



Utrecht University

Master Thesis

Multilingualism and Foreign Language Anxiety as Experienced by Utrecht University

Students with Study-Abroad Experience

Effrosynidou Olga

Utrecht University

Student Number: 3572558

MA Intercultural Communication

Multilingual Track

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Sergio Baauw

Second Reader: Dr. Marie Steffens

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the link between Multilingualism and Foreign Language Anxiety among Utrecht University students with study-abroad experience. The participants were divided into three target groups: a) *monolinguals* (i.e., one mother tongue) with limited proficiency in a foreign language, b) *early bilinguals*, (i.e., two mother tongues) raised within a bilingual family, and c) “late” *multilinguals*, individuals raised in a monolingual family, but acquired more than two foreign languages later. Particularly, the study sought to investigate, on the one hand, how the study-abroad experience influenced the participants’ perceived anxiety in their foreign-language interactions and, on the other hand, to explore possible differences and similarities between the three groups regarding the most anxiety-inducing factors. A quantitative survey was used in combination with qualitative follow-up interviews, as research instruments. Results revealed that the monolingual group experienced the highest FLA, followed by the “late” multilinguals, while the early bilinguals were found to be the least susceptible to FLA. *Fear of negative evaluation* and *communication apprehension* were identified as two fundamental dimensions of the FLA. Of particular interest was the finding regarding the early bilinguals’ and “late” multilinguals’ attention to speaking the foreign language proficiently.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Multilingualism, Early Bilingualism, Study Abroad, Higher Education

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1. Introduction and Motivation of this Research

The emergence of globalization has brought to the forefront issues related to foreign-language learning as well as the affective experiences of foreign-language learners and speakers. Educators and researchers have been aware of the fact that foreign-language speaking can be a distressing experience and the source of considerable levels of anxiety. To that end, many investigators have sought to explore the anxiety experienced by foreign-language speakers and learners and its debilitating effects (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993; Woodrow, 2006; Dewaele, 2007). The research on Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) focuses on the definition of FLA, its conceptualization and measurement, and aims at finding ways to regulate its effect and helping foreign-language speakers to increase their linguistic self-confidence in the target foreign language.

Continued research in the field of FLA is of paramount importance since the findings can lead to the improvement of the foreign-language speaking experience as well as the individual's performance in the foreign language. The present study focuses on the FLA experiences of university students with study-abroad experience, as these students are likely to have gained multiple experiences with foreign-language interaction. It would be interesting to examine to what extent the study-abroad experience influences the perceived FLA of the students and possibly identify which are the major anxiety-inducing factors associated with foreign-language interaction while studying abroad. While there is a considerable body of research focusing on the linguistic benefits of the experience abroad, such as the improvement of perceived oral fluency (Freed, 1995) and listening comprehension (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009), research on its nonlinguistic benefits is limited. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to fill the gap in the existing literature regarding the affective outcomes of the experience abroad, and more specifically, the influence of the study-abroad experience on the student's FLA.

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At the same time, the majority of the previous studies on FLA have focused on predominantly monolingual foreign language learners and speakers, studying a second foreign language, when in reality, monolingual students constitute only a small part of the total student population. A significant number of students who decide to study abroad or participate in a study-abroad program already command one or even more foreign languages. A special category among those would be that of students raised in a bi- or multilingual environment, thus being early bi/multilinguals. This raises the question of which population (i.e., monolinguals or [early] bi- and multilinguals) feels more confident when studying in a foreign language and which is affected the most by FLA. For that reason, the present research seeks to address this question by examining the link between Multilingualism and FLA as well as the differences and similarities in the way FLA is experienced by the three different groups of the study.

2. Context

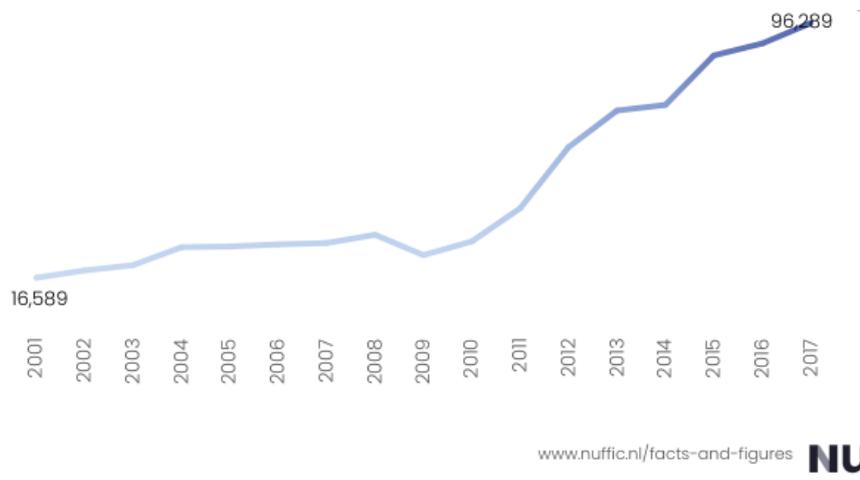
2.1 The Internationalization of Higher Education in the Netherlands: Utrecht University

Today's globalized world has led to the emergence of a variety of institutions with an international presence (Miller, 2015). The focus of the present research is on educational institutions, and more specifically, on Higher Education (HE). Knight (1994) describes the internationalization of HE as “the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” (p. 7). More precisely, the internationalization of HE includes international activities and initiatives undertaken by the universities, such as study-abroad experiences, foreign-language instruction, curricular internationalization, attracting foreign students, and offering international study majors, among many others (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

The present study focuses on the international activities of Utrecht University (UU), and more specifically it involves international students, currently enrolled at the UU, as well as UU students who have participated in study-abroad programs in the past. According to Nuffic (n.d.), the Dutch organization for internationalization in education, the Netherlands was placed among the top receiving countries in 2017, and the number of its incoming students increased dramatically from 27,968 students in 2010 to 96,289 in 2017 (see figure 1). During the same period, a gradually rising trend is also observed with respect to Dutch outgoing students participating in *Erasmus* for studies or placement (Nuffic, n.d.) (see figure 2). The *Erasmus* program is a mobility program funded by the European Union (EU) offering university students the opportunity to study abroad or even combine their studies abroad with a traineeship, in order to gain international experience and improve their communication and foreign language skills (“Studying abroad,” 2020).

Figure 1

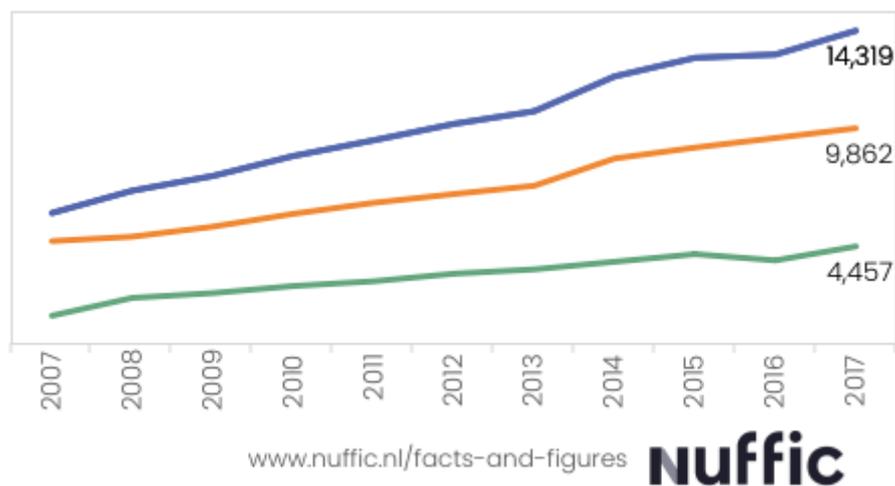
Number of incoming students from all countries to the Netherlands



Note. Figure retrieved from <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/facts-and-figures>.

Figure 2

Outgoing Erasmus mobility from the Netherlands



Note. Trend for studies (orange), internship (green), and total (blue). Figure retrieved from <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/facts-and-figures>.

With regards to the internationalization of Utrecht University, the *Strategic Plan 2025* UU explicitly states that “the Faculty of Humanities is consolidating its existing internationalization policy” (Utrecht University, 2020, p. 91), and that “there is a specific focus on young academics, for whom an international experience can be crucial for their professional

development and career opportunities” (p.91). Internationalization has become an indispensable part of the strategic plan of Utrecht University, and as a result, more and more international incoming students are welcomed each year to study on-campus. At the same time, an increasing number of Dutch UU students are encouraged to participate in study-abroad programs. According to the facts and figures of Utrecht University, there are currently 1,537 international students from 118 different countries (“Facts and figures,” 2020), when only five years ago the countries of origin of the incoming students were less than 100 (Utrecht University, 2016).

An outcome of this global academic mobility is the fact that more and more students are pursuing university degrees in foreign countries and, consequently, in most cases in a foreign language. Studying in a foreign language, especially in Higher Education where the demands are higher, poses an extra challenge to the students who are striving for successful academic results. The anxiety university students experience in their classroom as well as in their daily interactions with fellow students, lecturers, and academic staff can have a significant impact on their academic achievement and wellbeing in general. Previous studies have suggested that the anxiety experienced in communication in a foreign language can have debilitating effects and influence the students’ adaptation to the foreign language environment as well as the achievement of their educational goals (Woodrow, 2006; Dewaele, 2007). However, the research to date has tended to focus on classroom-based anxiety only, failing to capture the reality of a study-abroad experience, where the communication in the foreign language extends beyond the classroom and to any potential academic-related situation which could trigger language anxiety. The present study is, therefore, aimed at filling precisely this gap in the existing literature by focusing not only on in-class situations but also on outside-class experiences of the target students.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is divided into four sub-sections. The first one provides information regarding the definition of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and offers an overview of related past studies in the field. The second sub-section discusses the meaning of Multilingualism and proposes a distinction between early and “late” multilinguals. The third sub-section sheds light on the positive impact of Multilingualism on FLA, and, finally, the last section presents some of the most prominent factors influencing FLA.

3.1.Types of Anxiety and the Foreign Language Anxiety

In educational research, anxiety is classified as being either a trait or a state (Woodrow, 2006). Trait anxiety refers to a characteristic of personality, which means that an individual who is trait anxious (i.e., anxious as a person) is likely to experience anxiety in a variety of situations, and external factors are only triggering anxiety, rather than causing it (Woodrow, 2006). State anxiety, on the other hand, is a temporary condition experienced at a particular moment, and it is not necessarily related to the individual’s personality and disposition (Woodrow, 2006). In addition to trait anxiety, which is an innate characteristic, and state anxiety, triggered by the external environment, Spielberger et al. (1976) identify a third type of anxiety, namely the situation-specific anxiety, which could also be viewed as a sub-type of the state anxiety. This type of anxiety is attached to specific situations, that is, situations that are judged to be anxiety-provoking (e.g., workplace, exams, etc.). Research into foreign language learning has classified language learning anxiety as situation-specific (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b and Horwitz 2001, as cited in Woodrow, 2006; Oh, 1990 as cited in Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012) since it is observed in language learning situations, namely classrooms.

However, classifying Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) as one type of anxiety may not be that simple and straightforward, since research indicates that FLA consists of multiple dimensions and there is debate among different scholars, which sometimes leads to

contradictory findings. Horwitz et al. (1986) made a valuable contribution to the conceptualization of FLA by providing, for the first time, a definition, which was used in subsequent research in the field. They conceive FLA as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). According to their view, FLA is comprised of a three-dimensional construct, involving *communication apprehension*, *test anxiety*, and *fear of negative evaluation*. Regarding the first dimension, they define *communication apprehension* as “a type of shyness characterized as fear of, or anxiety about communicating with people” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). This dimension of FLA is, therefore, linked to interpersonal interaction, referring to individual’s anxiety when interacting with others, and is central to the present study since the focus is on students’ interaction with others within a foreign language setting. Some manifestations of communication apprehension anxiety include group and public speaking anxiety, as well as difficulty in listening and understanding a spoken message (Horwitz et al. 1986). As for the second dimension, *test anxiety* refers to “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). This type of anxiety is, therefore, experienced during exams and quizzes, where any possible mistake is seen as a failure. Finally, the third dimension, *fear of negative evaluation*, is defined by Horwitz et al. (1986) as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (p. 128). Fear of negative evaluation has a broader scope than that of test anxiety, in the sense that it involves fear of being evaluated in any evaluative setting, not just the classroom.

The present study examines *fear of negative evaluation* and *communication apprehension*, whilst *test anxiety* will not be relevant since this dimension is only limited within the classroom setting. Based on the above three-dimensional description of FLA, Horwitz et

al. (1986) offered an instrument for its measurement—the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which is partly the basis for the present research, with some necessary additions and modifications (see Methodology).

Horwitz et al.'s (1986) definition of FLA, as well as most of past research in this area, focuses on classroom-based anxiety. The present study, however, considers FLA both inside and outside the classroom, where communication in the foreign language continues. Since the study involves students studying abroad, their communication in the foreign language is not limited within the classroom environment, but it is extended beyond it, as students strive to communicate successfully with fellow students, lecturers, and university staff. It is possible that students studying abroad encounter more challenges and stressful communicative events outside the classroom in their daily interactions and, therefore, the study needs to address these as well. According to Al-Saraj (2014), the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986), is not appropriate in such context, because it fails to consider the diverse cultural backgrounds and the individual learners' experiences and, hence, a new scale, pertinent to this particular context, should be developed. The present study has, therefore, modified the FLCAS and adapted it accordingly, so as to reflect the context of the study-abroad experience (see Methodology).

3.2. Defining Bi/Multilingualism

When conducting research on Bilingualism and Multilingualism, it is crucial to define what these terms mean. There is a large volume of studies on Multilingual Development, and it is important to recognize that the definition of Multilingualism, as well as the use of the related terminology, has been largely disputed amongst different scholars. In general terms, Multilingual language acquisition refers to “the language development of children exposed to two or more languages from birth or shortly thereafter” (Unsworth, 2013, p.1). Research on Second and Third Language Acquisition and Metalinguistic Awareness highlights the

advanced cognitive as well as social skills and the qualities that early bi/multilinguals develop, and they provide evidence regarding bi/multilinguals' advantages with respect to foreign language acquisition and use (Baker, 2008; Dewaele, 2015; Jessner, 2008). These cognitive and social advantages of people who are in contact with two or more languages provide them with a feeling of higher linguistic self-confidence and, as a result, they experience less communicative anxiety (Dewaele, 2015). This raises the question of whether individuals who get in contact with more foreign languages and expand their linguistic repertoire later in life will benefit from this multilingual interaction like the early bi/multilinguals and, if so, how will the two groups differ from each other with regards to FLA.

To the best of the author's knowledge, there has been no research distinguishing between early bi/multilinguals and individuals who acquire more foreign languages later in life, thus becoming "late" multilinguals, and comparing the way FLA is experienced by each. Nevertheless, it is felt that such categorization is more than reasonable since the experiences of an individual raised within a bi/multilingual environment will differ substantially from the experiences of an individual who, while raised in a monolingual family, acquired two or more foreign languages later in life. It would be interesting to examine how and to what extent these individuals experience FLA and explore possible differences and similarities.

3.3.FLA and Multilingualism

It is worth noting, at this point, that Horwitz et al. (1986), as well as the majority of the scholars investigating FLA, have focused on monolingual populations' anxiety when learning a foreign language for the first time, overlooking the fact that FLA could be experienced differently across bilingual and multilingual populations, learning a foreign language for their second or third time or beyond. The purpose of this research is precisely to fill this gap by investigating whether -early or not- bi/multilingual populations are less susceptible to FLA than monolingual foreign language speakers.

Bi/multilingual speakers are far more experienced in interacting in different languages and making use of their larger linguistic repertoire, which raises the question of whether they will react differently in a foreign language-speaking context. In their study, Thompson and Khawaja (2016) have explored the relationship between Multilingualism and anxiety, pointing to the positive multilingual effects in reducing FLA. The findings of their study indicated that due to their extended exposure to multiple languages, “multilingual individuals are typically more tolerant toward linguistic imperfections, and hence this lowers their affective filters when they are faced with the challenges of learning a new foreign language” (Thompson & Khawaja, 2016 as cited in Phongsa, Shaik Abdul Malik Mohamed Ismail, & Hui Min Low, 2017, p. 272). In line with this view, Dewaele, Petrides, and Furnham (2008) found a correlation between FLA and the number of foreign languages an individual speaks. According to them, multilingual speakers are highly skilled in employing different linguistic strategies to avoid communication pitfalls, and hence they feel more confident when interacting in a foreign language environment (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008). Another interesting finding was that of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), supporting that the more languages an individual speaks, the stronger the feeling of enjoyment and the lower the feeling of anxiety. In a different study, Dewaele (2007) claims that trilingual and quadrilingual speakers experience less anxiety in comparison with bilinguals, a finding which supports the idea that the more languages an individual commands, the less likely they are to experience FLA.

In summary, past studies exploring the link between Multilingualism and FLA have indicated that the number of languages an individual speaks is related to the levels of anxiety when learning an additional foreign language. Nevertheless, research in the field of Multilingualism and its link to FLA is still limited, and further evidence is needed (Bensalem, 2017).

3.4. Variables Associated With FLA

Part of FLA's complexity stems from the fact that there are several variables involved, which can result in anxiety-provoking situations. Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008) refer to socio-biographical (e.g., age, gender, number of languages known, age of onset of acquisition, etc.) and situational factors (e.g., public/private speech). Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) identify six variables that can significantly predict FLA levels (see Table 1). Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) stress the importance of learner's foreign language self-rating in determining FLA, as well as the role of motivation in inhibiting learner's anxiety. Kráľová (2016) distinguishes between static factors, related to stable characteristics (e.g., gender, nationality, native language, personality, etc.) and dynamic factors, which can vary over time (e.g., language proficiency, motivation, living in a foreign language country, etc.) (Kráľová, 2016). The table below illustrates some of the recurring variables identified in the aforementioned studies:

Table 1

Summary of variables associated with FLA in the different studies

Variables:	Gardner & MacIntyre (1993)	Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999)	Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham (2008)	Kráľová (2016)
Gender			*	*
Age		*	*	
Education Level- Academic Achievement		*	*	
Nationality				*
Native language				*
Personality				*
Number of languages known			*	
Age of onset of acquisition			*	
Motivation	*			*
(Self-perceived) FL proficiency	*			*
Context of acquisition			*	
Frequency of use			*	
Socialization			*	

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Network of Interlocutors		*	
Public/private speech		*	
Experience in foreign countries	*		*
Prior school experience of FL learning	*		
Perceived self-worth	*		
Expected average for language course	*		

In sum, with regards to possible factors affecting FLA, even though a significant overlap is observed, there is no consensus among the researchers, as different causes are attributed to FLA by different researchers. The fact that it is empirically hard to prove a cause/effect relationship between anxiety and its causes, adds to the complexity of FLA. Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008) claim that FLA is “a highly complex constellation of interacting variables” (p. 914), meaning that FLA both influences the different variables and is influenced by them.

The possible causes of FLA still remain underexplored, and therefore, the present research is designed to contribute towards filling this gap by shedding light on the most recurring anxiety-inducing factors, as reported by both monolingual and bi/multilingual university students.

4. Research Questions

In order to investigate the topic of FLA experienced by Utrecht University students with study-abroad experience, and link it to the relevant FLA theories and existing studies with a particular focus on the possible differences between monolingual and bi/multilingual students, the following research question has been raised:

RQ: To what extent does Multilingualism influence Foreign Language Anxiety as experienced by Utrecht University students in the context of a study-abroad experience?

The following sub-questions will facilitate the researcher to provide an answer to the main research question:

SQ1: In what ways do monolingual students experience FLA?

SQ2: In what ways do early bi/multilinguals experience FLA?

SQ3: In what ways do “late” multilinguals experience FLA?

SQ4: What are the differences and similarities between the three groups and what are the reasons for these differences/similarities?

5. Methodology

5.1. Mixed Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was selected for the execution of this research. A quantitative survey was first distributed to obtain statistical results regarding the FLA of the participants and the associated variables, followed by follow-up qualitative interviews, with the aim to gain a more in-depth insight into the anxiety-inducing factors, as reported by the participants. According to Dörnyei (2007), incorporating qualitative data into a quantitative study enriches the final findings significantly since it helps the researcher explore complex meanings and illustrate the obtained patterns.

5.2. Participants

A total of 61 participants completed the survey (3 males, 57 females, and 1 non-binary) of whom 30 were UU students and 31 alumni. Due to the limited time frame for the present research, the sample was obtained by convenience sampling. All participants were adults, and their ages ranged from 22 to 49, with the average age being 26.64 years (SD = 5.24). Of the 61 participants, 26 came to the Netherlands from abroad to obtain a full degree at UU, 1 was an Erasmus student at UU, 24 had participated in an Erasmus study exchange in the past, and 10 had a different international experience (e.g., placement abroad). Most participants had more than one international experience (n=40), whereas the rest only had one (n=21). Depending on the number of languages they were raised with, and the number of languages they learned later in life, the participants were categorized into three different groups: a) *monolinguals* (i.e., one mother tongue) with limited proficiency in a foreign language (n= 7), b) *early bilinguals*, (i.e., two mother tongues) raised within a bilingual family (n=12), and c) “*late*” *multilinguals*, individuals raised in a monolingual family, but acquired more than two foreign languages later (n=42). The mother tongues spoken by the participants in this study included a wide range of languages: Dutch (n=33), English (n= 7), German (n=7), Italian (n=5), Greek (n=4), Chinese

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(n=4), Arabic (n=2), Frisian (n=3), Danish (n=1), Portuguese (n=1), Latvian (n=1), Limburgish (n=1), Polish (n=1), Russian (n=1), Serbian (n=1) and Thai (n=1). Regarding participants' foreign languages, the majority spoke 2 foreign languages (n=29), many spoke more than 2 (n=21) and only a minority spoke just one foreign language (n=11). A detailed analysis of participants' proficiency levels in the foreign languages or the context of their acquisition is beyond the scope of this study.

Three participants (see Table 2), one from each of the studied groups, took part in a follow-up interview with the researcher. Due to the short time frame for this research, more interviews were not possible. The interviewees were informed in advance about the interview procedure, anonymity and confidentiality, their participation was entirely voluntary, and they provided written informed consent (see Appendix).

Table 2

Description of interviewees

Interviewee	Status	Mother Tongues (N)	Foreign Language (N)	Target Group
Participant A	Student	1	1	Monolingual
Participant B	Student	2	2	Early Bilingual
Participant C	Student	1	4	Late Multilingual

Note. N indicates Number

5.3. Materials

The study involved data obtained through two different instruments: a quantitative online survey and qualitative interviews.

The first part of the survey included the demographics section containing items regarding the independent variables of the research (i.e., age, gender, country of origin and residence, mother tongues, foreign languages acquired, self-perceived foreign language proficiency, international experience, duration of international experience and frequency of foreign language interaction). The second part of the questionnaire included ten questions extracted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)¹ (Horwitz et al., 1986), and adapted accordingly so as to reflect the foreign language environment of the sample. In these questions participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with ten statements regarding the anxiety they experienced in different in-class situations when speaking a foreign language. Five additional items were introduced focusing on out-of-class interaction, where respondents had to indicate the anxiety levels they experienced in each out-of-class scenario described. For the second part of the questionnaire responses were given based on standard 5-point Likert scales (from 1= Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree/ from 1=Not at all anxious to 5=Extremely anxious). All items referring to anxiety were positively phrased so that high scores would reflect high anxiety. For these 15 items internal consistency, as measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient, was high (.93) and, therefore, the scale was found reliable. The final question was open-ended, asking respondents to describe a specific event that triggered FLA and explain why. This question was meant to elicit information regarding the way participants experienced FLA and its causes. The survey was pilot-tested with 5 participants prior to distributing the final version.

¹ For the original 33-item FLCAS designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) see the Appendix.

On the basis of the survey answers, and especially the answers to the open-ended question, a follow-up interview was designed to triangulate the obtained data. The interviewees were asked to, firstly, provide some background information about themselves, and then to elaborate on whether they experienced FLA, in which communicative situations, under which circumstances, and which factors affected their FLA. The content questions were open-ended with various supplementary probes and the aim was to make the interview as flexible as possible, so as to allow for spontaneous and authentic interaction with the respondents (Dörnyei, 2007).

5.4.Procedure

The online survey was designed in Qualtrics and an anonymous link to it was distributed via email to the researcher's connections within Utrecht University. The link to the survey was also posted on various private UU LinkedIn groups with students and alumni. The survey was open for data collection for a period of three weeks.

After collecting the survey data, a qualitative follow-up interview was designed as a complementary instrument. The interviews were semi-structured, informal, one-to-one and they took place online via Microsoft Teams. The interviews were conducted in English and their duration was approximately 20 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher (see Appendix).

Both the survey and the interview are following the guidelines by the Faculty Ethics Assessment Committee - Humanities of Utrecht University (FEtC-H).

5.5.Data Analysis

Due to the limited time frame for this research and, hence the limited sample, inferential statistics were not possible. The quantitative part of the study was, therefore, based exclusively on descriptive statistics. Average scores on the 5-point scale were calculated for all 15 FLA

items separately and then, after the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found high (.93), a new variable was computed for all the 15 items in total. The new variable was named “FLA_Total” and represented the FLA score of the participants in all the FLA items included in the scale and it was used to draw comparisons between the studied groups. In order to examine the influence of the study-abroad experience on the FLA of each target group, a scatter plot was created depicting the relationship between the duration of the experience abroad and the FLA score of each participant in all three groups. In order to explore possible trends between the two variables, the least squares method was then used to obtain one representative line per group.

For the qualitative part, the transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed. According to Dörnyei (2007), “Researchers usually code and recode a text several times, with the initial, usually descriptive and low-inference codes gradually being replaced or supplemented by higher-order ‘pattern codes’...” (p. 251). It is, therefore, necessary to move back and forth especially during the qualitative analysis process, and gradually transform the data into salient content categories that will later lead to more concrete results. More specifically, during the coding phase, the researcher went through the interview transcripts and highlighted all the information related to the interviewees’ FLA and its causes. The highlighted parts were used to identify recurring patterns, and later categorize them and label them so that each label would correspond to a factor influencing FLA. Microsoft Word was used for this process (see Appendix) and the following labels and corresponding highlighting colors were used:

Table 3

Interview coding

Category found in Data	Coding Color	
Self-perceived proficiency	Dark Red	Dark Red
Interlocutor's proficiency level in FL/native	Yellow	Yellow
Frequency of FL speaking	Grey	Grey
Time spent abroad/in the host country	Green	Green
Previous international experience	Turquoise	Turquoise
Public speaking	Red	Red
Formality (context)	Pink	Pink
Fear of negative evaluation	Seaweed Green	Seaweed Green
Communication failure	Blue	Blue

6. Results

The following chapter will present the quantitative results obtained from the survey for each sub-question of the research. Qualitative results from the conducted interviews will provide further evidence and support the findings. Direct quotes from each interview will be used to underpin the results. The results are divided thematically into four sub-sections, based on the four sub-questions of the research.

6.1.SQ1: In What Ways Do Monolingual Students Experience FLA?

The first sub-question explored the FLA experiences of the first target group of this research (n=7), the individuals raised monolingually (i.e., one mother tongue) who did not command any foreign language, or they spoke only one. To be able to answer this question, the researcher had to measure the level of FLA among the respondents who belonged to this group. The mean language anxiety score for the seven participants of the monolingual group was 3.15 (SD = 0.64), which indicates moderate to relatively high anxiety. For a better illustration of the nature of the FLA experienced by this group, the means for the participants' responses to each of the 15 FLA items of the questionnaire were calculated separately (see Table 4), in order to examine which of these 15 factors triggered the most anxiety. This analysis revealed that what caused the most anxiety in this group of participants was the inability to express themselves in the foreign language (M=4.14, SD=0.37). Speaking well in front of other foreign-language speakers (M=4.00, SD=1.41), speaking in front of the whole class (M=4.00, SD=1.15), and pronouncing the foreign language correctly (M=4.00, SD=1.15) were also found to be among the most anxiety-provoking factors in this group. What triggered the least anxiety in these participants was being in a class with many other foreign language students (M=1.71, SD=0.75).

Table 4*Means and Standard Deviations for each FLA item for group 1*

Item	M	SD
Can't express myself in the FL	4.14	0.37
Too many FL students in my class	1.71	0.75
Classmates better than me in the FL	3.86	0.90
Can't speak well in front of other FL speakers	4.00	1.41
Talking in the FL to a stranger	3.57	1.13
FL Pronunciation	4.00	1.15
FL speaking in front of my class	4.00	1.15
FL speaking in front of other students	3.00	1.15
FL speaking around more experienced FL speakers	3.43	1.51
Giving a presentation in the FL	3.71	1.49
Talking to administrative staff in the FL	2.14	0.90
Conversation with native speakers of the FL	2.43	0.78
Speaking to a friend/colleague who is a native speaker of the FL	2.29	0.75
A lecturer/supervisor in my university asks me questions	2.86	1.21
Asking for advice from a lecturer/supervisor	2.14	0.37

Note. M and SD represent Mean and Standard Deviation respectively. FLA levels range from 1 to 5.

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the way monolingual participants are influenced by the different anxiety-inducing factors, interview data were used. The analysis of these qualitative data supported the survey findings regarding the most anxiety-provoking items and revealed some additional factors related to FLA. Regarding the first survey item

“can’t express myself in the FL”, which was found the most stressful item for this group, Participant A reported experiencing feelings of anxiety and frustration when not being able to express their thoughts satisfactorily and making themselves understood. They added that in case of miscommunication with their interlocutor they would think that the problem was theirs and they would feel embarrassed. The interview data also provided support for the other major stressors found in the quantitative analysis: “speaking in front of other FL speakers/the class”. Participant A explained that speaking in front of people with a high command of the foreign language would add to the FLA, especially in the case of native speakers. More specifically, the interviewee reported:

When I'm with people that they're English native speakers, I feel kind of uncomfortable because I know that I do not have this high proficiency level. [...] So, it makes me a little bit nervous. But with people that do not speak so good English, I'm not nervous at all. (Participant A, 1/4/2021)

What is particularly interesting about this quote is that it also highlights the role of the self-perceived proficiency and the proficiency of the interlocutor in the foreign language. It appears that participants tend to compare their FL level to that of their interlocutors, which leads to higher FLA.

6.2.SQ2: In What Ways Do Early Bi/Multilingual Students Experience FLA?

Regarding the second target group of this research, the early bi/multilinguals (i.e., two or more mother tongues), again, the data collected from the survey were used to deduce the FLA levels experienced by these respondents. In this sample, this group consisted only of early bilinguals (n=12), and not early multilinguals (i.e., with more than two mother tongues), hence from now on the researcher will refer to this group as “early bilinguals”. The mean of the FLA experienced by this group was 2.13 (SD=1.12), which indicates relatively low anxiety. As displayed in Table 5, out of the 15 FLA items, what triggered the most anxiety was speaking

well in front of other foreign-language speakers ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.44$) and the correct pronunciation ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.54$), while talking to the administrative staff of the university ($M=1.42$, $SD=0.66$) and being in a class with many other foreign-language speakers ($M=1.50$, $SD=0.67$) were found to be the least anxiety-inducing factors in this group.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for each FLA item for group 2

Item	M	SD
Can't express myself in the FL	2.42	1.37
Too many FL students in my class	1.50	0.67
Classmates better than me in the FL	2.33	1.55
Can't speak well in front of other FL speakers	2.92	1.44
Talking in the FL to a stranger	2.58	1.56
FL Pronunciation	2.75	1.54
FL speaking in front of my class	2.17	1.58
FL speaking in front of other students	2.25	1.54
FL speaking around more experienced FL speakers	2.58	1.67
Giving a presentation in the FL	2.25	1.60
Talking to administrative staff in the FL	1.42	0.66
Conversation with native speakers of the FL	1.58	1.16
Speaking to a friend/colleague who is a native speaker of the FL	1.67	1.15
A lecturer/supervisor in my university asks me questions	1.92	1.24
Asking for advice from a lecturer/supervisor	1.75	1.21

Note. M and SD represent Mean and Standard Deviation respectively. FLA levels range from 1 to 5.

What the interview data revealed with regards to the most anxiety-inducing factors for this group is the important role of the peer evaluation as well as the self-evaluation. Participant B claimed:

I actually do think that I felt more anxiety in the classroom because you compare yourself to people a lot more. [...] I was just always comparing myself to the other students and the levels that they were at. [...] And then maybe I'd be scared to speak or not participate as much in class. (Participant B, 9/4/2021)

In contrast with the first group, which scored high in the FLA item “can’t express myself in the FL”, this group was found more flexible in dealing with miscommunication. When asked about their reaction in case their interlocutor could not understand what they were saying Participant B stated:

[B]eing able to overcome that [communication failure] boosts my confidence because then I look back and think, OK, even though I couldn't think of the word, we still did get to the goal of the conversation. I was able to think of another way around saying what I wanted to say [...]and think that I've gained more from those conversations as opposed to the ones that went perfectly. (Participant B, 9/4/2021)

6.3.SQ3: In what ways do “late” multilingual students experience FLA?

This group was the largest in this study (n=42), consisting of individuals raised monolingually (i.e., one mother tongue) who acquired two or even more foreign languages later in life, thus being called “late multilinguals”. The analysis revealed that this group experienced low to moderate anxiety (M=2.52, SD=0.78).

Table 6*Means and Standard Deviations for each FLA item for group 3*

Item	M	SD
Can't express myself in the FL	3.38	1.28
Too many FL students in my class	1.55	0.94
Classmates better than me in the FL	2.93	1.15
Can't speak well in front of other FL speakers	2.98	1.27
Talking in the FL to a stranger	2.60	1.19
FL Pronunciation	2.95	1.26
FL speaking in front of my class	2.69	1.23
FL speaking in front of other students	2.57	1.36
FL speaking around more experienced FL speakers	3.19	1.31
Giving a presentation in the FL	3.24	1.24
Talking to administrative staff in the FL	1.95	1.03
Conversation with native speakers of the FL	1.95	0.96
Speaking to a friend/colleague who is a native speaker of the FL	1.81	0.99
A lecturer/supervisor in my university asks me questions	2.17	0.98
Asking for advice from a lecturer/supervisor	1.98	0.92

Note. M and SD represent Mean and Standard Deviation respectively. FLA levels range from 1 to 5.

As Table 6 illustrates, these respondents experienced the highest anxiety when they could not express themselves in the foreign language (M=3.38, SD=1.28), when giving a presentation in the foreign language (M=3.24, SD=1.24) or when speaking around more

advanced foreign language speakers (M=3.19, SD=1.31). The item related to the least FLA in this group was being in a class with many other foreign-language speakers (M=1.55, SD=0.94).

The interview data were particularly interesting in this case, because “late” multilingual speakers have multiple experiences with many different foreign languages to relate. Furthermore, in most cases “late” multilinguals have learned the foreign languages within a classroom in a relatively formal setting. As a result, speaking outside the classroom can be more stressful for them. Participant C specifically reported:

I must say that within university class environment [...] it's easier for me. But then, when you're doing it in the social atmosphere [...] I am a bit more insecure around native speakers, because that's a place that I don't really know how to use- well, I do, of course, but it's different from the level that I use when speaking about concepts or courses [...]. (Participant C, 20/4/2021)

6.4.SQ4: What Are the Differences and Similarities Between the Three Groups and What Are the Reasons for These Differences/Similarities?

The differences between the three target groups regarding the FLA levels experienced by each are highlighted in the table below:

Table 7

Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations for FLA between the 3 target groups

Group	M	SD
Group 1	3.15	0.64
Group 2	2.13	1.12
Group 3	2.52	0.78

Note. M and SD represent Mean and Standard Deviation respectively. FLA levels range from 1 to 5. Group 1: monolinguals, Group 2: early bilinguals, Group 3: late multilinguals

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The monolingual group scored higher in FLA ($M=3.15$, $SD=0.64$), followed by the “late” multilinguals ($M=2.52$, $SD=0.78$), while the early bilinguals were found to be the least susceptible to FLA ($M=2.13$, $SD=1.12$).

What is noteworthy is the fact that in all three groups the item which was associated with the least FLA was being in a class with many other foreign-language speakers. A possible explanation could be that when there are more foreign-language speakers in their class, they are not in the minority and, therefore, they feel less overwhelmed. However, this finding may seem contradictory with the fact that, again, all three groups scored high in FLA when speaking in front of other foreign-language speakers, especially when those had a high proficiency level. Regardless of which group they belonged to, all participants felt intimidated and experienced higher levels of anxiety when they spoke with more advanced foreign-language speakers, especially natives. The interview data supported this finding as the comparison between self-perceived proficiency and interlocutor’s proficiency was a recurring pattern in all interviews. All three interviewees reported that they would feel more insecure and anxious with their foreign language when speaking with more advanced or native speakers, and they would prefer to remain silent to avoid negative evaluation. Therefore, fear of negative evaluation seems to be a major factor influencing FLA in all three target groups.

Another interesting observation to emerge from the comparison of the three groups was the positive impact of the students’ international experience on reducing their FLA. All interviewees stressed the importance of their past experiences abroad and talked about how these experiences helped them feel more confident. Specifically, Participant A when asked about their previous Erasmus experience reported:

[D]uring Erasmus, it was the first time that I realized that, yeah, not all the other people except me are speaking amazing English. And I met so many people there that they didn't speak good English at all, and we could communicate perfectly with each other.

It didn't matter so much. So, it was something that made me feel more comfortable when I moved here [...] So I think it was very helpful for me [in order] to control my anxiety. (Participant A, 1/4/2021)

In line with this view, Participant B claimed:

I do think that going on an Erasmus year really is such a great experience for a number of reasons, but one is you have to survive. [...] So, you're forced into the situation. And the more that you're in that situation and you're able to look back and think, oh, it was all right, I was able to communicate what I wanted to say or whatever, then the anxiety diminishes each time. (Participant B, 9/4/2021)

Finally, the third interviewee also highlighted the benefits of spending a semester abroad:

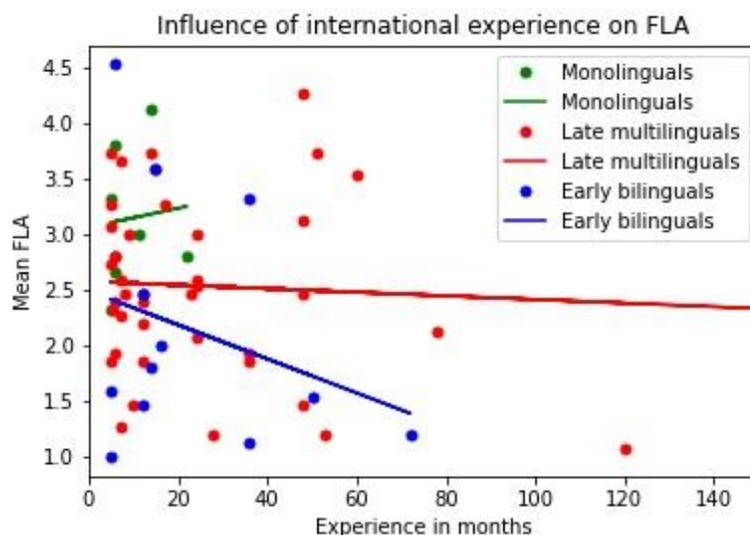
I guess it does make me more confident, definitely because, of course, you develop the skills while being there, but then also another kind of confidence derives from the fact that you learn a bit more of how to deal with situations where miscommunication occurs. (Participant C, 20/4/2021)

The most striking finding was the influence of the time spent abroad on the FLA levels of each group. Based on the interviewees' responses, the researcher would have expected that the more time a participant spent abroad, the more their FLA levels would diminish. Nevertheless, as figure 3 illustrates, a contradictory finding emerged. While for the early bilinguals and the "late" multilinguals a decreasing trend is observed, meaning that the longer their international experience the less their FLA, the opposite trend is observed for the monolingual group. This finding, however, should be seen with caution since the sample was very limited (see Limitations), especially for the monolingual group (n=7). It should be also noted that all the participants in this group (i.e., green dots) are situated on the left-hand side of the figure, which means that their experience abroad was no more than 20 months, compared

to the other two groups (i.e., red and blue dots) who are much more spread in the figure. It can be assumed that if the monolinguals spent more time abroad, then their FLA would start to decrease.

Figure 3

Influence of time spent abroad on the total FLA for each target group



Note. FLA levels range from 1 to 5.

Finally, another remarkable finding was the fact that Participant B and C, early bilingual and “late” multilingual respectively, were both found rather “perfectionists” regarding their foreign language performance, while the monolingual interviewee did not demonstrate any instances of “perfectionism”. In other words, Participant B and C paid particular attention to formulating grammatically correct utterances, which means that part of their anxiety could stem from this expectation for “perfect” language skills. On the other hand, Participant A was concerned about communicating successfully and was more stressed about making themselves understood rather than formulating “perfect” sentences. This is also consistent with the survey findings based on which the monolingual group had the highest score in the FLA item “can’t express myself in the foreign language”.

7. Discussion

The following chapter is devoted to the discussion of the research questions in light of the results obtained. The aim of the present study was to investigate the link between Multilingualism and the FLA experienced by different groups of individuals with study-abroad experience. The study also aimed to compare these groups and reveal potential differences and similarities between them regarding the nature of the FLA experienced by them and the most important anxiety-provoking factors.

The first three sub-questions measured the FLA levels for each of the three target groups of this research: monolinguals, early bilinguals, and “late” multilinguals. The quantitative results indicated that the monolingual group experienced the highest FLA ($M=3.15$, $SD=0.64$), followed by the “late” multilinguals ($M=2.52$, $SD=0.78$), while the early bilinguals were found to be the least susceptible to FLA ($M=2.13$, $SD=1.12$). These findings are in line with previous studies which supported that the knowledge of multiple languages can reduce the FLA due to the multilingual capacities that are developed (e.g., Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Dewaele, 2015, etc.). Bi- and multilingual students were reportedly found more flexible and confident FL speakers, which supports Baker’s (2008) claim that multilingual speakers experience less anxiety due to their enhanced communication skills after exposure to multiple languages. Based on this claim, it can also be assumed that the longer an individual is exposed to many languages, the more they develop their communication skills and, consequently, the less their FLA. The early bilinguals are exposed to two languages from an early age which provides them with an advantage and could potentially explain their low FLA scores. At the same time, in accordance with Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008), “late” multilinguals experience higher FLA than early bilinguals since individuals suffer more from FLA in languages acquired later in life.

The findings of the present research illustrate that all three groups scored predominantly higher FLA levels when speaking in front of other, especially more advanced, foreign-language speakers. All interviewees reported that they would feel more reluctant to speak in front of others, especially natives, and they would compare their level to that of their interlocutor. They also admitted that it was because of the other's judgment that they would be more anxious and consequently more reluctant to speak. Speaking with more advanced foreign-language speakers made them feel more insecure about their proficiency level and language skills and, hence they would feel more "sensitive" to the other's comments and potential criticism. These results are consistent with Horwitz et al.'s (1986) suggestion that FLA stems from the *fear of negative evaluation*, defined as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (p. 128). The present research has further illustrated that *fear of negative evaluation* is an important dimension of the FLA and can influence the anxiety levels significantly regardless of the monolingual or bi/multilingual background of the students in this study.

Horwitz et al. (1986) have also identified the FLA dimension of *communication apprehension*, defined as "a type of shyness characterized as fear of, or anxiety about communicating with people" (p. 127). This dimension of FLA has also been found central to the present study and is linked to the dimension discussed above since both refer to the speaker's anxiety during interaction in a foreign language. As explained earlier, all the participants in this study were found predominantly more influenced by FLA when they were interacting with others. The dimension of *communication apprehension* becomes even more salient in the case of the monolingual group, which scored the highest FLA when they could not communicate successfully. More specifically, the monolingual interviewee reported feeling anxious and shy when not being able to understand their interlocutor or when they could not make themselves understood.

The analysis of between-group differences showed that early bilinguals as well as “late” multilinguals are more concerned with achieving a high proficiency level in the foreign language and speaking “perfectly”, whereas the monolingual group is mostly anxious about being able to communicate the right message. This difference can be attributed to the fact that bi- and multilinguals have already two or more languages in their linguistic repertoire, and therefore, they can easily take advantage of this richer repertoire to communicate successfully. This finding is also consistent with Dewaele’s (2015) claim that multilingual speakers have more experience in interaction with a wide range of interlocutors and, consequently, they are better prepared for dealing with unexpected communicative difficulties. On the other hand, the monolingual group has fewer options and needs to rely on a much more limited linguistic repertoire to communicate. As a result, the monolinguals may feel more pressure and higher FLA when they are in a foreign language speaking environment. In the case of the bi- and multilinguals, however, their anxiety does not stem from the fear of not being able to communicate successfully, but from their expectation of speaking the foreign language proficiently. The above findings provide additional support for previous studies which have suggested that bi- and multilingual speakers are more aware of the language complexities and ambiguities as well as the linguistic differences between the foreign languages and the existing languages in their linguistic repertoires, and thus, more concerned about such differences (e.g., Phongsa, Shaik Abdul Malik Mohamed Ismail, & Hui Min Low, 2017).

A valuable contribution of the present study to the existing body of research in the field of FLA was the focus on the study-abroad experience and its influence on FLA. All the participants stressed the positive impact of their previous experience abroad on reducing their perceived anxiety in foreign-language speaking. While living abroad, their frequent interaction in the foreign language reportedly boosted their linguistic self-confidence, which resulted in lower FLA. Based on the interviewees’ responses, various benefits of the international

experience were identified. The most important one was the fact that it offers the experience of having to survive within a foreign language environment. Students who gain this experience eventually develop skills and competencies that help them overcome communication pitfalls, be more flexible communicators and reflect on their progress. Another reason why spending time abroad can reduce FLA, as reported by the interviewees, is the fact that during this experience abroad students have the opportunity to interact with a wide range of foreign language speakers, of whom not all command the foreign language in a high level. As explained earlier, individuals tend to compare their level to that of their interlocutors. When they meet other foreign-language speakers with a proficiency level comparable to theirs, it is possible that they feel reassured, and their confidence increases. For these reasons, the more time students spend abroad, the more their FLA diminishes. Nevertheless, a surprising contradictory result emerged from the statistical analysis of the survey data. As described earlier, the FLA of the monolingual group was found to increase the more time this group spent abroad. However, caution should be exercised upon interpreting this finding due to the considerably limited sample, especially for the monolingual group (n=7) (see Limitations).

8. Conclusion

The present study investigated the phenomenon of FLA and its link to Multilingualism, which is a relatively underexplored topic of research, offering a valuable insight into the nature of FLA and the underlying anxiety-inducing factors. FLA amongst Utrecht University students and alumni with study-abroad experience was examined. Particularly, this research was an attempt to fill the gap in the existing literature by focusing not only on FLA experienced inside the classroom environment but also outside class, where students could potentially interact with other foreign-language speakers in the context of their study-abroad experience. The findings illustrated that in the current study the monolingual group experienced the highest FLA, followed by the other two target groups of this study (i.e., “late” multilinguals and early bilinguals), which exhibited similar levels of anxiety, with early bilinguals experiencing the lowest. These results support the notion that the knowledge of multiple languages has a positive impact on the study-abroad students involved in this study by reducing their FLA. With regards to the factors affecting FLA, the inability to communicate successfully in the foreign language and the comparison between the self-perceived proficiency and the interlocutor’s proficiency were identified as major sources of FLA in this sample. The current findings supported the important role of the *fear of negative evaluation* and *communication apprehension* as two fundamental dimensions of the FLA. Of particular interest was the finding regarding the early bilinguals’ and “late” multilinguals’ attention to speaking the foreign language proficiently, whilst in the case of the monolinguals this “perfectionism” was not pertinent. The latter were more concerned about communicating successfully and, unlike the other two groups of this study, their anxiety did not derive from the expectation of “perfect” foreign-language speaking.

9. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study had some significant limitations which should be considered. The most important one was the very short timeframe, which consequently led to a limited number of participants for both the quantitative and the qualitative parts. A larger pool of participants may have yielded a significantly larger and more balanced dataset allowing for generalized conclusions applicable to the whole target population. Additionally, although interviews allow for a more in-depth analysis, the researcher of the present study was only able to conduct three due to the time restrictions and, as a result, the obtained information may be biased and not representative. It is also possible that social desirability influenced the participants' statements leading to altered results. At the same time, another likely problematic aspect could be the fact that the survey was based on self-rating questions about participants' anxiety and, therefore the objectivity of the answers cannot be guaranteed. With regards to the sample selection, it must be clarified that some of the alumni participants had finished their studies long before the time the present research was conducted. This means that at the time of filling in the questionnaire their memories regarding their study-abroad experience may have been distorted since memory is unreliable.

Overall, the sample of the present research was too small to determine whether the observed patterns are statistically significant, but the findings could be used as a basis for further research in this field. Future research is necessary to review the current results and determine whether they generalize. Additionally, future studies should extend over more countries and involve students from different universities to limit the "local" bias and adopt a more inclusive approach. It is imperative that future research focus on more background information, such as the foreign language proficiency level of the participants as well as the context of language acquisition, as these are likely to be important variables, which were intentionally overlooked in the present research due to limited time.

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11. Appendices

Appendix A: Interview 1- transcript and coding

00:00:28

Speaker 1: So, how many languages do you speak? First question;

00:00:40

Speaker 2: I speak two; English and Greek.

00:00:44

Speaker 1: OK, so one foreign language. And in what language is your study program?

00:00:51

Speaker 2: It is in English.

00:00:53

Speaker 1: And what is the proficiency level that you have in English, according to your opinion?

00:00:58

Speaker 2: I think it is C1. Maybe now it comes closer to C2, but I am sure that is C one.

00:01:11

Speaker 1: OK, so how do you feel when you have to speak English in your class? Do you feel confident in general?

00:01:20

Speaker 2: At the beginning I was really nervous because I didn't know the proficiency level of the other classmates. But now that we get used to each other and know the professors, I'm not so nervous. There is an anxiety in general.

00:01:38

Speaker 1: OK, so you're saying that what makes you- what made you very anxious was the beginning, when you weren't familiar with the others?

00:01:47

Speaker 2: Yeah, I didn't. Yeah. Firstly, because I didn't know them in general and people feel uncomfortable when they have to speak with other people that they don't know. And secondly, because I didn't know their proficiency level - language proficiency level, because I was afraid that maybe they speak very- they had very high command in English and I didn't feel so comfortable for myself because I didn't speak English so often. Before the master.

00:02:19

Speaker 1: OK, great. So if you know that your classmates are native English speakers, how do you feel about that?

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00:02:30

Speaker 2: Yeah, probably a bit uncomfortable. In general, when I'm with people that they're English native speakers, I feel kind of uncomfortable because I know that I do not have this high proficiency level. It's not. Yeah, it's not there. So it makes me a little bit nervous. But with people that do not speak so good English, I'm not nervous at all.

00:03:02

Speaker 1: Great. So in what context do you feel the most anxious? During the lessons and the lectures, when you have to speak with others outside the class, let's say after the lecture or when you go out with fellow students?

00:03:20

Speaker 2: I think inside the class, because we use specific terminology, sometimes you have to explain some things. And yeah, it's- it's more difficult in a way, but not when we are outside of the class because everyone is more cool. And you can use also body language if you are in person. That is also helpful.

00:03:46

Speaker 1: Mm hmm. Great. And would you feel more anxious when you spoke to the lecturer or supervisor or fellow students? In-class or in group discussion... ?

00:04:01

Speaker 2: It depends, I will say it depends on the person. Sometimes maybe with some classmates, I would feel a little bit anxious when I speak to them because, as I mentioned before, of their high command in English. And the same applies for some professors, but not for all of them.

00:04:20

Speaker 1: Yeah, OK, great. And are you afraid of making any mistakes in front of others? So, how would you feel if you knew that you made mistakes and the supervisor was listening or native speakers were listening, for example?

00:04:41

Speaker 2: OK, now, after so many months of online lectures and the master, I don't care so much about their opinion, but at the beginning, I was nervous and preferred not to talk so much because of this reason. I think now I got used to it. So I'm talking more during classes. Yeah.

00:05:09

Speaker 1: Mm hmm. Um, and how would you feel if your interlocutor, the person that you were speaking to, couldn't understand what you were saying during a discussion?

00:05:22

Speaker 2: Oh, I think I would feel a bit frustrated because... the first thing I would think is that

it was my problem that the other person does not understand and ... but, yeah, I think that's it. Frustrated. And then I will try to explain with different words, trying to use body language if it is face to face because online is more difficult.

00:05:49

Speaker 1: Yeah. And what if it was the other way around? So if you were- somebody was talking to you and you couldn't understand some phrases or what he or she was saying.

00:06:00

Speaker 2: Yeah. I think I would be kind of shy to say to him to repeat himself because I don't understand. But if I see that, yeah, in general, I don't understand anything I will say to the other person if they can paraphrase it or explain what he says, because I don't understand.

00:06:25

Speaker 1: OK. Yeah, so right now you're living abroad where you're studying. So do you think that this plays a role in the way you feel when speaking to foreign language speakers?

00:06:45

Speaker 2: I don't know, maybe I feel more comfortable than before, because now that I have spent more time here, because as I mentioned before, when I arrived, I didn't feel comfortable to speak, but now it became the everyday reality. So after a while, you get used to it. So you are not so anxious as before.

00:07:11

Speaker 1: Exactly. And yeah. So some of the courses you're following include some group work, group discussions, group talks. How do you feel during these group discussions?

00:07:29

Speaker 2: Um, mostly not anxious because it's like a friendly chat with- now we know each other- with the people that you see every week so and yeah, the level of English of most of the students, it's more or less in my level C1. Some of them may be C2, but it's OK. We can understand each other. We don't have so many native speakers. I think they are not the majority. And I think the ones that we have are from the US, not from the U. K, who I have a little bit of trouble to understand sometimes because of the pronunciation, so I don't feel any anxious when I am in the group.

00:08:21

Speaker 1: OK. And can you express your feelings and thoughts easily? So for example, when you have to relate to somebody, some thoughts or some things that you have read, for example, but you haven't really thought about how you're going to say these things to them. So, yeah. How would you feel?

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00:08:52

Speaker 2: Yeah, sometimes it's difficult if I haven't thought about it before. Like now hahaha. I think I will find the words but maybe a little bit of stress when I start talking and I realize I haven't thought about how I'm going to explain it. Yeah. A little bit of stress.

00:09:17

Speaker 1: Mm hmm. Yeah, and what about public speaking or presentations in front of class, but in a formal context?

00:09:29

Speaker 2: OK, if I am prepared, I don't have a problem. If I have prepared it in my mind and I have written down, I don't mind to do it. But if it is something unexpected, for instance, the professors say that I will have after the meeting to be the speaker of the team and explain, for instance, what we did, that probably will make me very, very anxious because I will not be prepared. I will have to talk for all the- in front of the class about what we did in the group. And I am a little bit nervous that probably I will not be able to explain in the best way possible what we did and maybe the others will be kind of disappointed.

00:10:16

Speaker 1: Yeah, OK, fair enough. And maybe that's our last question. Yeah. Could you describe any particular events during these past months where you felt really anxious? It doesn't have to do- it doesn't have to be in class. It could be outside of class. But you had to speak to somebody in English and it can be something not related to the studies.

00:10:49

Speaker 2: I have. Of course I have. Ehh currently I was looking for an internship and I have some interviews, all of them in English, and one, particularly one of them was with an English native speaker. Erm and it, it, it was yeah. Very, I was very nervous and mostly I couldn't understand him because he had an English pronunciation. So that makes it more difficult for me. Um, yeah. I was really frustrated. I didn't get the job obviously. That's the event. In general in interviews because I have to use a very formal language and the, the, the English proficiency level, it matters it matters more there than during the class. It makes me more nervous.

00:11:54

Speaker 1: Mm hmm. Yeah, of course it does. And yeah. Final question. And we're finished. Yeah. I think that you have participated in an Erasmus Abroad study abroad experience in the past. So do you think that this experience has helped you right now with dealing with foreigners and foreign language in general?

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00:12:20

Speaker 2: Yeah, for sure. First of all, I think if I didn't go to Erasmus, probably I wouldn't apply for a master abroad. In general, it helps you with the anxiety to travel abroad as an experience. And during Erasmus, it was the first time that I realised that, yeah, not all the other people except me are speaking amazing English. And I met so many people there that they didn't speak good English at all and we could communicate perfectly with each other. It didn't matter so much. So it was something that made me feel more comfortable when I moved here and I had this in mind that, you know, probably all of your classmates there and the people that you are going to meet are not going to use perfect English. And they think if I didn't go to Erasmus, I didn't I I wouldn't have this experience to make the connection in my mind. So I think it was very helpful for me after, yeah, to control my anxiety.

00:13:35

Speaker 1: Yes, I believe so, too, I think that was the final question, so thank you very much for your participation.

00:13:43

Speaker 2: My pleasure.

00:13:44

Speaker 1: I will stop the recording now.

Category found in Data	Coding Color	
Self-perceived proficiency	Dark Red	Dark Red
Interlocutor's proficiency level in FL/native	Yellow	Yellow
Frequency of FL speaking	Grey	Grey
Time spent abroad/in the host country	Green	Green
Previous international experience	Turquoise	Turquoise
Public speaking	Red	Red

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Formality (context)	Pink	
Fear of negative evaluation	Seaweed Green	
Communication failure	Blue	

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Appendix B: Interview 2- transcript and coding

00:00:10

Speaker 2: OK, so first, a little bit of background questions. So could you tell me which are your mother tongues and, then, how many and which foreign languages do you speak?

00:00:24

Speaker 1: My mother tongues are English and Dutch, and I consider them my mother tongues because I learned them both from birth as opposed to like in a classroom. And then the foreign languages that I speak are French and Spanish.

00:00:40

Speaker 2: Thank you. And right now you're a UU student. And my question is, did you come to the Netherlands for studies? So, are you an international student or have you been in the Netherlands for many years before your studies as well?

00:01:01

Speaker 1: I arrived here in August for this course. So an international student.

00:01:06

Speaker 2: Great. And do you have any other additional international experiences prior to coming here for studies?

00:01:15

Speaker 1: Yes, for my bachelor's course, I studied French and Spanish. So in my third year, I took like an Erasmus year and I first did a study placement through Erasmus in France. And then the second half of the year I went to Spain, I'd stay to Madrid, and I just got a part time job there. So I wasn't at a university, but it was still part of that year abroad.

00:01:38

Speaker 2: Great. OK, so so for the rest of the questions, you can think of any of these occasions where you were an international student or an intern. So let's get started with the questions. So did you experience any kind of anxiety or a little bit of stress while you had to speak in any of these foreign languages while you were there?

00:02:09

Speaker 1: Yes, definitely, especially for French and Spanish, because I didn't feel anywhere- and I was maybe like a B1 or a B2 whenever I arrived. So it really was- receptively I understood a lot. But when I actually had to reply or speak, I did feel quite out of my depth you know, if I was going to an appointment, I would look up all the vocabulary before I got there so that I knew which words or key words that I had to say. It was a bit different here when I'm speaking Dutch because I'm a lot more used to speaking Dutch. And if anything, I'm more used to

speaking than I am to reading or writing. In fact my reading and my writing is horrendous. But speaking, that's the only thing that I knew. So that was OK. But I did feel anxiety in the way that I was so aware that I wasn't at the level that a normal Dutch 23 year old was at, even though I sound completely Dutch when I speak because my mum is Dutch, so my Dutch sounds very Dutch, but it's like the level of a 10 year old, for example. I think that gives me anxiety to begin with.

00:03:15

Speaker 2: So depending on whether it's writing or speaking, you would feel the anxiety. So let me see. Yeah, so could you identify any reasons, factors that would cause you? Yeah, maybe that would cause this anxiety in many of these cases.

00:03:43

Speaker 1: And maybe for my year abroad, especially in the job, it was anxiety because it was like a professional atmosphere and the- being able to communicate, I really had to be able to do that. I worked in a cafe, so it was OK, I could get by. But yeah, like being with adults, not being in the safety of the classroom, I guess, where where you know, that everybody else is learning as well. You're just thrown into the real life situation and you have to cope. And I also, to begin with, really had the- I did that I have to- I'm aiming to speak this language perfectly. Now I'm doing this Masters that has completely changed that. Now I'm more focusing on just the communicative, that being successful as opposed to like my grammar being perfect. I don't worry about that as much, but definitely in my year abroad, that was one thing that brought anxiety.

00:04:44

Speaker 2: So in the past, you were more a perfectionist, let's say. So now you focus more on the successful communication. Now that we talked about the context of interaction, do you think that- Let's think of in-class and out of class situations. Which of the two would cause you more anxiety in general? Yeah, both in Dutch and the other foreign languages.

00:05:22

Speaker 1: Although I just said, like within the safety of the classroom, I actually do think that I felt more anxiety in the classroom because you compare yourself to people a lot more. What I do in class. and I followed one of the Dutch modules for the master's and almost everybody but, maybe three of us were all born and raised, done all education in Dutch. And then the other three of us were so noticeably at a different level. That was not what I was expecting. I thought that there would be more people with a different Dutch background like we had. So I felt like quite a minority there. And then for French and Spanish as well, I was just always comparing

myself to the other students and the levels that they were at. A good few people in my year took a gap year between school and university and went and lived in Colombia, for example, for a year. So their Spanish level was amazing already and I would compare myself to that. Yeah. And then maybe I'd be scared to speak or not participate as much in class. Whereas whenever you're outside of class people don't know your background as much, and especially here I know that I have the safety net of speaking English. I can just pretend to be fully English and not know a word of Dutch if I can.

00:06:50

Speaker 2: Yeah, yeah. So, if I understand correctly, you care a lot about the peer evaluation regarding your language performance. I think that's something that we do a lot. So what about when you are with native speakers of the foreign language, so let's say with Spanish native speakers of French native speakers, would that cause some extra challenge or would you change- to what extent you would speak? So, for example, you would remain more silent if you were around native speakers.

00:07:35

Speaker 1: Yeah, I find it harder to spontaneously add to conversation when I'm yeah, when I'm not a native speaker, mostly because the pace is so fast and definitely for French and Spanish, by the time I've kind of digested what has been said and understood and thought of a response, the conversation is already at the next stage. So in that and yeah, in that way I find it harder to contribute, I guess. And Dutch is a bit different just because I'm a lot more used to speaking it with family and things like that, but I also did find that just really fast. I think the pace really makes it difficult.

00:08:21

Speaker 2: And what about the small communication failures? So how would you react if your interlocutor could not really understand what you were saying? Would you feel that that was your mistake or how would you react?

00:08:37

Speaker 1: I always at that point, because I have a part time job and it does happen where I mess up, where I say the wrong word or can't think of the word, and then I usually just say, oh, sorry, my Dutch isn't going so well today or something like that to make them aware of the fact that whilst it is my mother tongue, it's not the same as my English at all. And then people are usually very understanding and they say, oh, well, I understand English, just say the word in English. And the same goes for French and Spanish. You know, I do find that once you explain

your situation to whoever you're talking to, then it completely changes the dynamics of the conversation.

00:09:19

Speaker 2: But it doesn't really affect your confidence at that point?

00:09:24

Speaker 1: No, I don't think so, if anything, doing that and being able to overcome that boosts my confidence because then I look back and think, OK, even though I couldn't think of the word, we still did get to the goal of the conversation. I was able to think of another way around saying what I wanted to say or that kind of thing. I do. I do look back and think that I've gained more from those conversations as opposed to the ones that went perfectly.

00:09:54

Speaker 2: And what if you couldn't understand your interlocutor? Would you think that, for example, Oh my Dutch is not that good? What would you think?

00:10:08

Speaker 1: I do think that there's still a lot that I don't understand, but I've gotten to the point where I just really pick out keywords if I'm starting to lose the conversation or where I ask them to repeat themselves. I've also- that happens so frequently that I don't have the same feelings that I probably had at the start. I think at the start I probably thought, oh, my gosh, this is embarrassing having to ask for them to repeat themselves. But now I just know, like. It's just a necessity and not something to be ashamed about.

00:10:42

Speaker 2: Exactly. And what about public speaking, for example? Does that- is this something that causes extra anxiety or, for example, for class presentations? How do you deal with the stress?

00:10:59

Speaker 1: Yeah, I think that in English as well public speaking would make me a bit nervous. I don't know how I deal with it. I usually prepare like overprepare, maybe even have a script of what I want to say, because I know that I can learn things off by heart. So it's the spontaneity that would scare me or or be an extra dimension of anxiety. So I would rather be fully prepared in what I was going to say. But yeah, that's something that I would like to overcome or to feel less anxiety in those situations.

00:11:41

Speaker 2: Yeah it's really common to feel anxiety with public speaking. So you said that you have participated in various international experiences, Erasmus, et cetera. So do you think that

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the fact that you've had these experiences has helped you in a way to overcome foreign language, anxiety in general?

00:12:09

Speaker 1: yeah, I do think that going on an Erasmus year really is such a great experience for a number of reasons, but one is you have to survive. And sometimes that means like I mean, for the most part in Europe, you can get by by speaking English. So, you know that you always have that safety net. But there were some times when I just happened to speak French. So you're forced into the situation. And the more that you're in that situation and you're able to look back and think, oh, it was all right, I, I was able to communicate what I wanted to say or whatever, then the anxiety diminishes each time. So I definitely did learn a lot about just going for it and not thinking too much about things like you do have to be spontaneous and just be able to react and. Yeah.

00:13:04

Speaker 2: So another question. Do you feel more anxious when you have to speak to a supervisor or a lecturer or to a fellow student? So, yeah, the relationship with you interlocutor affects, the way you-your performance and your anxiety?

00:13:27

Speaker 1: Yeah, and I think it mostly has to do with how much do they know about me, so usually a teacher is slightly aware of, like whenever I was in France my teachers were aware that I was an Erasmus student so then they already have an image of maybe my language level or, OK, this person isn't native in French, whereas classmates don't always have that and. Yeah, you're more likely to compare yourself to people who are more similar to you, I think so, then these people are all roughly around the same age as me. And I don't know that makes it- I almost preferred the kind of power distance because then with the teacher, for example, you're underneath them. So you don't have to meet their level while classmates are more on your level. And then when your language isn't the same level as them, I really feel that.

00:14:27

Speaker 2: Yeah. Yeah. Because I would think that maybe with the students, with other students, familiarity would make things easier. But it's not the case, I think. So let me see. So do you- I think you have already covered that but let me just ask once again. Yeah. Do you think that you have changed your perspective regarding foreign language speaking? So did you feel always the same regarding foreign languages or the more international experiences you gain, the better you feel, the better prepared somehow or more aware of foreign language differences and miscommunications in general.

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00:15:25

Speaker 1: The foreign language experiences have definitely contributed to, but I did always feel that like growing up in a bilingual household, like. Not the value of languages, but like the necessity of them in life just to communicate. I always have that and I always really understood it. And I think that is also why I continued to study languages at school and perhaps differently to other people, my friends and stuff like that. I do think that I have a kind of different outlook on it. And the same with culture. **But then during the Erasmus year, really, that was like another on a full year to kind of be reflecting on that as well, as opposed to just something generally in life. It definitely- well now I'm living abroad again and I think that it was because of that year abroad that I would have had the confidence to do it again and to- now I didn't even think about language once as a potential barrier to living here.** Yeah.

00:16:36

Speaker 2: So do you think- maybe that's a difficult question to answer-, but do you think that the fact that you were raised in a bilingual way, has helped you more or less compared to the experience of living abroad? So which of the two was the most significant factor? Yeah, how do I say, for you to somehow overcome the anxiety when you speak foreign languages.

00:17:15

Speaker 1: I think it was probably more of a positive factor because whenever I was having those. Like, **I do still think that me visiting Holland all those years to see my family were still like international experiences to some extent so I already had practice of that.** It was just normal. That's what I did. That was kind of my life. And then I was able to apply that much more easily to learning French and learning Spanish and then going on the year abroad. You know, it wasn't a completely new experience. It was a situation I had already been in. **And then doing those like Dutch international experiences. When I was young, I had the support of my family around me, which was probably a good way to kind of be introduced to those international experiences. And when I was older, I was able to do that by myself.**

00:18:06

Speaker 2: Yeah. So let me just quickly check if there is anything that we haven't covered, otherwise, I think that's it. So, yeah, in case we haven't covered this already. Yeah, which one would be your biggest insecurity when it comes to foreign language speaking, if you can identify one?

00:18:42

Speaker 1: **Probably what the other person in the interaction thinks of me. I think that. And I wish that that wasn't the case. I think it has a lot to do with my personality as opposed to like**

exclusively to languages. Like I knew that I feel that about different things in life as well. But, yeah, I really do. I think about that far too much now.

00:19:06

Speaker 2: I think that I get it. I think I'm the same. Yeah. So I guess that's it. So if you. Yeah. If you would like to add something or. Yeah. Just also add an experience where you felt anxious, if you can think of anything in particular you can do so or else that's it.

00:19:39

Speaker 1: I think once was when I was at my job and someone had come to return something, but it's very- so it's very complex when you want to return something because there's like lots of shops within one shop. I was trying to explain this to the lady and I just could not get my words out at all. And this was one of the very few times that I felt- I didn't feel like she had empathy for me or like she could relate, because I did say- it was becoming more and more obvious that Dutch wasn't maybe my one hundred percent native language, but she didn't help at all. Or, I don't know, I expected some kind of acceptance of that fact or recognition or something. And there was absolutely nothing. And I just kept on trying to reformulate what I was saying, keep on going and keep on going. So whenever I looked back on that situation, I think -and I think this is the case nine times out of ten-, the reason why she didn't do that was because she was angry, because she couldn't just return it the way that she wanted to return it. So it didn't necessarily have anything to do with language or what I was saying. It was completely external from that. And I think that that's one thing that has gotten me through all these language experiences, is that the other person probably isn't thinking about you at all or like the level at which you're speaking. They're probably thinking something completely different. You know, we're all consumed in our own thoughts and they're not necessarily parallel. So.

00:21:12

Speaker 2: Yeah, yeah, exactly. We have to be more aware of this because it's not only with languages, but in general, it happens. So, yeah. Thank you so much. I will stop the recording now. I think we have everything.

Category found in Data	Coding Color	
Self-perceived proficiency	Dark Red	
Interlocutor's proficiency level in FL/native	Yellow	

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Frequency of FL speaking	Grey	
Time spent abroad/in the host country	Green	
Previous international experience	Turquoise	
Public speaking	Red	
Formality (context)	Pink	
Fear of negative evaluation	Seaweed Green	
Communication failure	Blue	

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Appendix C: Interview 3- transcript and coding

00:00:30

Speaker 1: OK, great. So thank you for participating. First of all, I forgot to send you the consent form, but I will do that after the interview. OK, so first of all, could you tell me what is your mother tongue and what foreign languages do you speak?

00:00:51

Speaker 2: Yeah, so my mother tongue is Dutch and then I speak English and French and a little bit of German and Swahili.

00:01:03

Speaker 1: Great, so many languages! So, what is the level of proficiency in these languages? According to your opinion.

00:01:19

Speaker 2: Like the European levels, the language levels

00:01:23

Speaker 1: more about what you feel is your level

00:01:27

Speaker 2: Ok. I would say Dutch and English fluent. Basically good enough to just formulate everything without having problems, and then French- there is a Dutch word for this- reasonable. So I can make myself understandable and I can understand what people are saying, mostly. Kiswahili. I can distinguish words. So I think the the vocabulary is not very big, but I can understand parts of stories that people would tell and I can make like basic phrases. And I think that's the same for German.

00:02:12

Speaker 1: Great. OK, thank you. So right now you are enrolled at a Dutch university, but yeah, you're not an international student, but have you participated in any study abroad experience or any other international studies experience in the past?

00:02:34

Speaker 2: Yes, I didn't uhm... My bachelor was international studies, so that basically says it already, but that was in the Netherlands, so I didn't actually go abroad for studying. But then I did an internship abroad. But that was also connected to the university. But it wasn't. It wasn't- I didn't follow any courses. I did a research there and an internship.

00:02:58

Speaker 1: Yeah, you did a placement. OK, and what was the language that you used during your internship there, both in the internship but also in your daily interactions?

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00:03:24

Speaker 2: Yeah, so the internship was with an originally Dutch NGO in Tanzania, but then we also had Tanzanian colleagues. So the language that I would use, like within the internship, would be Dutch and English mostly and a bit of Kiswahili. And then in daily life, English and Kiswahili.

00:03:49

Speaker 1: OK, great. So think about maybe the language that you use the most other than your mother tongue, which is Dutch, and reflect on how confident you were while interacting in these languages and to what extent you were feeling a bit anxious, let's say.

00:04:25

Speaker 2: I think I was most confident in English because it's a language that-well, my studies were in English and of course, it's more widespread in the Netherlands than Kiswahili. So my level of English is definitely higher. So I felt more confident. But then I think, well, I don't know if I would express it as anxiety, though, but when communicating with people from another culture than your own in English, you can still have some miscommunication. So sometimes I wasn't sure whether I expressed myself sufficiently like- how do you say- good English, I was good enough to make them understand me because of course there was a culture barrier kind of. But then the knowledge that I had of Kiswahili could kind of help me bridge that. Sometimes- so code switching basically, so throwing some words in there as well, and I guess with Kiswahili only my anxiety was bigger. So not in the sense that people were- they were really proud when they found out that I was trying to speak Kiswahili. So they really helped and stuff. So it was not necessarily the people around but more the level of confidence that I had. But I could say that at the beginning, - it was three months- At the beginning, I was really, really self-, self aware, self conscious. And then in the end, I remember that the level of Kiswahili was better also because I decided to use it more there. So you can easily get away with English. But then I tried to use more Swahili and in the end, after the three months, I could have pretty good conversations in Swahili. So I guess that kind of evolved throughout the period of time.

00:06:23

Speaker 1: Yeah, so do you think that the more you interacted in the foreign language, the better you- well not better, but the more the more confident you felt around native speakers of that language?

00:06:39

Speaker 2: Yes, yes, yes. And also more like- even if I would speak in English with them, I

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could still know from their language perspective and culture perspective what would be appropriate or what would be easily understood or maybe difficult to explain.

00:06:58

Speaker 1: And in a case where you would feel a bit stressed around a native speaker, could you maybe identify some reasons why you felt that way? So maybe the fact that you were with a native speaker played a role or any other factor.

00:07:29

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think. It was mostly my own confidence that would make me feel more stressed, so like I said, people were very welcoming when they heard you trying it and they would help you improve it and directing you in a really nice way. **But I think most of the stress that came with it was from my own- from myself, because I just wanted to make sure that I did it right. Also, I think because I wanted to show them that I could do it, you know, so I kind of proved that that that language skills are there.**

00:08:08

Speaker 1: And what about English? So even though you are highly competent in English, if you were in a group with native English speakers, would that make you feel- would that challenge your confidence?

00:08:24

Speaker 2: **It used to, funnily enough, so when I started my bachelors, I came from a Dutch high school and Dutch primary education and I was really- I had a friend and she was British. And whenever I was with her, I felt more insecure about my English** because, well, at that point, I wasn't really confident myself in general. But I guess now, not really anymore. So now I follow English education for about five years and I feel more confident. **However, I must say that within university class environment, so if you're talking about concepts, it's easier for me. But then when you're doing it in the social atmosphere, so outside of the- I find it- I think I am a bit more insecure around native speakers, because that's a place that I don't really know how to use- well, I do, of course, but it's different from the level that I use when speaking about concepts or courses or.**

00:09:28

Speaker 1: Exactly, I understand. So now that we mentioned the context, in which context would you feel the most nervous? So would a formal context, let's say speaking with a supervisor, for example, in the work setting would cause more anxiety in foreign language speaking or with colleagues? What is your opinion regarding that?

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00:10:01

Speaker 2: Do you mean in the language class or in education in general?

00:10:08

Speaker 1: Yeah, right now I'm talking more about the context of your international experience, let's say, in the placement. So you were speaking, you said, English mostly. And Dutch. But right now we're talking about the foreign language. So would you feel more stressed about speaking with colleagues or with supervisors? Yeah, or maybe you would think of a different context. So, for example, during your studies in the foreign language, whether it would be easier for you to express yourself while speaking the foreign language with the lecturer or supervisor or with fellow students.

00:10:58

Speaker 2: Actually, I think it's quite equal to me, so. Yeah. Because the context is international, the teachers often are international as well, as well as the fellow students. So on a language level at least, I feel or I felt not really that it was more difficult for me to discuss with either the colleagues or the teacher.

00:11:35

Speaker 1: OK, so maybe we have already covered that. But could you explain or could you give an example of a relatively big insecurity that you have regarding speaking in a foreign language.

00:11:57

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think in general, speaking is the hard part. The reading, the listening, that's all doable. But then speaking is- you kind of have to step over, you really have to well, just try it and just do it. I think what makes it- I think that's a bit broad, but I think mostly to form like correct sentences, that the grammar is correct, so. Yeah. So of course, it's important that people understand you. That's I feel the basis of the communication anyways. But then, whether it's correct or not, that's kind of what would make you even more-

00:12:52

Speaker 1: that was actually my next question. Whether you feel self-conscious about making mistakes and maybe we could add to that if you feel more stressed when you feel that others are paying attention to what you're saying. So if you feel, say threatened when you speak in the foreign language, and you really pay attention to forming grammatically correct sentences.

00:13:40

Speaker 2: I think for me that's the case. So if people are watching- and often that results in less correct grammar because of the pressure haha.

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00:13:49

Speaker 1: Exactly. Yeah, that's always the case. So, yeah. Do you normally, um. How do I say this? Do you care about the others' opinion about your competency in the foreign language? Yeah, maybe that's a tricky question, I don't know. But for example, I interact with many foreign speakers and many of them really care about what others think about their level of competence in the foreign language. And maybe this also affects their performance in the foreign language. So do you relate to this category?

00:14:45

Speaker 2: Yes, definitely. Yeah.

00:14:49

Speaker 1: Let me see what we haven't covered. I think you mentioned before that the most important part of speaking in a foreign language is making yourself understood. So how would you react if your interlocutor couldn't understand what you were saying?

00:15:12

Speaker 2: You mean how I would change my-

00:15:21

Speaker 1: Not in English, maybe because from what I understood, you really command English in a really high level, but yeah, in Swahili, was it? Yes, great. So if you're speaking to somebody but he or she cannot really understand what you're saying, would you feel exasperated or. Yeah. How would that make you feel? Or maybe the other way around also,

00:16:51

Speaker 2: so how do I experience miscommunication? Right? or I can't make myself understood. Uhm that really depends for me also on how the other person is reacting. Because sometimes people- They can become a bit awkward when you like, when you can't really make it work somehow, but then others, they are really trying to guess a lot, that also stresses me out a bit. So I'm like, just let me think, you know? And then I can find the word that I was looking for. I think people that are just kind of like nodding and just waiting for me, I think then it's fine. But I do feel under pressure then. So I feel like, OK within now and the next 10 seconds I have to say something, whether it's what I want to say or just trying to fill up the silence.

00:17:56

Speaker 1: Yeah. Exactly, you are a bit more flexible from what I understand. Yeah. So you adapt to your interlocutor. So you said that you lived for some time abroad for the internship. So do you think that this has played a role in the way that you experience foreign language

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speaking right now? Has this made you more confident towards foreign language speaking, more flexible?

00:18:32

Speaker 2: foreign language speaking in general or?

00:18:36

Speaker 1: Yeah, or in the languages that you were using in the context of the placement, but also in general.

00:18:49

Speaker 2: Yeah, I guess it does make me more confident, definitely because, of course, you develop the skills while being there, but then also another kind of confidence derives from the fact that you learn a bit more of how to deal with situations where a miscommunication occurs. So the awkward I was just talking about- like maybe in the beginning I would feel more pressure to quickly have a good formulation than otherwise, but then also that's also developing with your language development. So that's also kind of connected for me. But I think it teaches you a lot about also if someone is not really speaking Dutch very well yet, and they try to say something Dutch to me I kind of know how to- not always, but I have learned more ways to deal with that, I think.

00:19:50

Speaker 1: Yeah. So how do you feel about public speaking- in the foreign language, of course. Or for example, giving presentations in the foreign language. Does it cause you extra anxiety or is it the same?

00:20:15

Speaker 2: Definitely! Yeah, I mean, I have to add that I don't like public speaking in general either. So either in Dutch or English, I, I mean, it's OK, but I just really don't like it. I have a Dutch saying for this, it's xxx, which basically means that you kind of feel sick when you're standing for people, which is not the case in my case. But I kind of get really stressed and-anxiety. So yeah, if I have to do that in the foreign language that I don't really know very well, I'm really...

00:20:48

Speaker 1: Yeah, yeah. I totally get this. Let me see if there is something that we haven't covered. Yes, more or less, that's it, but maybe, yeah, could you elaborate on how you feel when you're in a group discussion with native speakers? Would you feel more reluctant to speak, even though you had many things to say, would you feel a bit more reluctant then and stay more silent than- even though you would prefer to express yourself more?

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00:21:34

Speaker 2: Yes, definitely. Also for other languages, I can definitely say that I would feel more reluctant. Because of their judgment also, I think,

00:21:49

Speaker 1: yeah, um, so if there is anything else you could add or maybe any event that caused you anxiety regarding foreign language, now it's the right time to say it, otherwise I think that's the end of the interview.

00:22:12

Speaker 2: Yeah, I can I can maybe add something about my vacations in France, because I go there pretty often. And I remember last year I tried, I was improving my French, then I just followed a lot of courses and I tried to do all the communication in French with the tourists places where we went. Yeah, but the people there often speak English as well. And they were sometimes really reacting, like when I was just trying to make myself clear in French, they would say things like, oh, we can also do it in English if you prefer. And then I would feel like really under a lot of pressure, like, on the one hand, I was kind of annoyed because I felt like I just want to practice it. And on the other hand, I was also like I just felt that pressure like, OK, I have to say it now in French or I should switch to English, because otherwise this man or woman is just- I'm gonna take up too much of their time. So I think that's also something that I experienced every now and then.

00:23:32

Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah, I know the feeling.

00:23:35

Speaker 2: Yeah.

00:23:43

Speaker 1: So I think that's it. Let me just check once more if there's anything else. Yes, I think we have covered everything. Yeah, OK, great, so I will stop the recording and we can continue...

Category found in Data	Coding Color	
Self-perceived proficiency	Dark Red	
Interlocutor's proficiency level in FL/native	Yellow	

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Frequency of FL speaking	Grey	
Time spent abroad/in the host country	Green	
Previous international experience	Turquoise	
Public speaking	Red	
Formality (context)	Pink	
Fear of negative evaluation	Seaweed Green	
Communication failure	Blue	

FLA Survey

Dear participants,

Thank you for participating in this research about **Foreign Language Anxiety as experienced by bi/multilingual and monolingual students during a study abroad experience**, conducted by Olga Effrosynidou and supervised by Dr. Sergio Baauw. This research is carried out in the context of the master thesis in **Intercultural Communication at Utrecht University**.

The research is following the guidelines of the Faculty Ethics assessment Committee - Humanities (FEtC-H). If you wish to submit a complaint about the procedure relating to this study, please contact the FEtC-H secretary, email: fetc-gw@uu.nl, or Utrecht University's privacy officer, email: privacy@uu.nl

Purpose of the research project

The aim of this research is to measure the foreign language anxiety levels as experienced by Utrecht University students during a study abroad experience, and to investigate whether these levels are higher for monolingual students than for their bi/multilingual peers. In order to gain an insight into this, several questions are asked focusing on individual experiences of Utrecht University students (and alumni) with the foreign language during their study abroad experiences.

The duration of the survey will approximately be **10 minutes**.

Voluntary participation, anonymity and data management

The survey is based on your experiences and personal opinions, which means that there are no right or wrong answers. The participation is entirely voluntary. Your answers will be treated confidentially and are completely anonymous. The data gathered during the research will be stored on a secure server of Utrecht University for at least 10 years and then deleted. The results of this survey will be incorporated into the master thesis of the student named below and will be possibly used for further analysis and publication in scientific journals only. The collected and anonymous data will be shared with the supervisors of my master thesis, and researchers or lecturers from Utrecht University.

Further information

For further information on the present research, please contact:

Olga Effrosynidou: o.effrossynidou@students.uu.nl

(Supervisor) Sergio Baauw: S.Baauw@uu.nl

I hereby declare that I voluntarily agree to participate in this research, and I have read the above stated information, by checking the option below:

I agree. (1)

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Please indicate your age:

Please indicate the gender you identify with:

Male (1)

Female (2)

Non-binary / third gender (3)

Prefer not to say (4)

Other: (5) _____

Please indicate whether you are a student or alumni of Utrecht University:

Student (1)

Alumni (2)

Please indicate your country of origin:

Please indicate the country(ies) you were raised in:

Please indicate whether you were raised in a monolingual or bi/multilingual family:

Monolingual (one mother tongue) (1)

Bilingual (two mother tongues) (2)

Multilingual (more than two mother tongues) (3)

Please indicate your mother tongue(s) (=the language(s) that you grew up with at home as a child):

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Do you speak any foreign language?

- No. (1)
- Yes. I speak 1 foreign language. (2)
- Yes. I speak 2 foreign languages. (3)
- Yes. I speak more than 2 foreign languages. (4)

Please indicate your dominant language(s) (=the language(s) with which you have greatest proficiency and/or use more often):

Choose the option which best describes your most recent international study experience.

- I came to the Netherlands from abroad to obtain a full BA/MA degree at UU. (1)
- I am an Erasmus student at UU. (2)
- I participated in an Erasmus study exchange in the past. (3)
- Other. Please specify: (4) _____

Please indicate the duration (in months) of this international experience (can be ongoing):

Which is/was the (main) language of instruction in your study program (=the language used the more often during lectures)?

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How often do/did you use this language (previously selected) during your study abroad experience?

- Daily (1)
 - 4-6 times a week (2)
 - 2-3 times a week (3)
 - Once a week (4)
 - Never (5)
-

Please indicate your level of proficiency in this language:

- No Proficiency (1)
 - Elementary Proficiency (2)
 - Limited Working Proficiency (3)
 - Professional Working Proficiency (4)
 - Full Professional Proficiency (5)
 - Native / Bilingual Proficiency (6)
-

Have you participated in more than one international experiences?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Block If Have you participated in more than one international experiences? = No

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Please indicate the total duration of all your international experiences until now (in months):

In the following section you will be asked to answer some questions regarding your experience with the foreign language (=language of instruction used in your study program) during your stay in the

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foreign country. In order to answer, please reflect on your feelings in each of the contexts described below.

During my study abroad experience...

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	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I feel nervous when I can't write or express myself in the foreign language. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get anxious when there are too many foreign language students registered in my class. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious when I see classmates better than me in the foreign language. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get anxious when I feel that I can't speak well in front of other foreign language speakers. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel nervous when talking in the foreign language to someone I just met. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I fear pronouncing words incorrectly in the foreign language. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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I feel low self-confidence about speaking the foreign language in front of my class. (7)	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel anxious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students. (8)	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel nervous when I am around more experienced foreign language users. (9)	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel nervous when standing to give a presentation in the foreign language in front of the class. (10)	<input type="radio"/>				

In a scale from 1 (not at all anxious) to 5 (extremely anxious) please fill in the circles according to how anxious you feel when you speak the foreign language (=language of instruction in your study program abroad) in the following situations.

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	1 (Not at all anxious) (1)	2 (Slightly anxious) (2)	3 (Moderately anxious) (3)	4 (Very anxious) (4)	5 (Extremely anxious) (5)
Talking to administrative staff of my University. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking part in a conversation out of class with more than one native speaker of the foreign language. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Starting a conversation out of class with a friend or colleague who is a native speaker of the foreign language. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A lecturer/supervisor in my university faculty asks me questions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking for advice from a lecturer/supervisor in my faculty. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Finally, please describe one particular situation when you felt anxious during your interaction with foreign language speakers in the context of your study exchange and explain why you were stressed. It can be either an in-class or out-of-class incident.

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Appendix E: FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986)

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English 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 English 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 English 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 classes.
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.

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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.

Interview

Letter of Consent & Consent Form

Information about participation in

Study of Foreign Language Anxiety Experienced by Bi/Multilingual and Monolingual Students During a Study Abroad Experience

1. Introduction

With this letter, I would like to ask your consent for participating in a scientific study that aims to shed light on foreign language anxiety as experienced by students during a study abroad experience. The study will investigate whether bi/multilingual students feel more comfortable and have increased self-confidence when they are in a foreign language speaking environment compared to their monolingual peers. The study will consist of an online interview. Participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study at any moment during the interview. Please send an email for any further questions or inquiries to:

researcher: o.effrossynidou@students.uu.nl

supervisor: s.baauw@uu.nl

2. What is the background and purpose of the study?

The research will take place in the context of my master's thesis in the field of Intercultural Communication at Utrecht University. The aim of the present research is to measure the foreign language anxiety levels as experienced by Utrecht University students during a study abroad experience and to investigate whether these levels are higher for monolingual students than for their bi/multilingual peers.

3. How will the study be carried out?

For this research, interviews with both monolingual and bi/multilingual students with a study abroad experience will take place. The interview will be conducted online via a video call (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams etc.). The interview will be (audio) recorded and later transcribed and analyzed for the purpose of this research.

4. What is expected of you?

As a participant in this study, you are expected to take part in the interview. You do not have to prepare anything for that. The interview will take place at a time and date that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

5. What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of participating in this study?

Potential advantages:

You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. However, the study may provide useful insight into the major sources of foreign language anxiety.

Potential disadvantages:

- You need to invest approximately 30 minutes of your time;
- You may be asked to share personal experiences or opinions as part of a naturally occurring conversation.

6. Voluntary participation

The participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from participation in the study at any time without giving a reason. In addition, as a participant, you can also withdraw your consent at any time. If you choose to do so, your research data will not be included in the analysis. However, it should be noted that it is impossible to delete your research data if it has already been analyzed.

7. For what purpose will the data collected be used?

Data will be collected during your participation in the study. The interview will be conducted online via a video call (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams etc.). The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed and analyzed for the purpose of this research. These data are given a code that can only be traced back to the participant with a key. This means that the research data are encrypted. The encrypted research data may be shared with and/or reused by other scientists, possibly to answer other research questions. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the recordings and the key of the encrypted data. The key that can be used to trace encrypted data back to the participant personally will be destroyed as soon as possible. We are obliged to store the encrypted research data for at least 10 years. You are consenting to this if you are participating in this study. If you do not agree to this, you will not be able to participate in this study. Your data will be stored and kept on a server secured by Utrecht University.

8. Is any reimbursement provided for your participation in the study?

No reimbursement is provided.

9. Approval of this study

This study is following the guidelines by The Faculty Ethics assessment Committee - Humanities (FEtC-H). If you wish to submit a complaint about the procedure relating to this study, please contact the FEtC-H secretary, email: fetc-gw@uu.nl, or Utrecht University's privacy officer, email: [privacy@uu](mailto:privacy@uu.nl).

10. More information about this study?

If you have any further questions about this research or would like to receive more information, please contact the researcher through the email address or telephone number stated below:

Olga Effrosynidou o.effrossynidou@students.uu.nl +306946193989

11. Appendix:

In the Appendix you can find the declaration of consent.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT for participation in:

Study of Foreign Language Anxiety Experienced by Bi/Multilingual and Monolingual Students During a Study Abroad Experience

I confirm:

- that I have been satisfactorily informed about the study via the information letter;
- that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and that any questions I may have asked have been satisfactorily answered;
- that I have had the opportunity to carefully consider my participation in this study;
- that I am voluntarily participating.

I agree that:

- the data collected will be obtained for scientific purposes and retained as stated in the information letter;
- the collected, encrypted research data may be shared with and/or reused by other scientists, possibly to answer other research questions;
- audio recordings may also be made for scientific purposes.
(See the box below for the sharing and reuse of this data.)

I understand that:

- I have the right to withdraw my consent for the use of data, as stated in the information letter.

Name participant: _____

Date of birth: ___ / ___ / ___ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Signature: _____

Date, place: ___ / ___ / ___, _____

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Declaration on data reuse **to be completed after the data collection has taken place**

(please tick the appropriate boxes and sign at the bottom):

(1) Do you agree that the collected audio recordings can be shared with other researchers for research purposes?

Yes, I agree.

No, I do not agree.

(2) Sometimes, image recordings are also shown in scientific lectures or lessons. Do you agree that the recordings created can be used for these purposes?

Yes, I agree.

No, I do not agree.

Signature: _____

To be completed by the researcher with ultimate responsibility:

Name: Olga Effrosynidou

I declare that I have explained to the above person
what participation involves.

Date: dd / mm/ 2021

Signature: _____