

## AFRAID TO TALK? EXPLORING ARABIC SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify the levels and influencing factors of foreign language anxiety in Arabic Language learning among students at Tribakti of Islamic University. The study involved 73 participants and employed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) developed by Horwitz et al. as the main instrument. The findings reveal that most learners experience mild levels of anxiety, while others report moderate to high anxiety levels. These results align with the perspectives of Krashen, Horwitz, MacIntyre, and Liu, who emphasize that anxiety is a key affective variable that can hinder input comprehension, affect language processing, and reduce learners' confidence, particularly in speaking. This study enriches the literature on foreign language anxiety within the context of Arabic language learning, an area still less explored compared to other foreign languages. Additionally, it offers practical recommendations for educators, encouraging the adaptation of emotionally supportive teaching approaches, including anxiety-reduction strategies and confidence-building interventions to enhance learning outcomes.

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### Keywords:

Arabic Language Learning; Foreign Language Anxiety; Speaking Skill.

### ملخص

تهدف هذا الدراسة إلى تحديد مستويات القلق والعوامل المؤثرة في طلبة الجامعة الإسلامية تري باكتي لربايا أثناء تعلّم اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية، وذلك باستخدام مقيس القلق من اللغة الأجنبية في الفصل الدراسي الذي طوره هورويتز وآخرون. وقد شارك في تحديد نتائجها ٧٣ طالباً. وتبيّن أن معظم المتعلمين يعانون من قلق خفيف، بينما أظهر آخرون مستويات قلق متوسطة إلى عالية. وتتوافق هذه النتائج مع وجهات نظر كراشن، هورويتز، ماكنتاير، ليو الذين يؤكدون أن القلق هو متغير عاطفي رئيسي يمكن أن يعيق فهم المدخلات، ويؤثر على معالجة اللغة، ويقلل من ثقة المتعلمين، خاصة أثناء التحدث، وعليه فإن هذه الدراسة تركز على الأدبيات المتعلقة بالقلق من اللغة الأجنبية في سياق تعلّم اللغة العربية، وهو مجال لا يزال أقل استكشافاً مقارنة باللغات الأجنبية الأخرى. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقدم الدراسة توصيات عملية للمعلمين، تشجعهم على اعتماد مناهج تعليمية داعمة عاطفياً، بما في ذلك اقتراح استراتيجيات جديدة للحد من القلق وتعزيز بناء الثقة عند المتعلمين من أجل تحقيق نتائج أفضل.

كلمات أساسية: تعلم اللغة العربية؛ القلق من اللغة الأجنبية؛ مهارة الكلام.

## Introduction

Learning a foreign language requires learners to master various skills, including Arabic. In the process of acquiring Arabic, there are four main skills that must be mastered: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.<sup>1</sup> Among these four, speaking is considered the most important in communication, but it is also an anxiety-provoking skill.<sup>2</sup> Individuals rely on communication to articulate their thoughts and share information. Through speaking, they transmit messages to others, shaping their expressions in ways that align with their personal intention and communication goals.<sup>3</sup> As a result, speaking ability is viewed as the most essential aspect of language proficiency and plays a central role in the overall process of language learning.<sup>4</sup> This aligns with Nunan's statement, which explains that the success of a language teaching and learning process can be measured by the learner's ability to communicate orally in the target language.<sup>5</sup>

Despite studying Arabic for many years, many students still do not attain a satisfactory level of proficiency in speaking skills.<sup>6</sup> This statement is supported by Masyitoh's findings, which show that 70% of students have not yet been able to master speaking skills well.<sup>7</sup> To achieve the goals of language learning, speaking skills face several challenges, both internal and external.<sup>8</sup> Internally, learning to speak makes them feel anxious. They may be reluctant to use the target language because they are afraid of making mistakes.<sup>9</sup> Students may feel uncomfortable

<sup>1</sup> Harun Baharudin and Wan Muhammad Radzi Wan Anuar, "Humor Practises Of Arabic Teachers And Speaking Anxiety," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 6, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v6i3.23359>.

<sup>2</sup> Gaya Tridinanti, "The Correlation between Speaking Anxiety, Self-Confidence, and Speaking Achievement of Undergraduate EFL Students of Private University in Palembang," *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies* 6, no. 4 (2018): 35, <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.6n.4p.35>; Vahid Rafieyan, "Discovering Factors of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety and Coping Strategies," *Journal for the Study of English Linguistics* 4, no. 1 (2016): 111, <https://doi.org/10.5296/jsel.v4i1.9668>.

<sup>3</sup> Zanyar Nathir Ghafar and Bareq Raad Raheem, "Factors Affecting Speaking Proficiency in English Language Learning: A General Overview of the Speaking Skill," *Journal of Social Science (JoSS)* 2, no. 6 (2023): 507–18, <https://doi.org/10.57185/joss.v2i6.107>.

<sup>4</sup> Nor Hadisah Mohamed Shalikin and Mohammad Taufiq Abdul Ghani, "Strategies For Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency Among Students In Government-Aided Religious Schools In Malaysia," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 8, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v8i2.31308>.

<sup>5</sup> David Nunan, *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers* (Prentice Hall, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Uril Bahrudin and Zulfi Mubaraq, "Obstacles to Learning Speaking Skills among Non-Arabic Speaking Learners in Indonesia," *IJ-ATL (International Journal of Arabic Teaching and Learning)* 7, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.33650/ijat.v7i1.4570>.

<sup>7</sup> Masyitoh Yaacob and Kaseh Abu Bakar, "Student-Centered Teaching Approach Combined with Coaching and Mentoring Elements in Arabic Language Speaking Proficiency," *OALib* 05, no. 06 (2018): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1104684>.

<sup>8</sup> Sugirma Sugirma et al., "Analysis of Speaking Skill Learning Difficulties in Students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program at State Islamic Institute," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (2024): 579–96, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.10903>.

<sup>9</sup> Hameed Gannoun and Farhana Diana Deris, "Teaching Anxiety in Foreign Language Classroom: A Review of Literature," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, ahead of print, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4432859>.

speaking in a second language because they are not using the communication tool they are familiar with. When this situation occurs repeatedly, students eventually begin to experience anxiety when speaking in the second language. Other contributing factors also play an important role in triggering foreign language anxiety. These factors are connected to interpersonal dynamics and personal characteristics, such as fear of speaking a foreign language, low self-perceived language ability, and low self-confidence. Liu and Jackson further emphasize that the fear of making mistakes, teachers' correction of learners' errors, and speaking in front of teachers or peers are significant triggers of foreign language anxiety.<sup>10</sup>

Anxiety is part of the affective domain, emphasizing the emotional aspects of human behaviour, and is closely connected to individuals' lived experiences.<sup>11</sup> In psychology, anxiety is described as a personal experience of tension, uneasiness, nervousness, and concern that arises alongside heightened activity in the autonomic nervous system.<sup>12</sup> Anxiety can be defined as an individual's inability to adjust emotionally to reality, characterized by feelings of insecurity, emotional immaturity, difficulty in coping with environmental pressures, and tension in daily life.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, MacIntyre describes language anxiety as an emotional condition characterized by feelings of pressure, nervousness, worry, and other affective responses that arise during the process of learning a second or foreign language.<sup>14</sup>

Horwitz et al. describe foreign language anxiety as a distinct and multifaceted phenomenon involving learners' self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors that emerge specifically within the context of the language learning classroom and stem from the distinctive nature of the language acquisition process.<sup>15</sup> They significantly advanced the theoretical and measurement framework of language learning anxiety. They proposed that anxiety in this context consists of three key

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<sup>10</sup> Asta Lileikienė and Lina Danilevičienė, "Foreign Language Anxiety In Student Learning," *Baltic Journal of Sport and Health Sciences* 3, no. 102 (2016): 18–23, <https://doi.org/10.33607/bjshs.v3i102.61>; Ibrahim Naser Oteir and Abdullah Nijr Al-Otaibi, "Foreign Language Anxiety: A Systematic Review," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, ahead of print, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3466022>.

<sup>11</sup> Shokhan Kawa, "Strategies for Reducing Anxiety in Language Learning: Measuring the Effective Techniques for Managing Anxiety in the Language Learning Process," *OTS Canadian Journal* 2, no. 3 (2023): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.58840/ots.v2i3.15>.

<sup>12</sup> Zhitong Shi and Runhan Zhang, "Investigating Chinese University-Level L2 Learners' Foreign Language Anxiety in Online English Classes," *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics* 13, no. 01 (2023): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2023.131001>.

<sup>13</sup> Evita Aulia Nur Rohmah and Iman Santoso, "Analysis of Student's Coping Strategies in German Language Learning Anxiety at Senior High School 3 Yogyakarta," *International Journal of Pedagogical Language, Literature, and Cultural Studies (i-Plural)* 2, no. 3 (2025): 204–11, <https://doi.org/10.63011/ip.v2i3.42>.

<sup>14</sup> Peter MacIntyre and Tammy Gregersen, "Affect: The Role of Language Anxiety and Other Emotions in Language Learning," in *Psychology for Language Learning* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137032829\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137032829_8).

<sup>15</sup> Elaine K. Horwitz et al., "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety," *The Modern Language Journal* 70, no. 2 (1986): 125–32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>.

dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, Krashen explains that learners with low self-esteem tend to experience higher levels of anxiety compared to those with stronger self-esteem. This occurs because they are more concerned about how they are perceived by their peers.<sup>17</sup> Anxiety can manifest through various outward indicators, including hesitation, disrupted speech, sweating, rapid heartbeat, confusion, and overall tension, which may lead to inconsistent verbal expression. In certain situations, individuals may appear uncertain, tremble, struggle to speak, or even experience partial psychological and physical inhibition.<sup>18</sup>

A range of approaches – including peer assistance, encouraging feedback, and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere – has been proven effective in reducing speaking anxiety and enhancing learners' performance.<sup>19</sup> Hembre also proposed three approaches: a cognitive approach that emphasizes improving thought patterns, an affective approach that focuses on reducing negative emotional responses through relaxation and desensitization, and a behavioral approach that highlights enhancing learning skills to reduce anxiety.<sup>20</sup>

Several previous studies have examined foreign language anxiety in various contexts, such as the level of student anxiety in Arabic speaking skills (Shaharuddin, et al.)<sup>21</sup>, the relationship between oral language anxiety and students' Arabic language learning outcomes in Malaysian secondary schools (Ismail et al.)<sup>22</sup>, and the influence of self-efficacy on Arabic public speaking anxiety

<sup>16</sup> Şengül Balkaya et al., "Students' Foreign-Language Classroom Anxiety at the Department of German Language Teaching Program (a Sample from Anadolu University)," *Alman Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi - Studien Zur Deutschen Sprache Und Literatur*, no. 44 (December 2020), <https://doi.org/10.26650/sdsl2020-0019>.

<sup>17</sup> Bulbul Hajjiyeva, "Language Anxiety in ESL Learners: Causes, Effects, and Mitigation Strategies," *EuroGlobal Journal of Linguistics and Language Education* 1, no. 1 (2024): 119–33, <https://doi.org/10.69760/pn9wgv05>.

<sup>18</sup> Ehab Saleh Alnuzaili and Nasir Uddin, "Dealing with Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning Classroom," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 11, no. 2 (2020): 269, <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1102.15>.

<sup>19</sup> Osman Özdemir and Hümset Seçkin, "Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Higher Education: Multifaceted Insights into Causes, Impacts, and Coping Strategies," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (2025): 101364, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101364>.

<sup>20</sup> Soo Jeong Youn and Luana Marques, "Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies to Manage Anxiety," *Psychiatric Annals* 51, no. 5 (2021): 207–8, <https://doi.org/10.3928/00485713-20210409-04>.

<sup>21</sup> Hanis Najwa Shaharuddin et al., "The Level of Student Anxiety in Arabic Speaking Skills," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* VIII, no. VIII (2024): 2563–71, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8080195>.

<sup>22</sup> Zawawi Ismail et al., "Relationship Between Oral Language Anxiety and Students' Arabic Language Learning Outcomes in Malaysian Secondary Schools," *International Journal of Language Education* 1, no. 1 (2023): 143, <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v1i1.37368>.

(Tafriha and Hasan).<sup>23</sup> Although speaking anxiety in foreign language learning has been widely examined, no studies have specifically focused on learners from Islamic boarding schools. This group has distinctive educational and cultural backgrounds that uniquely influence their language anxiety. Therefore, this study fills the gaps by investigating Arabic-speaking anxiety among Tribakti University students who come from pesantren environments.

Although speaking anxiety in language learning, such as in English and German, has frequently been examined, further investigation remains essential, as this phenomenon continues to evolve alongside changes in educational context, learner characteristics, and instructional methods. Each learning environment possesses unique psychological and cultural dynamics, which highlights the need for new research specifically within the Tribakti University setting. By identifying the level of Arabic language anxiety and the factors influencing it among students at University Islam Tribakti, Lirboyo, Kediri this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of language anxiety research while providing an empirical basis for developing more adaptive and supportive teaching strategies. Thus, this study not only fills an academic gap but also holds practical relevance for updating theoretical understanding and offering pedagogical interventions that better align with the needs of today's learners.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. The descriptive design was appropriate for this research since it describes the factors that cause the students' speaking anxiety at the Islamic University of Tribakti. The participants for this study were students of Tribakti Islamic University, Lirboyo, Kediri, specifically those enrolled in Arabic language courses during the 2023/2024 academic year. A total of 73 students participated, selected through convenience (opportunity) sampling, meaning that participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to take part in the study.<sup>24</sup> The limitation of using the convenience sampling method lies in its lack of representativeness of the overall population. Since participants are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate, the results may not be generalizable to all students within the university or similar contexts. Nevertheless, this method remains relevant for preliminary research aiming to provide a practical and contextual snapshot of the phenomenon under investigation.

<sup>23</sup> Intiha Bima Tafriha and Moh. Abdul Kholiq Hasan, "The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Arabic Public Speaking Anxiety," *ATHLA : Journal of Arabic Teaching, Linguistic and Literature* 5, no. 1 (2024): 16–27, <https://doi.org/10.22515/athla.v5i1.9428>.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel J. Stratton, "Population Research: Convenience Sampling Strategies," *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 36, no. 4 (2021): 373–74, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X21000649>; Suparlan Suparlan, "Factors Contributing Students' Speaking Anxiety," *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching* 9, no. 2 (2021): 160, <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v9i2.3321>.



The present study assessed the degree and sources of foreign language classroom anxiety using the Foreign language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) developed by Horwitz.<sup>25</sup> This 33-item instrument evaluates learners' anxiety levels in foreign language classes using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This tool consists of 33 statements prompting participants to indicate their reactions to situations involving anxiety in foreign language learning. These items represent the three dimensions of language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

## Result and Discussion

The result of the study revealed that anxiety in Arabic language learning was mainly related to communicative situation, evaluative pressure, and learners' self-perceptions in the classroom. The questionnaire items reveal recurring emotional reactions such as nervousness when speaking spontaneously, fear of making mistakes, concern about being negatively evaluated by teachers or peers, and discomfort when failing to fully understand instructional input. These patterns indicate that the anxiety experienced by students is not merely situational but is deeply tied to classroom interactions, oral performance demands, and comparisons with peers. To capture these dimensions systematically, the following table presents the individual items of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS), which serve as the basis for identifying key anxiety triggers and interpreting learners' affective response within the instructional context.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire of FLACS<sup>26</sup>

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

<sup>25</sup> Horwitz et al., "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety."

<sup>26</sup> Horwitz et al., "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety."

Item	Questionnaire item of FLACS
(15)	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
(16)	Even if I am well prepared for languages 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 pleasure to prepare very well for language class.
(23)	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
(24)	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
(25)	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
(26)	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
(27)	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
(28)	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
(29)	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
(30)	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
(31)	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
(32)	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
(33)	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) used in this study is organized around two main indicators. First, Communicative Mastery, which reflects learners' confidence and ability in using the target language, comprises items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, and 32. Second, Negative Response, which captures learners' emotional reactions such as fear, tension, and apprehension, includes items 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, and 33.

These two indicators provide a comprehensive framework for identifying the sources, patterns, and intensity of the students' foreign language anxiety. The present study analyzed the responses of 73 participants to determine their overall anxiety levels as well as to examine how communicative challenges and negative emotional reactions contribute to their experience of anxiety in Arabic Language Learning. The table below shows the level of the foreign language classroom anxiety scale.

**Table 2.** Classification of Foreign language Anxiety Levels Based on FLACS Score Range

Range	Level
Very anxious	141-165
Anxious	114-140
Midly anxious	87-113
Relaxed	60-86
Very relaxed	33-59

**Table 3.** Individual Participants' FLACS Score and Corresponding Anxiety Levels

Participan	Result	Level	Participan	Result	Level
1	97	midly anxious	13	122	midly anxious
2	106	midly anxious	14	124	relaxed
3	121	midly anxious	15	121	midly anxious
4	120	midly anxious	16	103	midly anxious
5	120	midly anxious	17	139	midly anxious
6	102	midly anxious	18	111	midly anxious
7	79	anxious	19	109	midly anxious
8	150	midly anxious	20	109	midly anxious
9	121	midly anxious	21	111	relaxed
10	96	midly anxious	22	99	midly anxious
11	109	midly anxious	23	118	midly anxious
12	95	anxious			

The findings of this study reveal a clear distribution of anxiety levels among the 73 participants. Specifically, 1.4% of students were categorized as highly anxious, 23.3% as anxious, 65.8% as mildly anxious, 6.8% as not anxious, and none were classified as very relaxed. This distribution indicates that the majority of students experience anxiety at a low to moderate level, while a smaller but significant portion encounter more intense anxiety during foreign language learning, particularly in Arabic. These results align closely with foundational theories on language anxiety.

Horwitz's conceptualization of foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) provides an essential framework for interpreting these findings. According to Horwitz, FLA arises from communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety – three components that are consistent with the general profile of respondents in this study.<sup>27</sup> The presence of 17 students falling into the anxious categories suggests that interpersonal pressure and evaluative classroom situations may heighten emotional tension. This corresponds with Horwitz's argument that the classroom setting often triggers self-doubt and fear of judgment.

Krahen's affective filter Hypothesis helps explain why the majority of students (48 participants) fall into the mildly anxious category. Krashen posits that affective factors such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety regulate the extent to which comprehensible input is absorbed. Mild anxiety, while not debilitating, still raises the affective filter, potentially reducing the efficiency of language intake and slowing acquisition. This pattern may reflect students' struggles to maintain confidence in performing linguistic tasks in Arabic, a language often perceived as structurally complex for non-native speakers.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Elaine Horwitz, "Language Anxiety and Achievement," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 21 (January 2001): 112–26, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190501000071>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibrahim Abukhattala, "Krashen's Five Proposals on Language Learning: Are They Valid in Libyan EFL Classes," *English Language Teaching* 6, no. 1 (2012): p128, <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n1p128>.



Furthermore, MacIntyre work on the dynamic role of anxiety in the L2 learning process supports the observation that anxious students may experience declines in cognitive processing, particularly during speaking tasks.<sup>29</sup> MacIntyre emphasizes that anxiety interferes with all stages of language use: input, processing, and output. Students in the “anxious” and “highly anxious” categories may therefore struggle with concentration, lexical retrieval, and fluency, which could reduce class participation and performance.

The results are further supported by Liu’s study on Chinese EFL learners, which found that classroom speaking tasks generate substantial anxiety due to fear of making mistakes and negative peer evaluation.<sup>30</sup> The large proportion of mildly anxious students in the study suggests a similar pattern: learners may possess adequate competence yet still experience tension when required to speak Arabic in front of others. As Liu highlights, learners’ self-perception of proficiency strongly shapes their emotional response during performance.

Moreover, the fluctuation between anxiety and positive emotions is consistent with Dewalee and MacIntyre’s work on the dual roles of Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Enjoyment. They argue that learners often experience both simultaneously, and that anxiety does not necessarily exclude the presence of engagement or motivation. In the present study, the dominance of mild anxiety suggests that many students may still engage actively with learning tasks despite experiencing emotional tension, reflecting this dynamic interplay between discomfort and persistence.

Overall, the findings indicate that while most students experience manageable anxiety, a meaningful subgroup faces emotional barriers. It reinforces the perspective shared across Krashen, Horwitz, MacIntyre, Liu, and Dewalee that anxiety is a pervasive, multifaceted construct that significantly shapes learners’ cognitive processing, communicative behavior, and overall language learning trajectory – particularly in demanding oral communication contexts.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that foreign language anxiety remains a significant factor influencing Arabic language learning among university students, with most participants experiencing mild anxiety and a smaller portion facing moderate to high anxiety levels. These results reaffirm the perspective of Krashen, Horwitz, MacIntyre, and Liu, who argue that anxiety is a crucial affective variable capable of impeding input comprehension, affecting language processing, and

<sup>29</sup> Peter D. MacIntyre et al., “Language Teachers’ Coping Strategies during the Covid-19 Conversion to Online Teaching: Correlations with Stress, Wellbeing and Negative Emotions,” *System* 94 (November 2020): 102352, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102352>.

<sup>30</sup> Meihua Liu and Bin Wu, “Teaching Anxiety and Foreign Language Anxiety Among Chinese College English Teachers,” *Sage Open* 11, no. 2 (2021): 21582440211016556, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211016556>.

lowering learners' confidence in language production, particularly in speaking skills. Thus, this study highlights the need for pedagogical strategies that are more responsive to learners' affective needs to ensure a more effective and supportive language acquisition process.

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## Author Contribution Statement

All authors contributed significantly to the completion of this research. SA and HG was primarily responsible for conceptualizing the study, designing the research framework, and preparing the initial draft of the manuscript. MHB and MM contributed to data collection, statistical analysis, and interpretation of findings. ATM and ZZE provided critical revisions, theoretical insights, and refinement of the discussion section to enhance academic rigor. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. Furthermore, all authors have contributed equally to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this manuscript. The research was conducted independently, without any external influence from funding bodies or institutional pressures. The integrity, originality, and academic objectivity of this work were maintained throughout the research process.

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