Efl Learners and Language Learning Anxiety in Croatia

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims at investigating the possible connections between language learning anxiety and three variables: gender, study program and the year of study. 89 participants were included in the study, which was carried out among the students of English language at the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Data were collected via a questionnaire adapted from Horwitz (1986), which included 33 Likert scale questions alongside 5 preliminary questions. The results showed that even though male students were predominately less anxious, both male and female students experienced high levels of anxiety when it came to public speaking. The results were confirmed with respect to public speaking by the data connected to the year of study. Students' anxiety levels tend to show a significant increase with the increasing years of study when it comes to being called on in a language class. A possible explanation for such results could be the changes in the curriculum and the increase in the number of more orally-oriented subjects at the university. When it comes to the study programs, analysis suggests that the students with two language majors are more anxious, prone to panicking when faced with the possibility of public speaking in a foreign language, more fearful of the consequences of failing their class and, more upset when they do not understand something the teacher is correcting as well as more likely to get nervous when the language teacher asks them something they have not prepared for in advance. Further studies should be carried in order to gain a deeper insight into this phenomenon.

Keywords: language learning anxiety, EFL, higher education

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1. Introduction

During the last few decades, anxiety has been gaining popularity among researchers of language acquisition, who have been examining the effects of anxiety on the second and foreign language learners. However, it is to be expected that opposing views are to emerge in the published papers, as various authors have settled on different definitions of language anxiety and their research leads towards contradictory findings.

This paper brings the most used definitions of general anxiety and presents the way it manifests itself, as well as the issues connected to defining language anxiety. Literature review, which follows the brief introduction into the topic of psychology and anxiety, focuses on papers strictly connected to language learning anxiety, whose authors will be familiar to those in the field of linguistics and language teaching. The main focus of this paper is put on the research of language learning anxiety in Croatia, among the future language teachers, with the idea of filling the gaps left by previous research which are due to the lack of the same in this region. Future language teachers, students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences present a good quality sample as they have both the theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching methods, student's psychological traits as well as of the way anxiety manifests itself, which will be useful in this context of self-identification of various situations which make them feel nervous, worrisome, frightened and self-conscious. The sample questionnaire was adopted from Horwitz (1986) to ensure the same variables were taken into the account, in order to avoid additional contradictory results due to human error. The paper will also give some insight into the recommendations for the (future) teachers on decreasing the levels of anxiety among their students and in their classroom in general, as seen in the papers which are to be mentioned in the literature review. There are several limitations to this research, with small sampling being the most obvious one. Personal lack of experience in the field of teaching meant that no greater alternations were made with either the instruments or

the methods, but the results did give more insight into the issue, especially in the region where there is a great need for educational reform, which is currently being strongly debated.

2. Literature review

2.1.General anxiety

"*Ancient though, the word 'anxiety' may be, it was rarely employed as a psychological or psychiatric concept before the late 19th century, and only became widespread over the course of the 20th century."* (Freeman & Freeman, 2012, 2). It stems from the Greek word *angh* which means *"'to press tight, 'to strangle', 'to be weighed down by grief", and 'load', 'burden', and 'trouble'."* (2). Nowadays, definitions of anxiety can be seen in various articles, studies and books, which are not reserved for psychologist and psychiatrist only. We can see the terminology being used among linguists, pedagogists and other educational experts, as they try to understand the human nature, languages and how we conceive the world around us. *"The definition of anxiety ranges from an amalgam of overt behavioural characteristics that can be studied scientifically to introspective feelings that are epistemologically inaccessible."* (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; as seen in Zheng, 2008). Accordingly, Horwitz (1986) defines anxiety as *"the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (2),* which is mainly in line with the explications present in most of the psychology course books and online materials (American Psychological Association, Anxiety and Depression Association of America). *"The more precise psychological classification (Horwitz, 2001) differentiates between the following categories of anxiety: 1. trait anxiety, 2. state anxiety, 3. situation-specific anxiety."* (Kralova, Soradova, 2015). The first of them – trait anxiety, refers to a *"relatively stable personality characteristic, „a more permanent predisposition to be anxious"(Hashemi, 2001,2).* Trait anxiety is therefore the most general feeling of worry, regardless of the

situation, or the school subject in this case. State anxiety, on the other hand, "*is a transient anxiety, a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus such as an important test."* (2) State anxiety is self-explicatory and a rather common type of anxiety in the educational system, due to the great amounts of examination and its standardization as well as to the still grade-oriented classrooms. "*The third category, Situation-specific anxiety, refers to the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties. It is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations, or class participation"* (as seen in Hashemi, 2001, 2).

No matter what type of anxiety from the mentioned classification we are talking about, one thing they all share are the effects on the human body. The "flight-or-fight" mode which gets activated each time a person feels anxious (and is therefore considered to be in a dangerous situation), drives numerous changes which start occurring in the body itself (UIC). These changes include:

- Rapid heart- beat and breathing
- Sweating
- Nausea and stomach upset
- Dizziness and lightheadedness
- Chest-pain
- Numbness and tingling sensations
- Unreality or bright vision
- Heavy legs
- Choking sensation
- Hot and cold flashes

First, with the increased blood circulation in order to bring oxygen to all the important parts of the body, one's heart rate increases, making him or her prepared to leave the uncomfortable or dangerous situation. Subsequently, he or she starts sweating to cool herself/ himself down and to make his/ her body more difficult to grasp by the attacker. Since the body is concentrating on bringing oxygen to the most vital areas now needed, it would only be logical that some other parts (autonomous nervous system) are being shut down, since they are not necessary for survival. The aforementioned applies to digestion, sexual arousal, urination etc.; which means that one might get diarrhea, upset stomach or nausea. At a time of danger, when the person's breathing becomes faster, he or she might even experience hyperventilation (breathing too heavily) which leads to lightheadedness and dizziness (since the oxygen is being distributed to the muscle groups such as legs and arms, with less oxygen left in the brain). With time, muscles get tenser, meaning one might even feel pain in his/ her chest or throat (choking sensation), while at the same time feeling numbness in the parts "drained" of blood such as fingers (for the same reason we feel dizzy- the lack of oxygen). *"When responding to danger, our pupils dilate to let in more light and to make sure that we can see clearly enough. This reaction makes our environment look brighter or fuzzier, and sometimes less real."* (pp. 3). Finally, cold and hot flashes might occur in one's body, as the tension of the blood vessels increases, making a person less susceptible to blood loss in case of an injury. (UIC, 2-3).

2.2. Language learning anxiety

There has been some debate whether language learning anxiety falls under one of the three mentioned types of anxiety, i.e. is a part of the existing anxiety spectrum, or whether it is a completely *"distinct phenomenon particular to language learning."* (Young, 1991, 3). Young 1991) and Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), were the first to treat it as a separate

phenomenon, basing their conclusions on clinical data and anecdotal evidence (Young, 3). According to the same authors, identical conclusions were reached by McIntyre and Gardner.

Evidence of language learning anxiety is mainly in line with the aforementioned changes in the body (ICU), but since it is greatly connected to the classroom environment, additional manifestations should be taken into the account, such as *"nervous laughter, avoiding eye contact, joking, short answer responses, avoiding activities in class, coming unprepared to class, acting in- different, cutting class, putting off taking the foreign language until the last year, crouching in the last row, and avoiding having to speak in the foreign language in class (22)."*(Young, 6). Possible sources of language anxiety have been discussed by most of the authors mentioned above as well. Hashemi (2011) states that since *"language anxiety is a psychological construct, it most likely stems from the learner's own 'self', i.e., as an intrinsic motivator (Schwartz, 1972; cited in Scovel 1991:16), e.g., his or her self- perceptions, perceptions about others (peers, teachers, interlocutors, etc.) and target language communication situations, his/her beliefs about L2/FL learning, etc. Language anxiety may be a result as well as a cause of insufficient command of the target language (Sparks and Ganschow; cited in Horwitz, 2001: 118)."* (Hashemi, 3). Tsiplakides and Keramira (2009) reached the same conclusion, listing "*fear of negative evaluation from their peers"* as one of the anxiety drivers (3). Apparently, *"all anxious respondents compared their speaking skills negatively in relation to their peers."* (3). Another factor worth mentioning is some of the participant's self-acclaimed *"exaggerated focus on avoiding mistakes"* (3).

The most important question is how the (English) language teachers could possibly help their students overcome their anxieties in and outside of the classroom. Hashemi (2011) proposes ten suggestions for achieving this goal (5-6):

1) Language teachers should acknowledge the existence of the feeling of anxiety and stress among the language learners and should apply quick and effective strategies to help them cope with those destructive feelings.

2) A truly communicative approach in language teaching should be adopted to provide those language learners who have limited exposure to English language with more chances to fully practice their speaking skills.

3) Creating a friendly, informal and learning-supportive environments for language learning by teachers' friendly, helpful and cooperative behaviour, making students feel comfortable when speaking in the class.

4) Teachers should encourage those learners who are afraid of making mistakes to feel free to make mistakes in order to acquire communication skills. As for a positive response to students' concern over the harsh manner of teachers' error correction, teachers' selection of error correction techniques as Horwitz et al. (1986: 131) recommended, should be based upon instructional philosophy and reducing defensive reactions in students.

5) To reduce the students' fear that their mistakes in front of the teachers will influence their end of course grades, more emphasis should be placed on formative assessment (assessment for learning) and feedback rather than summative assessment (assessment of learning) and feedback.

6) Sometimes language teachers should initiate discussion in the class about the feelings of anxiety and should take measures to reduce the sense of competition among them (Tanveer, 2007).

7) To give language learners a feeling of success and satisfaction when using English, language teachers should avoid activities that enhance early frustration.

8) It is also recommended that teachers should confront students' erroneous and irrational beliefs by cultivating in them "reasonable commitments for successful language learning" (Horwitz, 1988: cited in Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999: 232). More importantly, students should be guided as to how to direct their attention away from self-centered worries when they are speaking a second/foreign language (1999: 233).

9) Familiarity with the culture and ethnic background of the language learners and an awareness of their previous language learning experiences can also assist language teachers in understanding and decoding anxiety-related behaviours in some learners. Teachers should specifically make the effort to create a sense of friendship and cooperation among the students. This will help them to speak more confidently and with less anxiety in the class (Tanveer, 2007).

10) Finally, language teachers need some specific in service training courses on general psychology including language anxiety in order to deal with the stress and anxiety in their classes.

The following literature review focuses on the aforementioned issues as well as on findings related to language-learning anxiety, which ultimately inspired this paper and the research.

2.2.Literature review - studies

Masoud Hashemi, from the Department of English, Toyserkan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Toyserkan, published his contribution to the topic of language anxiety in his 2011 paper "Language Stress and Anxiety Among the English Language Learners". Hashemi opens his research with the issues of the exclusiveness of anxiety within language research and psychology in general, presenting the two opposing views of the issue. Hashemi's study was focused on investigating *"the factors behind language anxiety among the EFL (English as a*

Foreign Language) students of Islamic Azad University Hamedan Branch in Iran both within the classroom and in the social context." (3). In order to meet his goal, qualitative semi-structured interview and focus-group discussion were used. Among the population of 300 students, sixty of them were randomly chosen to participate in the study.

Findings are later discussed within the following segments: 1. Anxiety-producing factors; 2. Socio-cultural context; 3. Exposure to the new language; 4. Cultural differences; 5. Social-status and self-identity; 6. Coping with stress and anxiety in language classes; 7. The vital role of language teachers; 8. Suggestions for language teachers (3-6). Hashemi states that high levels of anxiety were found among most of the students, and since Iranian students showed higher levels of anxiety than the students in other research it is fair to assume that certain cultural aspects do play some role in the achieved levels of anxiety (3). Major anxiety-producing factors were found to be *"adopting or achieving native (L1)-like pronunciation"* and *"strict and formal classroom environment"*. Participants further expressed feeling *"more anxious and under stress in the classroom environments that follow the traditional learning systems where the learners have to constantly drill or repeat some tiresome tasks like machines (e.g. audio-lingual language teaching method)."* (3). Alongside classroom management and pronunciation, giving presentations and public speaking were also reported as major anxiety sources. Interestingly, Hashemi's results highlight that social factors *("social context, culture, social status, the sense of foreignness of the language learners")* were more important than the linguistic ones in inducing anxiety among the students (4). However, I find it to be too vaguely explained and think it would be more helpful for the future researchers if the aforementioned factors were more elaborated. Lack of the exposure to a language puts major pressure on students when they are faced with speaking in and outside the classroom. Furthermore, "*the more uncertainty or unfamiliarity with the target language culture, the more it is likely to be anxiety provoking"* (4) for the students.

Participants even pointed out certain issues that should be resolved in the classroom to reduce the levels of anxiety present among them. One of them, unsurprisingly, was to *"make the language classroom environment less formal and more friendly, one where students can make mistakes without looking or sounding inept." (*4). Next, teachers should try to avoid *"setting up the activities that increase the chances for the students to fail"(4)* and to focus on formatting the language classroom as that of ELF rather than native-like RP. Teacher's role is therefore to be altered, with more focus on positive feedback, encouragements and taking time *"to discuss or initiate discussion in the class by pointing out that it is very common for students to feel uncomfortable, uneasy and anxious while speaking English, thus inviting their thoughts about its possible reasons as well as solutions."(5).* Another thing worth mentioning is the idea of *"abandoning practice of giving summative feedback in the form of grades and marks"* (5), however it is to be further discussed among the experts, since the mentioned practice would be heavily opposed to the still popular standardization in the field. Hashemi does give rather useful recommendations to the (future) teachers, but I believe these should be further discussed in another paper, and definitely backed up by additional research, including interviews with the participants.

The next authors to be discussed are Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz and Joann Cope, with certainly what is now one of the most famous studies related to the topic of language learning anxiety, "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety", published by The Modern Language Journal, Vol. 70 (2) in 1986. Not only was Horwitz the first to actually separate language learning anxiety from other forms of anxieties, but this paper gives the so far most detailed questionnaire to be used in the research of the topic. The study itself was carried out among two groups of fifteen students at the University of Texas. They joined the "Support Group for Foreign Language Learning", whose experiences were later used in developing the Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. Authors gave examples of some of the

answers to the FLAS and mentioned that *"students who test high on anxiety report that they are afraid to speak in the foreign language" (129);* which is in line with what Hashemi found in his study as well. Students fear being less competent then their peers, as well as being judged by their colleagues and making mistakes in the foreign language. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope further give evidence that language learning anxiety should be treated separately, and not as a term under the umbrella of all the other anxieties. *"Student responses to two FLCAS items- "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language" (34%) and "I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes" (38%)--lend further support to the view that foreign language anxiety is a distinct set of beliefs, perceptions, and feelings in response to foreign language learning in the classroom and not merely a composite of other anxieties."* (7).

Just like Hashemi (2011), Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope reserved a section of their study for pedagogical implications. They explicitly state that teachers are faced with two options when dealing with students' anxiety. They can either 1. Help them learn to cope with existing anxiety-provoking situation; or 2. Make the learning context less stressful. Before they do either though, they must *"first acknowledge the existence of foreign language anxiety."* (8). Some techniques mentioned by the authors include *"relaxation exercises, advice on effective language learning strategies, behavioral contracting and journal keeping"* (8). Teachers should create support systems and closely monitor their classroom to determine what exactly causes anxiety in their students, especially when it comes to error correction, which has proven to be one of the most obvious sources of anxiety among language learners. This study proved itself to be extremely useful for future researchers as it gave both the inspiration and method for further examination of language anxiety, but I do find it lacking the methodological background as well as some in depth explanation of the scale and its components. However, the overall value of this particular study, as well as some other

Horwitz's studies, is unquestionable for both the language teaching methodology and the practice.

One of the rare studies actually focusing on advanced EFL learners is that by Zsuzsa Tóth from 2011, titled "Foreign Language Anxiety and Advanced EFL Learners: an Interview Study". Qualitative research, which is stated to be a follow-up to a previously conducted questionnaire among the Hungarian EFL Majors in Tóth's research from 2009, focuses on "*highly anxious EFL majors (and) their learning and communication experiences in the target language*."(3). Three research questions were formulated in accordance with the presented aims:

1. How do advanced learners with high levels of FLA feel and behave when learning and using their TL?

2. What are the sources of the anxiety of advanced-level language students?

3. What do anxious learners' language learning histories reveal about the origins of L2-related anxiety?

Through "*purposeful sampling*" (3), five English majors (first year of study) were selected to participate in the interviews. They were considered (on the basis of the questionnaire) to be highly anxious and were thus perfect candidates for the research that followed. All of them were female, which means the results cannot be generalized to the same extent some other research results can. Tóth also used the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). Semi-structured interviews were "*centered on the following four topic areas":*

1. Language learning history

2. Attitudes to English

3. Impressions of and attitudes to university English classes

4. Attitudes to communication in English (5)

The results showed that all the participants had certain negative experience in the language classroom. They felt tense, ill, afraid and distressed in general as they did not feel comfortable in their classes at the university. The main reason for the discomfort was the fear of "*being called upon and having to speak up in class."* (6) They would often experience *"trembling, sweating (Edit), faster heart beat (Klári); physical activities like self-manipulation; or having a quivering voice (Zsófi), which only increased their anxiety and caused further embarrassment.*" (6) The symptoms are in line with what Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), as well as Hashemi (2011) reported in their studies. Additional symptoms which have not been talked about so far were "*more severe psychosomatic symptoms*" experienced by one of the participants of Tóth's interviews: "*Towards the end of the term my hair started to fall out, I had stomach problems, and my blood pressure wasn't OK either (Rita, p.6)".* (7). Participants showed unwillingness to participate in class, even during pair- and group-work which is often considered to be less anxiety- evoking. Being incorrect, i.e. making mistakes in their language classes appeared as one of the main causes of anxiety, just like in the previous research. *"In the classroom, however, anxious English majors make a conscious effort to speak their TL correctly, trying hard to avoid mistakes and find the most appropriate words, as a result of which they perceive speaking in the L2 as a laborious and, at the same time, very stressful experience.*" (9)

When it comes to the teacher variable, the results were mainly in line with other studies as well. The participants reported feeling anxious due to being monitored and tested by the teacher, as well as feeling humiliated by being corrected in public, *"especially if accompanied by disparaging remarks by the teacher.*" (9). The same applies to their peers, the results which

were present in Hashemi (2011) as well. "*English majors with high levels of FLA expressed a greater concern about the opinions of their peers and felt more apprehensive about potential negative evaluation on their part*". (10) However, it was later determined that it has less to do with the negative evaluation and more with their mere presence (10). Feeling less competent emerged as the number one issue when it came to their peers, which is, again, completely compatible with the former results. Tóth concluded that the high levels of anxiety present in her results could be attributed to the intensive learning environment at the university and the fact that *"the more proficient the learners become in the L2, the more easily they can recognize their own mistakes and other linguistic limitations, which, as evidenced by interviewees' experiences, plays a major role in their being apprehensive about using their TL."* (15). Overall, the paper was well rounded and detailed, with little to no need for change in either methodology or the later interpretation and has definitely served as an inspiration for my own research and the discussion of the results.

Since most of the research so far has recognized a pattern of speaking anxiety among students of FL, it would be wise to consult one of the research papers focused specifically on the said skill. The study in mind is that of Han Luo from the Northwestern University with his 2014 paper: "Foreign Language Anxiety: A Study of Chinese Language Learners", published in the Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages. The study focuses on college students of Chinese (CFL) in the United Stated, since *"there have been no studies exclusively focusing on Chinese language learners' anxiety associated with speaking."* (4) For the purposes of the study, three research questions were formulated:

1. Are U.S. college-level CFL learners anxious when speaking Chinese?

2. What is the influence of background variables such as gender, proficiency level, and elective-required status on U.S. college-level CFL learners' speaking anxiety?

3. How is CFL learners' speaking anxiety related to their perceived difficulty level of the Chinese language, self-perceived achievement, and self-perceived language learning ability? (5)

Study included a great number of participants (257 overall; 147 male, 110 female), all between 15 and 59 years of age. The exact names of the universities were not listed, but one of them is located in Southwest of the U.S. while the other one is in the Midwestern area. The participants' proficiency levels of Chinese were classified as either elementary, intermediate or advanced, depending on their year of study (first, second or third). Most of the participants fell in the first group, 54, 9%, which equals 141 participants. Again, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's scale was adapted into the Chinese Language Speaking Anxiety Scale alongside the Background Questionnaire which included age, gender, ethnicity, year of college, proficiency level, expected grade in the Chinese class, self-perception of the Chinese language abilities as well as their perception of the difficulty level of the Chinese language (7). The means of data analyses were SPSS' ANOVA with the corresponding tests.

The results of Luo's study are not in line with most of the research on the topic of language anxiety, especially when it comes to the speaking skill. According to the results, "*the mean item response for Chinese Language Speaking Anxiety (M=2.7256) is not very high, indicating that the CFL learners in this sample, on average, were only slightly anxious in speaking Chinese."*(9). This, of course, is completely unexpected since most of the studies so far detected high levels of anxiety among students. These results could be interpreted as a product of cultural differences and in the same matter – languages, as a depiction of the same culture. It was further discussed that although the average participants' anxiety was not high, there were individuals who showed higher levels of anxiety while speaking Chinese. Reasons for their anxiety are repetitive in relation to other studies prior to Luo's, since students feel anxious about speaking in front of their peers (which can again be tracked back to Hashemi

(2011), Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and Tóth (2011)). "*Peer competition seemed to be an important cause of speaking anxiety in Chinese classes.*" (11).

When it comes to the background information, "*results of the three-way ANOVA analyses by gender, proficiency level, and elective-required status showed that there were no significant differences in Chinese Language Speaking Anxiety by proficiency level (df = 2, F = .578, p = .562) or the elective-required status (df = 1, F = 3.225, p = .074), but there were significant differences by gender (df = 1, F = 5.996, p = .015)"* (11). Female learners were found to be more anxious with the mean of M= 23.34 and standard deviation of SD= 7.70 than their male counterparts with the mean of M= 20.72 and standard deviation of SD= 7.34. (13) Interesting results were observed when correlating anxiety with the perceived difficulty of Chinese language and the self-perceived speaking abilities. Apparently, those students who perceived Chinese as difficult were more anxious, while those who perceived themselves as better in learning languages accordingly scored lower on the Chinese speaking anxiety scale.

The study itself opened a new specter of language learning anxiety, focusing only on one aspect i.e. skill to get a better insight into what drives the anxiety in students as well as how to adapt the classroom leaning environment to the learners. The study is somewhat detailed in its descriptions and analysis but would benefit more from further examination, for example - additional interviews. The number of participants is unusually high for this area of research and can therefore be considered more legitimate. Authors themselves stated the need for further analysis and research, which I completely agree with.

All of the mentioned studies from this review and the introduction itself served as a basis for the following study. By using their data results and implications as well as the recommendations for future research, I noticed a gap which needs to be filled in order to get a

closer look into the practices which cause more harm than benefit, i.e. which induce anxiety rather than curiosity in the language learning environment.

3. Aim and hypotheses

The aim of this research paper is to investigate the issue of language learning anxiety among the students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka. More specifically, the goal is to detect any differences between genders, years of study and the study programs in relation to language learning anxiety. Accordingly, three main research questions were formulated:

1. Are female students more anxious with regard to learning languages than male students?
2. Are first-year students more anxious when it comes to language learning than the students of second and third year of study?
3. Are students with two language-majors more likely to be anxious with regard to learning languages than those with only one language-based major?

In addition, three hypotheses were as follows:

1. There are no differences in anxiety levels with regard to learning languages when it comes to gender.
2. First year students are more anxious when it comes to language learning than the students of second and third year of study.
3. Two- language-majors are more anxious with regard to learning languages than one-language majors.

4. Methodology

4.1.Participants

The research included 89 participants in total; 25 first- year students (28, 1 %), 31 second- year students (34, 8 %) and 33 third- year students (37, 1 %) of undergraduate studies. The participants study different study combinations; 34 students with at least one language major (English, German, Italian), and 51 students with combinations which do not include languages (Pedagogy, Philosophy, Computer Science, History, Art History). The majority of students combined Pedagogy-English language (22, 5 %), Philosophy-English language (18 %) and English language-German language (15, 7 %). Average age of the participants was 20 and the average number of years of learning English was 13. 33 participants were male, and 66 female. All the participants were contacted and asked to participate with the help of the Faculty's professors. The participants were granted anonymity and were given the opportunity to get an insight into the final results if they expressed the desire to do so.

4.2.Data collection

The participants were asked to fill in a two-page questionnaire on the topic of language learning anxiety. The questionnaire consisted of preliminary questions (gender, age, year of study, study program and number of years of leaning English) which were then followed by 30 Likert scale questions, which dealt with their personal experience with anxiety in a learning environment, as well as outside the classroom. The average time for filling in the questionnaire was 8 minutes. The permission for carrying out this research was given by the course instructor and subsequently the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences as well.

4.3.Data analysis

Collected data were transferred and analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor. Oneway ANOVA was used to determine the possible differences between the three study-years. To analyze the differences between the study programs, as well as gender, a T-test was applied. Accordingly, the results are based on medians (C) and interquartile ranges (Q) to determine the differences between genders and study programs (Mann-Whitney U test) while ANOVA was followed by Kruskal-Wallis and Chi-square tests to determine the existing differences. For all three categories, means and standard deviations were included, as well as the significance itself.

5. Results

5.1.Gender

T-test for Equality of Means was carried out in order to determine whether there were any differences in means between the subjects in relation to their gender. The results showed such occurrences in questions number 1 (LLA1) with p being lower than 0, 05 (p=0,045 where equal variances are assumed and p=0,027 where they are not assumed) and number 4 (LLA4) with p=0,019 (equal variances assumed) / p= 0.006 (equal variances not assumed). With an assumption that the results are scattered, a nonparametric test was applied, i.e. the Mann-Whitney Test was used. Significant differences in answers were noticed and proven in a total of nine questions: LLA1 (U=574, 0; z=-2,063; p<0, 05 / p= 0,039), LLA4 (U=527, 5; z=-2, 252; p<0, 05 / p= 0,024), LLA11 (U=453, 5; z=-3,000; p<0, 05 / p= 0,003), LLA13 (U= 493, 5; z=-2,588; p<0, 05/ p= 0,010), LLA15 (U= 421, 0; z= -3,308 ; p<0,05 / p=0,001), LLA17 (U=548,0; z=-2, 075; p<0,05 / p= 0,038), LLA21 (U= 537, 5; z=-2,211; p<0,05 / p= 0,027), LLA26 (U= 553, 5; z= -2,003; p<0,05 / p= 0,045) and LLA27 (U= 560,0; z= -1,997; p<0,05 / p=0,046).

Table 1. Mann-Whitney Test (Gender)

	LLA1	LLA4	LLA11	LLA13	LLA15	LLA17	LLA21	LLA26	LLA27
Mann-Whitney U	547,000	527,500	453,500	493,500	421,000	548,000	537,500	553,500	560,000
Wilcoxon W	823,000	803,500	2664,500	769,500	697,000	2759,000	2748,500	829,500	836,000
Z	-2,063	-2,252	-3,000	-2,588	-3,308	-2,075	-2,211	-2,003	-1,997
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,039	,024	,003	,010	,001	,038	,027	,045	,046

a. Grouping Variable: gender

The direction of the data can be seen in the *Descriptives* table below.

Table 2. Descriptives (Gender)

	Gender		Statistic
LLA1	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA4	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA11	Male		
		Median	4,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA13	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000

		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA15	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA17	Male		
		Median	4,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA21	Male		
		Median	4,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA26	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA27	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00

Differences between the genders are analyzed through the values of median (C) and interquartile range (Q). The group which shows higher values has therefore scored higher on the particular question. If the medians of the two groups are equal, then interquartile range is

taken into the account, and the results are interpreted taken the aforementioned into the account.

5.2.Year of Study

The analysis of differences in answers to the given questionnaire on the language learning anxiety between the three years of undergraduate studies has been conducted using Oneway ANOVA. Significant differences were observed in the case of questions LLA3 (p<0, 05 / p= 0,016; F= 4,349) and LLA4 (p<0, 05 / p=0,033; F=3,561).

Table. 3 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
LLA3	Between Groups	9,024	2	4,512	4,349	,016
	Within Groups	89,223	86	1,037		
	Total	98,247	88			
LLA4	Between Groups	8,865	2	4,433	3,561	,033
	Within Groups	107,045	86	1,245		
	Total	115,910	88			

Post Hoc Tests have been carried out to determine the exact groups between which the aforementioned have been detected. Using the Bonferroni method of Multiple Comparisons, a significant difference can be seen between the first and the third year as well as between the second and the third year (i.e. the third year has been shown to be statistically different from the first and the second year of study) on the question LLA3.When it comes to the questionLLA4, statistically significant differences can be observed between the first and the third year.

Table 4. Multiple Comparisons

						95% Confidence Interval	
Dependent Variable	(I) year_uni	(J) year_uni	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
L Bonferroni	first	second	-,01806	,27380	1,000	-,6866	,6505

L			third	-,66909*	,27007	,046	-1,3285	-,0097
A		second	first	,01806	,27380	1,000	-,6505	,6866
3			third	-,65103*	,25477	,037	-1,2731	-,0290
		third	first	,66909*	,27007	,046	,0097	1,3285
			second	,65103*	,25477	,037	,0290	1,2731
L	Bonferroni	first	second	,42839	,29990	,470	-,3039	1,1607
L			third	,78909*	,29582	,027	,0668	1,5114
A		second	first	-,42839	,29990	,470	-1,1607	,3039
4			third	,36070	,27905	,599	-,3207	1,0421
		third	first	-,78909*	,29582	,027	-1,5114	-,0668
			second	-,36070	,27905	,599	-1,0421	,3207

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

By using the Kruskal-Wallis (Nonparametric test) and Chi-square, we can further analyze the given data. According to the chi-square, only LLA3 is of statistical importance, with the significance value of 0,019 (p=0, 019, p<0, 05).

Table 5. Chi-square

	LLA3
Chi-Square	7,919
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,019

a. Kruskal-Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: year_uni

Mann-Whitney U test shows us the exact nature of the differences between the third group (third year of study) and the first two (as previously noted, using the Bonferroni method of multiple comparisons). The premise behind the test is to compare all three years with each other to determine which of the three scored highest, i.e. lowest on a particular question. The tables present a proportionate rise in means with years, meaning the first year's mean is the lowest (M=2, 2400; SD=1, 05198), followed by the second year (M=2, 2581; SD=0, 96498)

and finally the third year scoring the highest (M=2, 9091; SD=1, 04174), as seen in Bonferroni's test.

Table 6. ANOVA Descriptives

			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
LLA3	First		25	2,2400	1,05198	,21040
	Second		31	2,2581	,96498	,17332
	Third		33	2,9091	1,04174	,18134
	Total		89	2,4944	1,05662	,11200
	Model	Fixed Effects			1,01856	,10797
		Random Effects				,22688

5.3.Study Program

An independent samples test (t-test for equality of Means) was run to determine the possible differences in answers between the groups of students classified under the "linguistic studies" and those as "non-linguistic", as previously noted under the *Participants* section.

Table 7. Study Programs

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
programme	1,00	EJK-HJK	10
	2,00	EJK-NJEM	14
	3,00	EJK-TAL	10
	4,00	EJK-PED	20
	5,00	EJK-POV	10
	6,00	EJK-PUM	5
	7,00	EJK-FIL	16
	8,00	EJK-INFO	4

The results suggest significant differences in 5 questions out of the 33 question-survey. They can be observed in the questions LLA4, LLA9, LLA10, LLA15 and LLA27. The corresponding values of significance on the questions are as following: LLA4 p= 0,049;

LLA9 p=0,001; LLA10 p= 0, 033; LLA15 p= 0, 009 and LLA27 p= 0,013. The Mann-Whitney Test (Non parametric) followed the t-test results and confirmed the significance of results on questions LLA9 (U= 526, 0; z= -3,151; p<0, 05 / p= 0,002), LLA10 (U= 616,5; z= -2, 356; p< 0,05 / p= 0,018), LLA15 (U=589,5; z= -2,595; p<0,05 / p= 0,009) and LLA 27 (U= 589,5; z= -2,654; p<0,05 / p= 0,008), with a newly recognized significance of the question LLA30 (U= 577,5; z= -2,696; p<0,05 / p=0, 007).

Table 8. Mann-Whitney Test (Study Program)

	LLA9	LLA10	LLA15	LLA27	LLA30
Mann-Whitney U	526,000	616,500	589,500	589,500	577,500
Wilcoxon W	1852,000	1942,500	1915,500	1915,500	1903,500
Z	-3,151	-2,356	-2,595	-2,654	-2,696
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,018	0,009	0,008	0,007

a. Grouping variabe: programme2kategorije

To see the exact direction of the data, i.e. which program scored higher/lower than the other, *Descriptives* table was used once more.

Table 9. Descriptives (Study Program)

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA9	Jezičari	Mean	3,1765	,16061
		Median	3,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,93649	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,3725	,16794
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,19935	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA10	Jezičari	Mean	3,7353	,21656
		Median	4,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,26272	

		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	3,1373	,17268
		Median	4,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,23320	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA15	Jezičari	Mean	3,0588	,16857
		Median	3,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,98292	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,4314	,15404
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,10009	
		Interquartile Range	1,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA27	Jezičari	Mean	2,6176	,15231
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,88813	
		Interquartile Range	1,25	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,0784	,13959
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,99686	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA30	Jezičari	Mean	3,1176	,17795
		Median	3,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,03762	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,4510	,15163
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,08284	
		Interquartile Range	1,00	

Differences between the two groups of students (first one being the linguistic one and the other non-linguistic) are primarily observed through the values of median (C) and interquartile range (Q). The same procedure applies here as it did in the case of gender; if the means of two groups are equal, then interquartile range dictates the final results. Tables above show means and standard deviations of the groups and allow us to gain a better insight into the students' answers (which are to be further discussed in the next section).

6. Discussion

The results of the study highlighted several questions included in the questionnaire. LLA4, LLA15 and LLA27 gave results of significant statistical value for more than one aspect that was investigated in this research. For example, LLA4 was significant for gender, year of study and the program itself, while LLA15 showed significance in the matter of gender and program. Other questions showed no overlapping of statistical significance.

6.1. Gender

To start with the parameter of gender, questions which were tackled in the previous section and showed statistical significance of some sort were LLA1, LLA4, LLA11, LLA13, LLA15, LLA17, LLA21, LLA26 and LLA27. With that in mind, the first hypothesis was dismissed. Evidently, the ‘gender’ variable gave the most results out of all the parameters measured and is, therefore, the most valuable source of information when it comes to discussing the problem of anxiety this paper aims at tackling. The following table gives a clearer picture of the statements which are to be discussed and further analyzed. The table predominately takes median and IRQ measures into the account, but gives an insight into the means as well.

Table 10. Significant questionnaire questions 1

Variable	Question	Results
LLA1	*"I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class."*	Female students scored higher than male students. MM= 2, 3913; MF= 2, 9242
LLA4	*"It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language."*	Female students scored higher than male students. MM= 1, 9565; MF= 2,6061
LLA11	*"I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM= 3,7391; MF= 3,0152
LLA13	*"It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class."*	Male students scored equal to female students on the basis on IRQ and median, but means differ slightly: MM= 2,0000; MF= 2,7424
LLA15	*"I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting."*	Female students scored higher than male students. MF= 2,9242; MM= 2,0435
LLA17	*"I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM= 3,8261; MF=3, 3333
LLA21	*"I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM= 3,6087; MF= 3,1667
LLA26	*"I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM=2,0435; MF= 2,5758
LLA27	*"I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says."*	Male students score equal to female students on the basis of IRQ and median, but means

		differ slightly: MF= 2,3939; MM= 1,9130

As can be seen from the table, male student show a tendency to score lower on most of the questions with regard to their anxiety levels. Some inconsistencies can be observed in the question LLA26 where they scored higher than female students, who normally show greater signs of anxiety. This could be interpreted as being unsure of their own state or feeling borderline anxious, especially when it comes to speaking in a foreign language classroom, as other questions were more general in their approach to anxiety, whereas LLA26 is primarily focused on the speaking skill. However, the assumption that the students are unsure or not objective enough to correctly report what they are feeling or how good they are in their studies was disputed by Mihaljević-Djigunović (2004) who found "*that language learners and users are, generally, objective assessors of their own skills. In our study the correlation between English achievement and self-assessment of English skills (R= .67) was significant at the 0.01 level. The same was true for the relationship of language use anxiety and self-assessment of English skill (R= .70, p< .01)"* (8). In general, male students are more sure of themselves, less upset when faced with unknown vocabulary and feel less pressured to prepare well for a language class. The same results, which suggest that female students tend to be more anxious than their male colleagues, were found by Cakici (2016), who stated that *"female students are significantly more anxious than male counterparts"* (4), with MF= 45.91 and MM=37.53 (p=.000, meaning the results were highly significant). Similarly, Fage's (2015) results show that female participants were more anxious than male but he mentions that such results could be due to women experiencing more traditional social pressure, i.e. social context could be playing a significant role in Kurdistan (8). On the other hand, Taghinezhad's (2016) results are opposed to the mentioned conclusions. The author states that

"gender does not predict language learning anxiety because no statistically significant relationship was found between gender and language learning anxiety (B= -.033, t=.583, Sig.=.560)" (6). "*No significant difference between male and female students"* (14) were found by Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) either, in none of the categories (communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, English classroom anxiety) that were proposed by Horwitz (1986).

However, it is important to note that both male and female students feel more anxious when it comes to volunteering to speak in a foreign language class, which can be an implication that certain skills should be given more attention in the classroom, whether by implementation of a different approach to learning or teaching them, in order to decrease anxiety levels. The mentioned reluctance to volunteer to speak in the language classroom seems to be a recurring result in many research papers. Lou (2014) reached the same conclusion when investigating anxiety among Chinese language learners, where *"81 (31.5%) participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements such as "I feel confident when I speak in my Chinese class" (10).* Hashemi (2001) as well concluded that *"giving a short talk, lecture or presentation in front of the class has also been reported to be highly anxiety inducing, one which makes the classroom environment more formal and stressful for the learners"(3).* A great number of students report being scared of a possible ridicule on the behalf of their peers when they speak in a foreign language classroom. Ghodke's (2016) study yielded similar results, where 69, 53% of the participants reported agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "*I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language"* (11), and 74, 35% of the participants claiming to agree or strongly agree with a statement "*It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language"* (12).

6.2. Year of Study

The second variable had the least amount of statistically significant questions out of the three variables being discussed. The questions in mind are LLA3 and LLA4, as can be seen from the table below. The same measures apply here as they did when it came to the gender table in the section prior to this.

Table 11. Significant questionnaire questions 2

Variable	Question	Results
LLA3	*"I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class."*	Third year showed statistically significant deviation from the first and second year of study. M1= 2,2400; M2= 2,2581; M3= 2,9091
LLA4	*"It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in a foreign language."*	First year and second year showed significant deviance in their answers (from each other). First year scored higher than the second year of study. M1= 2,8800; M2= 2,4516

The results concerned with the year of study revealed surprising data with regard to anxiety. Although we would expect them to decrease over the years, it would seem that students' anxiety levels are rising with the increasing years of study when it comes to being called on in a language class (meaning the second hypothesis was dismissed). It cannot be precisely concluded why this is the case, but it could be related to the greater demands professors make on students in their later years than they have of those who have just started their university education. From personal experience, one more possibility seems plausible.

The third year has proven be the most stressful one in terms of certain courses. There are more presentations involved, as well as an increased number of discussions about certain topics that not all students would be willing to share their opinions on. All this could lead to an increased amount of stress and anxiety inside and outside the classroom, and could as well be transferred to those classes that normally would not cause such negative reactions in students. LLA4 seems to be of great relevance here as well; but interesting and different data can be read in the case of the year of study. It would seem that first year students are more anxious about being faced with unknown vocabulary when being in class than the students of the second year (and consequently third year students). This is more in line with laymen expectations, since one would expect students to adapt and learn how to cope with stressful situations. We can assume that the decrease in anxiety in the matter of unknown vocabulary came from the mechanisms of acquiring vocabulary, which students are introduced to early on in their higher education. In other words, students are taught to put more stress on the context than on the individual words, which could lead to the results observed from the data.

Inconclusive results can be observed among a number of studies dealing with language learning anxiety. One that gave similar, surprising results was that of Al-Khasawneh (2016), focused on investigating foreign language learning anxiety in Saudi undergraduates. Participants who reported the highest levels of anxiety (general language anxiety) were senior students (M= 3.27, SD=.457), followed by sophomores (M= 3. 21, SD=.408), freshmen (M= 3.14, SD=.364) and finally graduates (M= 3.03, SD=.364) (9). He stated that *"these results suggest that freshmen students at King Khalid University are more confident and hold a greater ability to learn English language and overcome the feeling of nervousness, fear and anxiety"* (10). Nahavhandi and Mukundan (2013), however, found elementary students to be the most anxious (M= 3.19; while the mean of the advanced students was M=2.7), and the results to gradually decrease as the proficiency increases (with the years of study). The

authors refer to Na (2007) when explaining their results: *"Na (2007) believes that this issue can be attributed to students' English proficiency, which might not be high enough to permit them to communicate with others freely, express themselves adequately in class and answer teachers' questions properly"* (Navahandi, Mukundan, 21*).* Even though this explanation would be logical for the results Navahandi and Mukundan (2013) reported, it does not seem to explain the opposite results from my own study, where the older students, who should be more proficient, experience higher levels of anxiety than their younger colleagues.

6.3. Study Program

The last variable included in this analysis is the program of study, i.e. differences between the students whose majors are both of linguistic nature and those students with only one major being a foreign language (such as combinations of pedagogy and English or English and computer science). Questions that have shown to be of statistical significance are LLA4, LLA9, LLA10, LLA15, LLA27 and LLA30. The following table explains it further, with the explanation behind results being the same as in the previous tables.

Table 12. Significant questionnaire questions 3

Variable	Question	Results
LLA4	*"It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language."*	"Linguists2" scored equal to "Linguists1" on the basis of IQR and median, but means slightly differ. ML2= 2,7353; ML1= 2,2353
LLA9	*"I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class."*	"Linguists2" scored higher than "Linguists1". ML2=3,1765; ML1= 2,3725
LLA10	*"I worry about the consequences of failing my*	"Linguists2" scored equal to "Linguists1" on the basis of IQR and median, but means

	foreign language class."	slightly differ. ML2= 3,7353; ML1= 3,1373
LLA15	*"I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting."*	"Linguists2" scored higher than "Linguists1". ML2= 3,0588; ML1= 2,4314
LLA27	*"I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says."*	"Linguists1" scored higher than "Linguists2" on the basis of IQR and median, but means are in favour of "Linguists2". ML1= 2,0784; ML2= 2,6176
LLA30	*"I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.*	"Linguists2" scored higher than "Linguists1". ML2= 3,1176; ML1= 2,4510

The results could be considered somewhat controversial since different individuals could explain them in an entirely different way, depending on their view of the matter. For instance, the results suggest that the students with two language majors are more anxious, prone to panicking when faced with the possibility of public speaking in a foreign language, more fearful of the consequences of failing their classes, more upset when they do not understand something the teacher is correcting and are more likely to get nervous when the language teacher asks them something they have not prepared for in advance. The third hypothesis was therefore confirmed.

One could conclude that they are more anxious due to the work load they have to endure and the more severe consequences of failing (since they are purely linguists, it would be considered worse for them to fail than someone who is studying one language only). Others would find the results shocking, since they would expect the students with two language majors to be more adapted to the load of their departments and most of all, used to public

speaking in a foreign language. Neither of the views would be wrong, so I highly recommend further research into the matter, especially when taking into consideration the fact of a somewhat unique Croatian system of having two majors in this shape and form, where the combinations of majors are both numerous and limited.

One research that can be taken into the account in the matter of study programs is that of Moira Kostić-Bobanović (2009), who incorporated 100 Croatian students "*studying at the Juraj Dobrila University in Pula"* (3) in her study. The participants were freshmen of Economics and they were enrolled in *"Business English as a foreign language*" (3). Participants of her study reported high levels of anxiety on the majority of the Horwitz's questions, especially those concerned with speaking anxiety, as was observed in many other studies throughout this paper. Apparently, *"30% of Croatian students had a permanent feeling that the other students spoke the foreign language better than they did"*. (*"I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do") (4).* Similarly, when faced with the statement: *"I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am",* 40% of the Croatian students and 52% of the Austrian participants agreed. 45% never feel quite sure of themselves (3) and 27% disagreed with the statement: "*I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class."(3),* confirming my own results of low self-esteem among students of English (as a foreign language) in Croatia.

7. Conclusion

Rapid heart- beat and breathing, sweating, nausea and stomach upset, dizziness and lightheadedness, chest-pain, heavy legs, hoking sensation and hot and cold flashes are only some of the symptoms of experiencing anxiety. Even though the phenomenon is highly discussed in the field of psychology, language learning anxiety has met increased debates only just in the last few decades. With debates over whether it belongs under the umbrella of

general anxiety or it has its own distinct features which separate it from all the other forms of the phenomenon, the real issues have somewhat been left aside, which resulted in the lack of research in the field. Among those who did give their contributions to resolving the ongoing questions of causes and effects of language anxiety as well as the possible solutions for decreasing its levels were primarily Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), Young (1991), Hashemi (2011), Toth (2011) and Luo (2014). Findings of all the mentioned authors were mostly expected and straightforward to anyone who was at any point part of the educational system. To be more precise, Hashemi (2011) stated that his participants expressed *"adopting or achieving native (L1)-like pronunciation*" and "*strict and formal classroom environment"* as two of the most common causes of anxiety, followed by "giving presentations and public speaking" (pp 3). Furthermore, *"social context, culture, social status (and) the sense of foreignness of the language learners"* were more important than linguistic ones in inducing anxiety among the students (pp. 4). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope highlighted similar results, with the speaking skill highly rated as anxiety provoking, which was similarly concluded by Hashemi (2011) later on.

The greatest impact Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) had in the field of language study and language learning anxiety, alongside actually separating it from the general anxiety, was the development of Language Leaning Anxiety Scale, which ended up being used in various research to ensure equality of the methodology in order to avoid inconclusive results due to the different variables in question. One of the authors who used the scale was Tóth in 2009, which was then followed by another research, a follow-up qualitative study in 2011, focused on advanced EFL learners in Hungary. The results were similar to those reached before her study, showing most of the students experienced some form of anxiety in their language classrooms. The main reason for the discomfort was the fear of *"being called upon and having to speak up in class."* (6) They would often experience *"trembling, sweating*

(Edit), faster heart beat (Klári); physical activities like self-manipulation; or having a quivering voice (Zsófi), which only increased their anxiety and caused further embarrassment." (6) Participants were reluctant to participate in class, especially after being faced with unprofessional remarks by the teacher while correcting student's errors. Lou's "Study of Chinese Language Learners" included a large sample of learners of Chinese and in the end gave somewhat different results than the rest of the mentioned studies. Firstly, it focused strictly on speaking as a skill, and secondly, the results did not show great levels of anxiety as others have. They were visible, but no to the extent one would expect at this point. Drivers of the anxiety were in line with the rest of the available literature, with *"peer competition"* (11) standing out as the number one source among them. Interestingly, Lou's study gave a better insight into background information and their relationship to the anxiety levels. He found that female learners were more anxious on average than their male peers.

The study conducted for the purposes of this paper yielded similar results. Gender differences were confirmed, as a tendency for the female students to score higher on the anxiety scale was observed. The results of the study were surprising in relation to the year of study as well. Apparently, the older the students get, i.e. the more they advance in their studies (year wise), the more anxious they become. Further research is therefore required in order to fully grasp the reasons behind such data. I would suggest a repeated study with a greater number of participants, as a sample of 89 individuals is not enough to draw more serious conclusions. Since this study was carried out on the level of one university, I would encourage future researchers to take other universities into account, especially when it comes to students with two language majors since they are most likely to become teachers after the graduation. They present a valuable source of information and their high levels of anxiety (when compared to those with one language major) could be an indicator of the issues in the

educational system as well as some individual characteristics specifically related to those opting for two-language major studies.

However, this study served as an insight into the issues of the Croatian educational system and the recurring problem of neglecting the emotional needs of the students. With the debates of curriculum reform currently filling the newspapers, I think the results of the study could not be timed better. In order to insure the growth of both the system and the individuals inside it, and subsequently the society as a whole, those in charge should look into the ways in which they could improve the classroom environment to get the best results for the effort being put into the management and organization of the school curriculum.

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Mann-Whitney Test (Gender)

	LLA1	LLA4	LLA11	LLA13	LLA15	LLA17	LLA21	LLA26	LLA27
Mann-Whitney U	547,000	527,500	453,500	493,500	421,000	548,000	537,500	553,500	560,000
Wilcoxon W	823,000	803,500	2664,500	769,500	697,000	2759,000	2748,500	829,500	836,000
Z	-2,063	-2,252	-3,000	-2,588	-3,308	-2,075	-2,211	-2,003	-1,997
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,039	,024	,003	,010	,001	,038	,027	,045	,046

a. Grouping Variable: gender

Table 2. Descriptives (Gender)

	gender		Statistic
LLA1	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA4	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA11	Male		
		Median	4,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA13	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00

	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA15	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
LLA17	Male		
		Median	4,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA21	Male		
		Median	4,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	3,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA26	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	2,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
LLA27	Male		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00
	Female		
		Median	2,0000
		Interquartile Range	1,00

Table. 3 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
LLA3	Between Groups	9,024	2	4,512	4,349	,016

	Within Groups	89,223	86	1,037		
	Total	98,247	88			
LLA4	Between Groups	8,865	2	4,433	3,561	,033
	Within Groups	107,045	86	1,245		
	Total	115,910	88			

Table 4. Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable		(I) year_uni	(J) year_uni	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LLA3	Bonferroni	first	second	-,01806	,27380	1,000	-,6866	,6505
			third	-,66909*	,27007	,046	-1,3285	-,0097
		second	first	,01806	,27380	1,000	-,6505	,6866
			third	-,65103*	,25477	,037	-1,2731	-,0290
		third	first	,66909*	,27007	,046	,0097	1,3285
			second	,65103*	,25477	,037	,0290	1,2731
LLA4	Bonferroni	first	second	,42839	,29990	,470	-,3039	1,1607
			third	,78909*	,29582	,027	,0668	1,5114
		second	first	-,42839	,29990	,470	-1,1607	,3039
			third	,36070	,27905	,599	-,3207	1,0421
		third	first	-,78909*	,29582	,027	-1,5114	-,0668
			second	-,36070	,27905	,599	-1,0421	,3207

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5. Chi-square

	LLA3
Chi-Square	7,919
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,019

a. Kruskal-Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: year_uni

Table 6. ANOVA Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
LLA3	First	25	2,2400	1,05198	,21040

Second		31	2,2581	,96498	,17332
Third		33	2,9091	1,04174	,18134
Total		89	2,4944	1,05662	,11200
Model	Fixed Effects			1,01856	,10797
	Random Effects				,22688

Table 7. Study Programs

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
programme	1,00	EJK-HJK	10
	2,00	EJK-NJEM	14
	3,00	EJK-TAL	10
	4,00	EJK-PED	20
	5,00	EJK-POV	10
	6,00	EJK-PUM	5
	7,00	EJK-FIL	16
	8,00	EJK-INFO	4

Table 8. Mann-Whitney Test (Study Program)

	LLA9	LLA10	LLA15	LLA27	LLA30
Mann-Whitney U	526,000	616,500	589,500	589,500	577,500
Wilcoxon W	1852,000	1942,500	1915,500	1915,500	1903,500
Z	-3,151	-2,356	-2,595	-2,654	-2,696
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,018	0,009	0,008	0,007

a. Grouping variabe: programme2kategorije

Table 9. Descriptives (Study Program)

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA9	Jezičari	Mean	3,1765	,16061
		Median	3,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,93649	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,3725	,16794
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,19935	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA10	Jezičari	Mean	3,7353	,21656
		Median	4,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,26272	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	3,1373	,17268
		Median	4,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,23320	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA15	Jezičari	Mean	3,0588	,16857
		Median	3,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,98292	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,4314	,15404
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	1,10009	
		Interquartile Range	1,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA27	Jezičari	Mean	2,6176	,15231
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,88813	
		Interquartile Range	1,25	
	Nejezičari	Mean	2,0784	,13959
		Median	2,0000	
		Std. Deviation	,99686	
		Interquartile Range	2,00	

	programme2kategorije		Statistic	Std. Error
LLA30	Jezičari	Mean	3,1176	,17795
		Median	3,0000	

	Std. Deviation	1,03762	
	Interquartile Range	2,00	
Nejezičari	Mean	2,4510	,15163
	Median	2,0000	
	Std. Deviation	1,08284	
	Interquartile Range	1,00	

Table 10. Significant questionnaire questions

Variable	Question	Results
LLA1	*"I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class."*	Female students scored higher than male students. MM= 2, 3913; MF= 2, 9242
LLA4	*"It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language."*	Female students scored higher than male students. MM= 1, 9565; MF= 2,6061
LLA11	*"I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM= 3,7391; MF= 3,0152
LLA13	*"It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class."*	Male students scored equal to female students on the basis on IRQ and median, but means differ slightly: MM= 2,0000; MF= 2,7424
LLA15	*"I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting."*	Female students scored higher than male students. MF= 2,9242; MM= 2,0435
LLA17	*"I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM= 3,8261; MF=3, 3333
LLA21	*"I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM= 3,6087; MF= 3,1667

LLA26	*"I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class."*	Male students scored higher than female students. MM=2,0435; MF= 2,5758
LLA27	*"I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says."*	Male students score equal to female students on the basis of IRQ and median, but means differ slightly: MF= 2,3939; MM= 1,9130

Table 11. Significant questionnaire questions 2

Variable	Question	Results
LLA3	*"I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class."*	Third year showed statistically significant deviation from the first and second year of study. M1= 2,2400; M2= 2,2581; M3= 2,9091
LLA4	*"It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in a foreign language."*	First year and second year showed significant deviance in their answers (from each other). First year scored higher than the second year of study. M1= 2,8800; M2= 2,4516

Table 12. Significant questionnaire questions 3

Variable	Question	Results
LLA4	*"It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language."*	"Linguists2" scored equal to "Linguists1" on the basis of IQR and median, but means slightly differ. ML2= 2,7353;

		ML1= 2,2353
LLA9	*"I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class."*	"Linguists2" scored higher than "Linguists1". ML2=3,1765; ML1= 2,3725
LLA10	*"I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class."*	"Linguists2" scored equal to "Linguists1" on the basis of IQR and median, but means slightly differ. ML2= 3,7353; ML1= 3,1373
LLA15	*"I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting."*	"Linguists2" scored higher than "Linguists1". ML2= 3,0588; ML1= 2,4314
LLA27	*"I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says."*	"Linguists1" scored higher than "Linguists2" on the basis of IQR and median, but means are in favour of "Linguists2". ML1= 2,0784; ML2= 2,6176
LLA30	*"I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.*	"Linguists2" scored higher than "Linguists1". ML2= 3,1176; ML1= 2,4510

Appendix 2

You are about to participate in a research prepared for the purposes of a course Introduction into the English Language Teaching. Purpose of this research is to examine student's perception of language learning anxiety. You will be given a set of 30 questions to which you will give your answers according to your own experience. You will estimate each question on a scale from 1 to 5, depending on the level of agreement with the statements. (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). Anonymity is granted. Thank you for your participation.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I *don't* worry about making mistakes in English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in an English class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	1	2	3	4	5
6. During English classes, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the courses.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English language classes.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	1	2	3	4	5
12. In English classes, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I would *not* be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Even If I am well prepared for the English classes, I feel anxious about them.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel confident when I speak in English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
20. The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I *don't* feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	1	2	3	4	5

24. English classes move so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel more tense and nervous in my English classes than in my other classes.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I get nervous when an English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	1	2	3	4	5