



Original Article

Development and Initial Validation of Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS)

Forough Mahigir^{1,}*

¹ Department of Counseling and psychology, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

The study attempts to investigate the nature of foreign language for developing an instrument to measure anxiety of foreign language for use with high school students in Iran. By using the four domains of foreign language, a preliminary 35-item questionnaire was developed and tested based on high school students. The Participants for factor analysis were 350 teachers, representing 14 schools in Ahvaz. These samples were cluster randomly selected and grouped based on their sex, age, academic levels, the status of the school, etc. The survey instrument used in this study for the validity of the scale is Multifactor Language Questionnaire -FLA (Horwitz et al., 1986). The properties of reliability and validity have borne significant results which show this instrument can be considered suitable to determine the position of foreign language in high school students. Factor analysis was made from which 24 items were extracted which had a factor loading of >0.5 on the four domains. Analysis of data in this study supported the inclusion of four factors namely foreign test anxiety, foreign writing anxiety, foreign teacher anxiety, and foreign pronunciation anxiety. These findings are discussed together with recommendations for upcoming studies.

Keywords: Development of Scale, Foreign Language, Factor Analysis, High School Students, Validation of Scale



1. Introduction

Fear and anxiety have been recognized and analyzed as an inevitable consequent part of the human experience and confrontation since early historical times (Spielberger, 1972). The concept of anxiety as a normal response to adversity or threat of adversity is not new. In antiquity, anxiety had been recognized with the general state of uneasiness or troubled mind, turned into a descriptive category for feelings of fearfulness accompanied by physical symptoms such as tightness in the chest in the 17th century (Horwitz et al., 1993). There is a broad range of normal anxiety that is considered to be healthy under normal circumstances. Pathological anxiety is characterized by excessiveness, pervasiveness, and uncontrollability. Anxiety has three components: (1) identification of potential threat or harm, (2) the psychological features of alarm, dread, or fear, and (3) the physiological response that includes autonomic discharge and motor activity.

According to Spielberger (1972), anxiety is frequently applied indiscriminately. Anxiety is commonly used to describe a transitory state or condition that varies in magnitude and fluctuates over time. Anxiety is also used to characterize a personality trait that refers to individual differences in a predisposition toward anxiety states. He differentiated between anxiety as a transient state and anxiety as an essentially stable trait. He has proposed two anxiety constructs: state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety has been defined as an emotional condition that changes in intensity and duration, and is characterized by subjective feelings of apprehension, nervousness, and worry. The degree of state anxiety is believed to increase in situations that are perceived to be threatening to an individual. Trait anxiety is an analysis of data that demonstrates 6% of men and 13% of women in the United States have symptoms of anxiety disorder in any six months. Comorbidity studies demonstrate that 75% of these individuals also have at least one other co-morbid psychiatric condition such as depression and/or substance abuse. Anxiety disorders are also prevalent among other societies and cross-ethnic boundaries.

Considerable attention has been paid to the effect of anxiety upon performance. Although the relationship between anxiety and performance has been examined over many years, a conclusive explanation still does not exist as to the typical effect of this association (Schwarzer, 1994). They have noted that performance of anxiety can be exhibited as *general anxiety*. Test anxiety, social anxiety, or a domain-specific response, which includes both anxieties toward a particular course like foreign language and activities such as sports after

the prominent types of anxiety. Anxiety and performance may have a positive correlation that serves as a facilitating factor or may have a negative correlation that causes a consequential deleterious effect on performance. The sensation tends to be viewed as a facilitating factor when coping with a situation. At other times, perceptions of anxiety may have a paralyzing effect on individuals, thereby serving as a debilitating factor. Concerning the association between anxiety and academic performance.

Foreign Language Anxiety: The existence of a type of anxiety specific to the language learning process is accepted as an important matter because it can represent an emotionally and physically uncomfortable experience for some students. The term Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) or Language Anxiety (LA) was coined by Horwitz et al. (1986). They formulated a theory of an anxiety type specific to the language learning situation. They defined LA as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). To measure anxiety and to see whether a high level of anxiety hinders language learning, they developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which served as a starting point for the development of language and culture-specific anxiety scales (i.e., the Arabic foreign language anxiety questionnaire), as well as scales that would measure specific linguistic skills (i.e., the foreign language reading anxiety scale and the second language writing anxiety scale). Horwitz et al. integrated three related anxieties in their conceptualization of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension (i.e., the fear of communicating with other people), test anxiety (i.e., the fear of exams, quizzes, and other assignments used to evaluate students’ performance), and fear of negative evaluation (i.e., the worry about how others view the speaker), and concluded that anxiety could take place in any setting related to language performance.

Foreign language anxiety is a form of what psychologists describe as a specific anxiety reaction. Some individuals are more predisposed to anxiety than others and may feel anxious in a wide variety of situations (Al-Saraj, 2014). Foreign language anxiety, however, is situation-specific and so it can also affect individuals who are not characteristically anxious in other situations. The main causes of foreign language anxiety are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. There is also a psychological component to foreign language anxiety.

An example of when foreign language anxiety may occur would be in a classroom. The causes of foreign language anxiety have been broadly separated into three main components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is the anxiety experienced when speaking or listening to other individuals. Test anxiety is a form of performance anxiety, that is associated with the fear of doing badly or failing altogether. Fear of negative evaluation is the anxiety associated with the learner's perception of how other onlookers (e.g., instructors, classmates, or others) may negatively view their language ability. These three factors cause an increase in an individual's anxiety levels as well as a decrease in self-efficacy. Foreign language anxiety, however, is situation-specific and so it can also affect individuals who are not characteristically anxious in other situations. The main causes of foreign language anxiety are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. There is also a psychological component to foreign language anxiety (Tran et al., 2013).

To measure FLA in classrooms, Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Although some researchers have questioned its construct validity (Sparks and Ganschow, 2007), the FLCAS has been recognized as a reliable tool to examine FLA in classrooms (Young, 1994). Many studies have applied the FLCAS to analyze students' anxiety about foreign language learning in classroom situations (Arnaiz and Guillen 2012; Dewaele 2013; Yashima 2002). Horwitz et al. (1986) noted that the FLCAS was designed based on the academic performance evaluation of students. They pointed out three performance anxieties: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Several researchers reported that exploratory factor analyses of FLCAS data in studies with various student populations have constantly produced the three factors (Arnaiz and Guillen 2012); however, it should be noted that some others documented a different number of underlying components of the FLCAS.

Park (2014) recently presented three reasons for the different latent constructs found in the FLCAS. The first reason concerns limited explanation by the scale developers (Park 2014). Horwitz et al. (1986) did not specify the underlying constituents of the FLCAS or present which items among the 33 statements, relate to which three constructs. As a result, researchers have misinterpreted the constructs of the scale (Park 2014). The second point is a methodological issue. Most researchers have simply applied exploratory factor analysis, possibly leading them to make room for subjective evaluations in the factor rotation and the

naming of extracted factors (Park 2014). This argument articulates the need to affirm the underlying components of the FLCAS by using confirmatory factor analysis to check the construct validity. Additionally, Park (2014) pointed out that the use of orthogonal rotation techniques like varimax should be reconsidered because those rotation methods assume that components of the measure are independent of each other. It has been suggested that the methods of oblique rotation should be employed for the analysis of the FLCAS. The third reason corresponds to various translated versions of the FLCAS. The FLCAS was developed in English and has been translated into various native languages for participants to understand the scale; the validity of the measure might vary with different cultures. Park view is in line with Horwitz's (2016) comment on the Park study. This scale was designed to measure anxieties based on American culture with English-speaking participants that may be different from those in other cultural backgrounds (Horwitz, 2016). It is recommended that the FLCAS measure be investigated in different cultures because a different factor structure might be discovered (Horwitz, 2016).

Despite the abundance of research exploring the dimension of Language in industrial countries, relatively little attention has been paid in other countries (Mostafa et al., 2015). The current study proposes to investigate the various dimensions of Foreign Language and is aimed towards eliciting Foreign Language in a group of school teachers in Iran. Transformation Language (Ariyanti, 2016) contains four dimensions. First, foreign test anxiety describes leaders who act as role models and cultivate trust and respect in their followers. The second dimension, foreign writing anxiety mentions leaders who share a vision, set high-performance standards, and inspire others to achieve beyond their expectations. Third, leaders who promote others' development and challenge them to think for themselves are displaying behaviors associated with foreign teacher anxiety. Finally, leaders using individualized consideration coach, advise, and respect individuals' needs and aspirations.

2. Literature Review

Along with the beginning of studies in the field of language by Lewin and Lippitt (1938), other studies of Language and Language theories were developed. The most important theories in this area included trait theory, situational/contingency theories, power and influence theory, and transactional and Foreign Language (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The Multifactor Language Questionnaire, FLAS by Anandari, in 2015 is a famous instrument to measure Foreign Language. In this questionnaire, Foreign Language consists of four dimensions such as foreign test anxiety, foreign writing anxiety, foreign student anxiety, and Individualized consideration (Natia & Pontso, 2017).

This section briefly explains how the constructs of the FLCAS were conceptualized by introducing key discussion points made by Horwitz et al. (1986). As described in the introduction, Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed the FLCAS concerning three performance anxieties. The first construct of performance anxiety in classroom situations represents communication apprehension. It is assumed that mainly interpersonal interactions relate to FLA, which is conceptualized as the construct of communication apprehension. This describes a kind of shyness aroused by fear of communicating with others. Examples of communication apprehension include difficulty not only in speaking in dyads, in groups, or public but also in listening to or learning oral messages (Horwitz et al. 1986). If individuals have difficulty speaking or listening to foreign languages in front of people, their communication apprehension will be high (Horwitz et al. 1986). It appears that the emotion of shyness characterized as typical of communication apprehension is provoked in social situations in which individuals become conscious of interacting with others who are not psychologically familiar to them. When considering the trait of shyness, it seems that communication apprehension is likely to arise in immediate response to the person's environment. Moreover, individual difficulty in speaking or listening to foreign languages has also been ascribed to linguistic deficiency. Horwitz et al. (1986) documented the complaint of anxious learners who had difficulty discriminating foreign-language sounds and structures, giving the example of an anxious student who indicated hearing only the loud voice of his instructor. If such students cannot hear certain sounds, they will be worried about communication in class. Abu-Rabia et al. (2014) reported a negative relationship between linguistic skills and language anxiety, suggesting that students with linguistic deficiency have communication apprehension. Taken together, it is thought that social and interpersonal aspects such as psychological distance and a psychological safety environment, as well as individual attributes, may be centrally related to communication apprehension. Trang & Moni (2015), planned a program on the management of foreign language anxiety. Aydemir (2011) studied the changes in the foreign language anxiety levels experienced by the students of the preparatory school at Gazi University during an academic year and found family

background and school achievement in middle school. The effect of psychological factors on foreign language anxiety was studied by some of the researchers. For example, Fallah (2017), mentioned that mindfulness has a significant effect on foreign language anxiety.

This study highlighted Japanese learners' experience of English as a foreign language (EFL) in classrooms. It is important to explore how the constructs proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) relate to Japanese EFL learners. As discussed above, one aspect concerning communication apprehension is social and interpersonal contexts where individuals feel shy when speaking in the classroom. In Japan, there has been a trend toward having more interaction in EFL classes. Japanese students are expected to speak English in their classrooms to answer questions and talk to their classmates, even though this communicative interaction in class is not part of traditional Japanese pedagogy (Yashima et al. 2009). Several research studies concerning Japanese classroom situations of EFL have addressed the shyness of Japanese students in class or their reluctance to speak in front of people (Cutrone, 2009). This notion suggests that Japanese students have communication apprehension or FLA in a classroom situation. Williams and Andrade (2008) reported that Japanese students' FLA was related to speaking in front of classmates. Thus, when considering the situation of L2 learning in classrooms, the first construct of communication appreciation seems to be applicable to Japanese learners.

Recognizing the need for an instrument that addresses the diversity of Iranian academic population, Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS) was developed for their specific use. Due to the above reason, the two questions in this study are:

1. Does FLAS items generated reflect previously identified domains factors?
2. Does the FLAS evidence satisfy reliability and validity?

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample Characteristics

The sample for factor analysis was 350 teachers representing 14 schools in Ahvaz city in Iran. These samples were cluster randomly selected and grouped based on their sex, age, experience, academic levels, the status of the school, and so on.

3.2. Tools and Materials

To collect data on foreign language anxiety, this study also used Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which is a Likert-type questionnaire developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). This scale includes thirty-three items, measuring test anxiety, speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. As the following item depicts, each item ranges from strongly disagree, at one end, to strongly agree, at the other end. Thus, the scale for each item ranges from 1 to 5. Example 2: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class. a. strongly disagree b. disagree c. neither agree nor disagree d. agree e. strongly agree. Internal consistency of the FLACS by Cronbach alpha coefficient, as measured by Horwitz (1986) was found to be .93, with the test-retest reliability of .83. With regard to its validity, criterion-related studies that bear on construct validity of the scale were conducted. The results suggest that foreign language anxiety can be reliably and validly measured (Horwitz et al. 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991).

3.3. Procedure

This study was carried out in four interconnected but separate phases. Planning, Construction, Quantitative evaluation, and Psychometric properties. The first chapter is *Planning* and consists of the following 4 sections:

1. Identify the purpose of (FLAS), Identify the audience that the results of the (FLAS) study will be most important to Principals, Teachers, Counselors & Students.
2. Conducting a literature review in which all of the theories of Foreign Language are united.
3. Conducting a pilot study to try out different potential items.
4. Conducting two sets of interviews with teachers.

The second chapter is *Construction* and consists of the following 2 sections:

1. Determining and defining domains by linking visual illustration of various theories related to Foreign Language. Generating item pool with items that are distinguishable both by domain and level of agreeability.
2. Conducting expert reviews of all items for content validation.

The third chapter is *Quantitative Evaluation* and consists of the following 2 sections:

1. Administering the item pool on the teachers.
2. Reducing item pool to only the most valid and reliable items and factors by using factor analysis.

Phase 1 is the *Psychometric Properties* that contains two parts: Assessing the validity of the scale (i.e., concurrent validity) and Assessing the reliability by internal consistency (i.e., alpha Cronbach).

The summary of this study was noted in Table 2.

Table 1.

Scale Development Procedure:

Phase	Scale Development Steps
Phase 1 “Planning”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the purpose of (FLAS), Identify the audience that the results of the(FLAS) study will be most important to principals, teachers, counselors, and students. Conducting a literature review in which all of the theories of Foreign Language are united. Conducting a pilot study to try out different potential items. Conducting two sets of interviews with teachers.
Phase 2 “Construction”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining and defining domains by linking visual illustration of various theories related to Foreign Language. Generating item pool with items that are distinguishable both by domain and level of agreeability. Conducting expert reviews of all items for content validation.
Phase 3 “Quantitative Evaluation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administering the item pool on the teachers. Reducing item pool to only the most valid and reliable items and factors by using factor analysis.
Phase 4 “Psychometric Properties”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing the validity of the scale (concurrent validity). Assessing the reliability by internal consistency (alpha Cronbach).

4. Results

4.1. Developing Item Pool Questionnaire

By using all aspects of Foreign Language, an item pool with 84 items was initially developed. These 84 items were corrected by 3 experts and 4 interviews with students. Finally, 29 items were removed from the main questionnaire and retained only those 65 items which were then administered to the students. They were asked to respond using a five-point Likert Scale. The scale ranged from 1(Never) to 5 (Always).

4.2. Factor Extraction

The sixty-five-item instrument on Foreign Language was administered to the 350 students and their scores were subjected to factor analysis using principal component and

varimax rotation to verify the factorial composition of the instrument as well as define the common measure. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.891) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (1728.81), has shown that the properties of the sample are appropriate for factor analysis it has shown in Table 3.

Table 2.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kind of test	Aims	Result
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	Measure the Sampling Adequacy	.891 **
Bartlett's Test	Measure The Sphericity	1728.818**

** $p < 0.01$

Moreover, The number of factors was determined by contrasting the results of a parallel analysis with an analysis of the Scree plot.

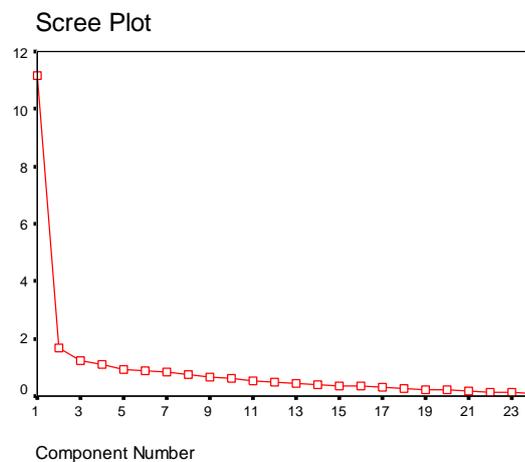


Figure 1. Scree plot to determine the number of factors.

5. Discussion

Results of the factor analysis indicate that out of the 65 items of the FLAS subjected to factor analysis with varimax rotation; only 24 items attained the minimum loading of 0.50 and were accepted as valid. As it is shown in appendix 1, factor 1 is comprised of 8 items associated with personal influences (Foreign test anxiety). Factor 2 comprises 3 items associated with motivational matters (Foreign writing anxiety), factor 3 contains 5 items associated with cognition and thinking matters (Foreign student anxiety) and factor 4

contains 9 items associated with individual concern (Foreign pronunciation anxiety). Together, these four factors accounted for 88.26 percent of the variance. Their quasi-orthogonal nature suggests that each factor is measuring something unique.

5.1. Reliability and Validity

Reliability: The indices of internal consistency associated with each sub-scale has shown that all four subscales exceed 0.70; which is often regarded as the benchmark for claiming that a scale is sufficiently reliable to be used in applied settings.

Table 3.

Subscale Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of FLAS

<i>N</i>	<i>factor</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>@</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	Foreign test anxiety	2.2	.94	.84	.01
2	Foreign writing anxiety	1.63	.88	.75	.01
3	Foreign student anxiety	2.06	.91	.80	.01
4	Foreign pronunciation anxiety	1.84	.78	.89	.01

Note: N = 350

Validity: concurrent validity has shown the relationship between the total score on each subscale of the FLAS items and the score on FLAS. As expected, all subscales on the FLAS were positively correlated with FLAS.

Table 4.

Inter-correlations Between Subscales of FLAS and FLAS.

<i>Scale</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Subscales of FLAS</i>	Foreign test anxiety	-			
	Foreign writing anxiety	.29*	-		
	Foreign student anxiety	.27*	.41**	-	
	Foreign pronunciation anxiety	.52**	.42**	.31*	-
<i>FLAS</i>		.43**	.39**	.29*	.37*

Note: N = 350. * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of foreign language and develop an instrument to assess foreign language for use specifically with high school students. The

results of this study viewed in conjunction with those of the previous seven studies led to the conclusions (Mostafa et al., 2015). The first conclusion concerns the factors and structure of the FLCAS. Our exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses showed a four-factor model. Accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that the FLCAS measure has multiple dimensional factors in terms of students' fear and anxiety about foreign language learning as mentioned in the other studies (Anika et al., 2015). Analysis of data in this study has shown that there is a support for the inclusion of four factors namely foreign test anxiety, foreign writing anxiety, foreign student anxiety & individualized consideration in foreign language. First factor associated with personal influences matters. In the second Factor, a kind of motivational matters discovered. The third factor reflected the cognition and thinking matters and the fourth factor revealed the individual concern as mentioned above and is the same as the items of FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986).

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NTLL Conference Special Issue 9(3): 146-160

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Appendix

Foreign Language anxiety scale (FLAS) contains 24 items, each answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. It measures a person’s level of anxiety by coming up with an anxiety score by adding up the ratings on the 24 items.

Foreign Language anxiety scale (FLAS)

1	When I study more for a language test, I will be confused.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2	I have anxiety about the consequences of failing in a foreign language.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3	I feel apprehension when I’m going to be called on in a language session.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4	I don’t worry about making mistakes in language meetings.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5	I am afraid that my language student is ready to correct every mistake I make.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6	I don’t understand why some people get so upset over foreign language courses.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7	I often feel like not going to my language session.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8	I don’t feel pressure to prepare very well for a language class.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9	It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10	I feel confident when I speak in the foreign language course.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other courses	SA	A	N	D	SD
12	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13	I can get so nervous I forget things I know In language class.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14	I get upset when I don’t understand what the teacher is correcting.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15	I would not be nervous speaking a foreign language with native speakers.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17	Even if I am well prepared for a language class, I feel worried about it.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20	I feel less self-conscious about speaking a foreign language.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	SA	A	N	D	SD

NTLL Conference Special Issue 9(3): 146-160

23	I am scared that the other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language.	SA	A	N	D	SD
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24	I feel very unease When I'm on my way to language class.	SA	A	N	D	SD
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*SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree.