

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DURING ENGLISH DISTANCE
CLASSES**

Oona Kiviniemi
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Department of Language and
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University of Jyväskylä
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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Erilaiset tunteet ovat vahvasti läsnä eri oppimistilanteissa. Ne voivat vaikuttaa oppimiseen joko positiivisesti tai negatiivisesti. Kielen oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta on tutkittu jo vuosikymmenten ajan. Kieliahdistus määritellään tilannesidonnaiseksi ahdistukseksi, jota esiintyy yleensä erilaisissa kielenkäyttö- ja oppimistilanteissa. Suurin osa aiemmin tehdyistä tutkimuksista liittyvät luokkahuoneessa koettuun kieliahdistukseen, mutta on tärkeää huomioida myös etäopetuksen näkökulma, erityisesti nyt kun COVID-19 pandemian aikana suurin osa opetuksesta siirtyi etäopetukseen. Etäopetusta jatketaan osittain varmasti myös pandemian jälkeenkin, jonka vuoksi kieliahdistusta tulisi tutkia enemmän myös tästä näkökulmasta.</p> <p>Tässä tutkielmassa tutkittiin yliopiston englannin opiskelijoiden kokemuksia kieliahdistuksesta englannin kielen etätunneilla. Tutkimus toteutettiin kyselylomakkeella, johon vastasi 45 anonyymia opiskelijaa. Kyseessä on sekä laadullinen että määrällinen tutkimus, jossa tutkitaan osallistujien yksilöllisiä kokemuksia, syy- ja seuraussuhteita, sekä määrällisiä tuloksia. Tutkimuksessa otetaan huomioon osallistujien kokemuksia myös luokkahuoneessa, jotta voidaan vertailla niitä etätuntien kanssa. Tavoitteena on selvittää, että kokevatko englannin kielen opiskelijat ahdistusta englannin kielen etätunneilla, onko ahdistuksen määrä muuttunut etäopetukseen siirryttäessä, miksi ahdistusta koetaan ja mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat ahdistuksen määrään.</p> <p>Tuloksista selviää, että kieliahdistusta esiintyy myös englannin kielen yliopisto-opiskelijoilla. Yleisimmät ahdistavat tilanteet liittyvät ääneen puhumiseen, kuten esitelmien ja puheiden pitämiseen muiden edessä. Myös ne opiskelijat, jotka eivät yleensä koe ahdistusta, voivat näissä tilanteissa sitä kokea. Epäonnistumisen ja kielteisen arvioinnin pelko ovat suurin syy ahdistukselle. Pelätään, että sanotaan jotain väärin tai ei äännetä sanoja oikein. Myös muiden opiskelijoiden ja opettajan mielipiteitä jännitetään.</p>	
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APPENDIX

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study is to examine if university English students experience anxiety during distance English classes. Language learning evoke various emotions among learners of different ages. Emotions influence language learners' actions, and also guides their perception and thought. When dealing with foreign language, the language learner may experience multiple emotion processes since emotions are dynamic and constantly emerging (So, 2005; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Emotions have a major influence on memory, attention, and decision making, which are essential in learning process (Cacioppo and Gardner, 1999:194). Anxiety is considered one of the most studied emotion in language learning (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012:195). According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) *foreign language anxiety* (FLA) is associated with feelings of apprehension, nervousness, and uncertainty. Researchers have stated that anxiety has a negative impact on language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). As Pajares (1996) points out, it is one of the strongest emotions that has an extensive influence on learning, especially when the learner is uncertain of his/her own language skills.

Often FLA is related to classroom settings and different situations that occur in classrooms when learning a foreign language. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed learning since the classes are now taking place online. Learning situations are becoming more complex, and learners are required to take more responsibility for their learning (Järvenoja and Järvelä, 2005: 466). Also, in many parts of the world shifting from classroom to distance learning has required students to adopt a new way of learning. For

some, distance learning has already been a familiar way of learning even before the pandemic. In the recent decades, education technology and online platforms have developed enormously, which have now been a great use during distance learning.

FLA is common among university students (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley, 1997:3). Previous research about anxiety among advanced foreign language students in classroom situations show that most students experience anxiousness during activities that involve speaking out loud and presenting in front of others, but also during test situations. FLA usually affects students' actions, thinking, and thoughts (Horwitz et al., 1986). It is interesting to find out how anxiety appear in distance learning and if students' anxiety levels change in different learning situations. There is not much research done about anxiety during distance language learning, which is one of the reasons why it should be studied more. Also, distance learning has been used in the past as a teaching and learning method, but after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is most likely here to stay, and it may also be used more than it was before the pandemic. Thus, further research about anxiety during distance learning is needed.

The goal of the present study is to find out different situations where students' anxiety levels increase and what factors affect the increase. Also, it is beneficial to compare anxiety that is experienced in the classroom with anxiety that is experienced in distance classes. Furthermore, there are rather few studies done in Finland about FLA during distance learning, which is why the findings of this study may give valuable information to both English language teachers and students.

The present study begins by introducing the theoretical background of emotions in language learning and FLA. Chapter 2 will discuss how emotions affect language learning in general and what factors may cause different emotions during classes. Chapter 3 introduces the concept of FLA and its effect on language learning during both contact classes and distance classes. Also, some previous studies are presented. Chapter 4 focus on the present study, such as the research questions, data collection,

and participants. After introducing the present study, its findings are presented in Chapter 5, whereas more detailed discussion and conclusion are included in Chapter 6.

2 EMOTIONS

Emotions are mental reactions that cause physical reactions and behavioral responses. The emotions we experience in certain situations often affect our motivation and capabilities to perform different tasks (Hall & Goetz, 2013:29). Some researchers have stated that emotions are so called action-tendencies, which causes us to act or behave in a certain way (Zautra, 2003:4). In this chapter I will discuss how emotions are related to language learning and how they influence our learning process.

2.1 Emotions in language learning

Emotions are strongly related to foreign language learning and performance. Language learning evokes various emotions, such as enjoyment, pride, frustration, anxiety, and shame. These emotions are vital for students' learning, motivation, performance, and identity development (Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfel & Perry, 2011; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Emotions influence how language learners choose to act as well as guides their perception and thought. As mentioned before, the language learner may experience multiple emotion processes when dealing with foreign language since emotions are dynamic and constantly emerging (So, 2005; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Emotions often emerge in specific contexts, however, Newberry, Gallant, Riley, and Pinnegar (2013) argue, that sometimes the familiar situation does not elicit the same emotion if the pursued goal is different.

Various emotions, such as hope, enjoyment, frustration, and anxiety, can be affected by classroom factors or individual differences. Classroom factors are for instance the learning environment, task content, or the topic of the lesson. Pekrun (2014) states that teachers should pay attention to giving instructions and well-structured tasks so that learners understand what they are required to do. Learners' self-confidence and enjoyment usually increase when the task is understood completely. It can be stated that teachers have a major role in causing different emotions among learners. For instance, the emotions that the teacher displays in the classroom, both positive and negative, often reflects to learners, which is why teachers should be aware of how they express their emotions during lessons (Pekrun, 2014:21).

According to Frenzel and Stephens (2013: 5) emotions have five components. The first component is affective component, which means that emotions are actually felt and not only mental states. The second component is a physical component, which covers bodily symptoms such as sweating and increasing pulse. Furthermore, people normally think what is going to happen when they do something. This cognitive component is related to evaluation and distinctive thoughts. The expressive component of emotions is related to facial and vocal expressions. Facial expressions, body movements, gestures, and tone help others to interpret and recognize the emotions. Finally, the motivational component refers to the fact that emotions influence how one acts.

2.2 The impact of emotions on learning

Emotions help us to focus on our environment and guide the perception of ourselves and our decision making. Pekrun (2014) points out that positive emotions, such as enjoyment, pride, and hope, promote learning and increase creativity. When the experienced emotions are positive and the learner is enjoying the task in hand, they tend to complete the given task better. As Hall and Goetz (2013) mention, these positive

task-related emotions, such as enjoyment of learning, affect the learner's way to think how to perform the task. These emotions draw the attention on the task, in which case the learner is fully focused on the task.

Negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, and boredom, influence learning in a way that the learner's motivation and enthusiasm towards the subject, task, or material decreases. These emotions usually draw the learner's attention from learning to irrelevant thoughts. When one is working on an activity and begins to experience negative emotions, their concentration often weakens, which in turn negatively affects the task itself (Hall & Goetz, 2013:29). Negative task-related emotions easily transfer the learner's thoughts elsewhere, and the task no longer progresses in the same way. One example of this is the feeling of anxiousness during test situations. In some cases, feeling slightly nervous before or during a test may help to perform better. However, when one is experiencing anxiety, their performance is usually negatively affected by anxiety.

As mentioned before, emotions are closely related to student performance and motivation. Hall and Goetz (2013) point out how positive outcome-related emotions affect our motivation to work for our goals, whereas negative outcome-related emotions lower our motivation to achieve our goals. Outcome-related emotions are associated with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. For instance, getting good grades can be considered as extrinsic motivation for learning, since one is then trying to achieve an external reward (Deci & Ryan, 1985: 250). Intrinsic motivation again means performing an act without obvious external rewards, but rather considering the activity itself being pleasant and rewarding.

Emotions and cognition work together in order for us to deal with and explore everything around us (Newberry et. al., 2013:22). Emotions are a mechanism that tunes or limits the functioning of our minds. Bower and Forgas (2000) point out the connection between the learner's emotional state and memory. When one learns something new

in a certain mood or emotional state, they remember it better later when they return to similar mood or emotional state. Strong emotions and emotional experiences, either positive or negative, can create a detailed memory. On the contrary, strong distressing emotions can also interrupt working memory and shift the attention away from the task to the experienced emotion (Newberry et. al., 2013:28).

3 ANXIETY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

During the last few decades, researchers have been increasingly focused on the link between anxiety and language performance. Anxiety is one of the most common emotions in language learning process, and thus it is important to examine how anxiety appears during classes and how it affects the learner's learning performance. This chapter will introduce the concept of FLA and how it can occur in distance classes. The final section will present some of the previous studies done on FLA.

3.1 Foreign language anxiety

Anxiety is a common emotion in language learning. It is a multidimensional phenomenon of feelings, beliefs, and self-perceptions (Horwitz et al., 1986). Huang (2012) defines anxiety that is associated with foreign language contexts as foreign language anxiety (FLA). It is usually experienced in classroom situations but its effect in distance language learning has not received as much attention. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) FLA is associated with feelings of apprehension, nervousness, and uncertainty. It is usually related to learner's self-image, confidence, perception about others, and beliefs about learning the target language. For example, Spielmann and Radnoffsky (2001) state that anxious language learners often observe the learning situation and create expectations and beliefs about the situation and learning in general.

Anxiety is a negative emotion which usually creates more negative emotions, such as frustration and fear. The negative feelings associated with FLA are related to avoidance and escape, since usually anxious situations makes the learner to avoid or leave the unpleasant situation (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012:195). In language learning situations learners usually feel uncomfortable and uneasy. Understandably these negative emotions can easily affect the language learner's experience on the target language or language learning in general. Horwitz et al. (1986) point out that learners who struggle with FLA rarely experience anxiousness in other situations outside language learning. In addition, FLA in most cases is related to experience. Language learners with more experience on the foreign language and language learning situations, tend to feel less anxious than learners with less experience (Pichette, 2009:79).

According to Aguila and Harjanto (2016) there are different factors, either internal or external, that influence learners' FLA. Usually, the internal factors are related to learners' sense of self, such as beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of themselves as language learners. The external factors on the other hand are related to the learning environment, the teacher, classroom procedures, and teacher-learner interaction. Other factors can also be the learners' personality, attitude towards the language or learning the language, and socio-cultural factors (Aguila and Harjanto, 2016:30).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) points out that when language learners feel uncomfortable or pressure to succeed in a foreign language learning situation, their anxiety level increases. Horwitz et al. (1986) mention that FLA is considered to be a situation specific anxiety, since it is usually connected to a foreign language and a specific skill or task. Language learners may feel anxious during communication situations where they have to speak to one another in the target language. In fact, speaking in the target language is often considered to be the most anxiety provoking situation in language learning (Young, 1990:539). Communicative tasks, such as describing something in the target language or giving a presentation in front of others causes anxiety. In these situations, one of the most common fears is making mistakes (Pichette, 2009). Making

mistakes in front of others may feel embarrassing. In addition, some may fear of being misunderstood. For example, pronunciation of the foreign language can be very different from the speaker's first language. Mispronouncing words can also lead to misunderstandings. Moreover, speaking with someone in the target language can be stressful, if the anxious learner is afraid of not being able to understand what the other person is saying (Králová, 2016: 11).

Another common situation where language learners feel anxious is the test situation. Some may forget what they have learned in test situations and go blank, because the situation itself is stressful. Language learners do not know what the test includes and what the tasks are like, which makes the situation unfamiliar and intimidating (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1999:220). This again is related to the fear of negative evaluation, such as fear of being corrected or making mistakes. Anxious language learners may expect to be evaluated negatively, but they also often underestimate their abilities (von Wörde, 2003). They usually prepare and study harder, since they are worrying about failure and negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). In addition, test situations may feel stressful because someone else evaluates one's knowledge of the language.

Both anxiety and motivation affect learning outcomes. FLA can have a negative impact on language learner's motivation and academic performance. Králová (2016) points out that anxious language learners have different coping strategies since anxiety usually affects one's behavior. Language learners who experience anxiety often try to avoid participation and interaction in class, for example answering questions out loud or talking with their peers. Also, they may sit in the back of the classroom in the last row and try to avoid eye contact with the teacher, or exhibit avoidance behavior such as miss classes. In addition, MacIntyre (2001) states that when learners get more anxious, their output becomes simplified, or they do not want to discuss the topic in more detail. MacIntyre also suggests that anxious language learners may have

difficulties in listening because they often concentrate more on their anxiety than on the language that they hear.

FLA can cause physiological symptoms that some language learners may experience. For instance, sweating, blushing, trembling, shaking, and headaches are common symptoms when the anxiety level increases (Horwitz et al., 1986). Some may even fear that their peers or the teacher will notice the physical symptoms, which can increase their anxiety level even more. These symptoms usually arise when the language learner is expected to do something in the target language, for example speak in front of others or participate in a discussion (Horwitz et al., 1986).

3.2 Previous studies on FLA in the classroom

In this section, I will present some of the previous studies done on FLA in the classroom setting. In table 1 there are few studies presented where the focus is on the most anxious situations, and factors that increase anxiety. These are also the main subjects of the present study. Below I will explain in more detail the purpose and results of the studies.

Table 1. Previous studies on FLA in the classroom.

Research	Most anxious situations	Factors that increase anxiety
Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaking or listening related tasks. - Test situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of negative evaluation.
Naudhani, Wu, and Naudhani (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaking related tasks. - Not understanding what the teacher says. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of negative evaluation and being corrected. - Lack of confidence.
Tóth (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaking out loud. - Making mistakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of being called on. - Students' perceptions of the learning situation.
Almonkari (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaking in a foreign language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of being judged.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting group work in front of the class. - Asking and answering questions out loud. 	
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Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) present a study about FLA in the classroom. The participants of the study were foreign language students at the Learning Skills Centre at the University of Texas. This study discovered that students experience anxiety when completing speaking or listening related tasks. The participants reported that they feel anxious when having to speak in the foreign language unprepared in front of everyone. Some mentioned that they do not understand the teacher and that it is difficult to follow when they do not understand everything. In addition, test situations were also one of the most common situations where students felt anxious. As mentioned before, this is also related to the fear of negative evaluations. The students are constantly being evaluated by the teacher and in some cases by other students, which may cause anxiety among students. Horwitz et al., point out that FLA is usually related to performance within an academic and social context.

Naudhani, Wu, and Naudhani (2018) studied Chinese-born undergraduates who studied English as a foreign language. Half of the respondents were English majors and half non-English majors. The study investigated if Chinese university students experience anxiousness when learning English. The findings show that majority of the participants experience anxiety in different language learning situations. The most common factors that causes anxiety are speaking and fear of negative evaluation. The participants mentioned the lack of confidence when speaking in a foreign language. Teacher-generated anxiety was related to getting corrected by the teacher and being afraid of negative evaluation. There were slight differences between these two groups: the English majors appeared less anxious than the non-English majors, however, both groups experienced anxiety when speaking in front of others. They were afraid of losing their face, not understanding everything that the teacher says, getting bad results,

and being laughed at. Naudhani et al. mention that the teacher has a major role in decreasing learners' anxiety during classes, and that they should consider their teaching methods in order to provide tasks and an environment where students feel safe and confident.

Tóth (2011) also examined anxiety from university students' perspective. The participants of her study were English majors at a Hungarian university. The anxiety level was measured by using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) that was invented by Horwitz et al. (1986). The data was also collected through interviews. The results indicated that highly anxious students did not feel comfortable and safe in their classroom environment. They were afraid of being called on and speaking out loud. Students were also afraid of making mistakes. When experiencing anxiousness during classes, some showed physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, and stomach aches. Tóth points out that the sources of anxiety among advanced-level language students are often related to students' perceptions of the learning situation, as well as perceptions of their own language competence.

Almonkari (2007) studied the social anxiety during communication situations among Finnish university students. The results of her study indicate that speaking in a foreign language, presenting group work in front of the class, and asking and answering questions out loud increased the students' anxiety levels. As highlighted before, speaking in class causes anxiety among most students. Furthermore, Almonkari points out that speaking with a partner or in a group did not cause anxiety as much as speaking in front of a bigger group of people. In addition, discussing in a web-based learning environment felt safe for the students and did not cause nervousness or anxiety. The participants had different coping strategies, some were unwilling to communicate, some did not let anxiousness to affect their performance, and some tried to work hard to meet the requirements even if they did have difficulties in doing that.

3.3 FLA in distance teaching

As I previously mentioned, FLA is considered as a situational specific phenomenon. Given the current global COVID-19 pandemic that began in spring 2020, classes are now taking place online. There are studies done on anxiety in the classroom, but its effect in the distance learning environment has received less attention.

Distance learning has become more common nowadays. Technology evolves rapidly and new online teaching and learning tools are constantly created. Distance learning has many positive aspects to it, for example it is flexible and easily individualized (Mekonen & Nneoma 2021; You & Kang, 2014). Also, technology and online learning platforms provide authentic materials that can be used in various learning situations. With the help of different online learning environments, it is easier to transfer foreign language teaching and learning from the classroom to an online environment. For teachers this means that they are able to use video, text, and audio material in teaching even more, which makes distance learning efficient and versatile (Bagapova, Kobilova & Yuldasheva, 2020: 210).

On the other hand, language learning is a social activity, which can make the distance learning situations quite challenging (Hurd, 2007). The teachers face a new challenge in building class community and being able to offer interactive activities during classes (Payne, 2020:246). Nonverbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language, are a natural part of human interaction. Sometimes language learners do not have or use cameras during distance classes, which usually affects the interaction. Without video image, one has to interpret the other person's emotions and feelings on the basis of what they hear. However, for language learners who suffer from anxiety and are not as confident to speak in front of others, these distance classes may offer other learning activities that they find effective. On the other hand, for those language learners who need physical presence of the teacher or other peers, may find themselves in an uncomfortable situation. Also, the effect of learner's anxiety on

learning may be intensified in a specific context since anxiety can be experienced different ways in different situations (Holmberg, Shelley & White, 2005). Next, I will present a few studies on FLA in distance teaching.

Table 2. Previous studies on FLA in distance teaching.

Research	Most anxious situations	Factors that increase anxiety
Hurd and Xiao (2010)	- When using productive skills, such as correct grammar and vocabulary.	- The fear of making mistakes.
Pichette (2009)	- Reading and writing.	- Using technology and online platforms.
Lisnychneko, Dovhaliuk, Khamska, and Glazunova (2020)	- Speaking English in front of others. - Speaking English without preparation.	- The fear of making mistakes. - The fear of negative evaluation.

Hurd and Xiao (2010) and Pichette (2009) have studied the connection between FLA and distance language learning. Hurd and Xiao studied to what extent and in which situations Chinese English major students experience anxiety in distance language learning and how they deal with anxiety. Their study showed that the participants felt anxious during productive skills, such as using the correct grammar and vocabulary. The participants were afraid of making mistakes and not using the correct grammar and vocabulary. However, students who used English at work or in their free time did not experience anxiety as much as the ones who did not have as much experience. On the other hand, being in an online environment did not have a major effect on the students' anxiety levels.

Pichette's research focused on comparing students' anxiety levels in distance learning and in classroom settings. He also wanted to find out the differences between more experienced students and first-semester students in both online and classroom environment. The participants were divided into two groups of learners: French-speaking university students in Canada who were studying either English or Spanish. Pichette

focused on testing FLA in general, second language anxiety, and reading and writing anxiety. His study pointed out that there was not a major difference between these two groups or first-semester students' and more advanced students' anxiety levels in classroom settings. The explanation to this was the students' experiences. Students in Canada often have mandatory second language courses at school from a very early age, which is why the students are used to language lessons. However, when it came to distance learning, after becoming more comfortable in using technology and online learning platforms, the more advanced students appeared to be less anxious.

Both studies suggest that there is not a major difference in students' anxiety levels. In other words, language learners do not feel more anxious or less anxious during distance classes compared to classroom environment. However, both studies were focused more on distance learning as independent courses and not as live lessons that are taking place online.

Lisnychneko, Dovhaliuk, Khamska, and Glazunova (2020) examined the difference in Ukrainian university pedagogy students' FLA levels in both classroom and online learning environment. The findings show that there are negative and positive changes in students' anxiety levels when shifting to online learning environment because of COVID-19. The study revealed that students' anxiety has increased due to the new learning context. Speaking English in front of others and without preparation are the main anxious situations, which indicates that communication apprehension in general has grown. In addition, fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation are the main causes for anxiety. Students may not be as motivated because of lack of feedback from the teacher. Anxious students also tend to avoid classes. However, there are some positive changes as well. For instance, flexibility of the schedule and autonomy of the students are one of the reasons for positive changes in students' anxiety levels.

Bollinger (2017) also studied FLA in foreign language classroom and distance learning settings. Bollinger examined college students' anxiety levels and how it effects their

foreign language achievement in both classroom and distance classes. The results of the study indicate that students with different levels of FLA tend to be more anxious in distance classes than in traditional classroom classes. On the other hand, there were no major differences in student achievement between classroom classes and distance classes. In this present study, student achievement is not taken into consideration. Instead, the focus is on anxious situations, students' level of anxiety, and how anxiety appears in distance classes. Also, Bollinger did not focus on situations that cause anxiety or how anxiety may appear.

4 PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter, I will introduce the present study. First, I will present its aims and research questions. Then, I will shortly explain the data collection process and the methods used for analyzing the findings. Finally, information about the participants is presented.

4.1 Aims and research questions

The COVID-19 global pandemic has changed the teaching and learning settings, requiring students to attend classes from home via Zoom and other online video platforms. Now teachers and learners are separated, which may cause difficulties for some learners. The new situation has changed teaching and learning which is why it is important to find out how learners' experienced anxiety has possibly changed when transitioning to distance classes. For those who experience anxiety in classroom settings, adapting to new learning situation may have either increased or alleviated the level of anxiety.

The aim of the present study is to find out if university English students experience anxiety during English distance classes. The focus is mainly on communicative

situations and situational factors that are related to language learning. This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is anxiety experienced in English distance and contact classes?
2. In what situations is anxiousness experienced?
3. What differences do students perceive between distance and contact classes from the perspective of anxiousness?

I want to find out if English students experience anxiousness during distance classes and when learning online, so it seems necessary to consider if they experience anxiousness in the classroom as well. Thus, I will compare the experienced anxiety in classroom settings and distance settings. The focus is mainly on different situations where students may feel anxious, and if they feel anxious in same situations in both contact classes and distance classes. Moreover, the study aims to find out how anxiousness in different situations appear and what factors affect the level of anxiety.

4.2 Data collection

The data was collected with a web-based questionnaire during the spring term of 2021 via email and social media channels. I also contacted one university English teacher who allowed me to participate in her distance English class via Zoom and explain the purpose of this study to the students. Then the students were able to answer the survey during the lesson.

The questionnaire was chosen for this study, since the purpose was to get answers from a large number of respondents anonymously in a short period of time. In the very beginning of the questionnaire the participants were asked for permission to participate in the study. Then they were informed about the present study and how the data will be used. There were also two questions about the participants' background: the number of years that the participant has studied English at the Department of Language and Communication Studies, and their previous experiences of distance

learning. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first section contained statements of experiencing anxiety in different situations during English contact classes, the second section contained statements of experiencing anxiety during English online classes, as well as statements related to digital tools that are needed in these distance learning situations. In the first and the second section, the participants were asked to answer to the statements by choosing an alternative from a scale of 1 to 7 that described their experiences the most. Since the main goal is to find out how often anxiety is experienced in different learning situations, the response categories were divided by relative frequency (Lavrakas, 2008: 658). The alternatives were never (1), very rarely (2), rarely (3), sometimes (4), often (5), almost always (6), always (7). The final section of the questionnaire contained open-ended questions where the participants were able to give more detailed responses based on their own experiences.

4.3 Method of analysis

Based on the collected data, I have selected content analysis as the method of analysis. Content analysis was chosen for the method because I will examine the results in more detail and try to look for similarities and differences. It is also a flexible way to analyze text data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1277). In addition, content analysis forms a consistent and general description of the data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009:105). In this study, the content analysis was used to categorize elements that were found from the responses and were relevant for the themes in question.

The results from the questionnaire were analyzed in both quantitative and qualitative manner. It was beneficial to convert the responses into numeric data since it helped process and compare the results (Kaushik & Mathur, 2014: 1189). In addition, it was important to analyze the open-ended questions qualitatively because it provided information about individuals' experiences. These experiences give great perspective from various point of views, since individuals can give very different explanations even if they have similar experiences.

The data was collected and treated anonymously. The topic of the study is related to a rather personal subject, that is anxiety, which made the questionnaire most suitable option for collecting data as it does not reveal the identity of the participants (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006: 437). The questionnaire consisted of statements with answers from a scale, which is why the first two sections of the data were analyzed quantitatively. The scale showed if the participants experience anxiety during English classes both in classroom settings and online settings and to what extent. I will present the analysis of quantitative data in Chapter 5. In addition, I will analyze the responses for the open-ended questions in more detail with the intention to find out the reasons for experienced anxiousness during classroom and distance classes. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis method was used for the open-ended questions. These questions gave the participants the opportunity to explain their experiences and thoughts in their own words. This offered the participants the opportunity to bring up issues that were not mentioned in the statements (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec & Vehovar, 2003: 161).

4.4 Respondents

As mentioned before, the data was collected with a web-based questionnaire. The respondents were 45 university English students who studied English as a major or as a minor. This means that they presumably already have rather good language skills, and the use of English should not present any major difficulties. Moreover, the present study points out if the experienced anxiousness during English classes is related to different learning situations, or to the use of English language. The respondents were volunteers, and the data was collected anonymously. Their age and gender were not taken into account as they were not relevant for the present study. In addition, there was not much information about the respondents' background collected, except how long they have studied English at the university and their previous experience on distance learning.

5 FINDINGS

The aim of this section is to introduce the findings of the present study. I will begin with introducing the general information about the questionnaire and the results. Then, I will focus on the main reasons for anxiety during both contact teaching and distance teaching and discuss them in more detail.

5.1 General information about the findings

There were 45 anonymous respondents who answered the questionnaire voluntarily. The respondents were asked to answer two additional questions about their studies: how many years they have studied English at the Department of Language and Communication Studies, as well as their previous experience with distance classes at the university and before entering university. Most of the respondents mentioned that they have not had distance classes before entering university. It is worth noting that this information is not analyzed in more detail.

The questionnaire provided variety of answers. There were statements and the respondents had to choose an alternative that describes their experiences the most. The statements were related to different situations that may cause anxiety during contact and distance learning. There are few situations that cause anxiety the most among the respondents and some situations that clearly do not cause anxiety as much. In table 3

and table 4 I have introduced the statements and the results from the most anxious situations to the least anxious situations.

At the beginning of the first section of the survey, the respondents were asked if they feel confident with their English skills in general. 22 of the respondents stated that they feel confident with their English skills almost always or always. 16 mentioned that they sometimes feel confident. This strongly suggests that students' language skills are not a major cause for anxiety. At the beginning of the second section that was related to distance learning, the respondents were asked to answer to the statement about experiencing anxiety during distance classes in general. 19 stated that they experience anxiety sometimes, whereas 17 respondents in total stated that they very rarely or never experience anxiety during distance classes. These answers suggest that the experienced anxiety in distance classes is most likely related to certain situations, since the respondents do not experience anxiety often.

Table 3. The results in contact teaching.

Statement	Never	Very rarely	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Almost always	Always
1. I get anxious when I have to give a speech or a presentation in English	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 11 (24,4%)
2. I get anxious when I have to speak without preparation in class	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 11 (24,4%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 7 (15,6%)
3. I get anxious when I get called on	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 3 (6,7%)
4. I compare my language skills to others	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 15 (33,3%)	n= 13 (28,9%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 6 (13,3%)
5. I get anxious when the teacher	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 20 (44,4%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 0 (0,0%)

asks me to answer a question in English							
6. I wonder what others think of my language skills	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 6 (13,3%)
7. I get anxious during test situations	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 20 (44,4%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
8. I get anxious when I don't understand every word the teacher says	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 13 (28,9%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
9. I get anxious when speaking English with a partner	n= 15 (33,3%)	n= 13 (28,9%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
10. I feel anxious when speaking English with the teacher one-on-one	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 1 (2,2%)
11. I feel anxious when the teacher gives me written or oral feedback	n= 11 (24,4%)	n= 16 (35,6%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
12. I feel anxious when I get peer feedback	n= 13 (28,9%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 0 (0,0%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
13. I like to participate in group discussions	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 8 (17,8%)

Speaking in foreign language in front of others has been shown to increase anxiety among students (Young, 1990:539). As we can see from table 3, the most anxious situations during contact classes are related to speaking English out loud. As mentioned before, communicative tasks and speaking in foreign language in front of others in general are the main cause for students' anxiety. This could be due to different factors which I will focus on more in the next chapter.

Table 4. The results in distance teaching.

Statement	Never	Very rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always	Always
1. I get anxious when I have to give a speech or a presentation in English	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 12 (26,7%)
2. I get anxious when I have to speak without preparation	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 7 (15,6%)
3. I am anxious about making mistakes when speaking English	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 6 (13,3%)
4. Technical difficulties make me anxious	n=2 (4,4%)	n=2 (4,4%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 17 (37,8%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 4 (8,9%)
5. I get anxious when the teacher asks me to answer a question in English	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 1 (2,2%)
6. I get anxious when I have to speak English	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 13 (28,9%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 2 (4,4%)
7. I get anxious during test situations	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
8. I get anxious when I don't understand every word the teacher says	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 14 (31,1%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 2 (4,4%)
9. I get anxious when speaking English with the teacher one-on-one	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 13 (28,9%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 1 (2,2%)
10. I like to participate in group discussions	n= 1 (2,2%)	n=2 (4,4%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 14 (31,1%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 8 (17,8%)
11. It is easier to speak English during online classes	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 14 (31,1%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
12. The lack of physical presence makes me feel more anxious	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 16 (35,5%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 0 (0,0%)
13. The lack of physical presence makes	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 5 (11,1%)	n= 17 (37,8%)	n= 8 (17,8%)	n= 6 (13,3%)	n=2 (4,4%)

me feel more comfortable							
14. I get anxious when speaking English with a partner	n= 6 (13,3%)	n= 11 (24,5%)	n= 15 (33,3%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 0 (0,0%)	n=2 (4,4%)	n= 1 (2,2%)
15. I feel more tense and anxious in online English classes than in my other online classes	n= 16 (35,5%)	n= 12 (26,7%)	n= 7 (15,6%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 1 (2,2%)	n= 2 (4,4%)	n= 3 (6,7%)
16. I am comfortable using all the required technological tools	n= 0 (0,0%)	n= 3 (6,7%)	n= 4 (8,9%)	n= 10 (22,2%)	n= 9 (20,0%)	n= 14 (31,1%)	n= 5 (11,1%)

The results of the present study show that the most anxious situations are the same in both contact and distance classes. For instance, giving a presentation or a speech in English is the most anxious situation during both contact and distance classes. This indicates that students' level of anxiety is related to a specific learning situation and not the learning setting. In addition, the least anxious situations also seem to be the same in both learning settings. These situations are speaking English with a partner or in a group. Additionally, another least anxious situation during contact classes is receiving feedback from peers and the teacher.

One of the most interesting findings is the teacher's role in increasing or decreasing students' anxiety. Speaking English with the teacher face-to-face in contact or distance classes does not cause anxiety in most respondents. One of the main reasons for students' anxiety is the fear of being judged. Most of the respondents in this survey are afraid of being judged by either their peers or the teacher, which is in part inconsistent with the results. One could have imagined that speaking English with the teacher would increase anxiety and the fear of being judged would be higher. On the contrary, it may be easier to talk to the teacher one-on-one without the pressure of other students.

Additionally, a few of the respondents mentioned that the teacher's attitude and teaching style can affect the level of anxiety. For instance, if the teacher's attitude towards distance learning is positive and they are confident in using technological tools and different online learning platforms, students tend to be less anxious. However, quick transition to distance classes have caused stress to teachers as well, which may affect the quality of teaching. The respondents also mentioned that if the teacher encourages students to try and emphasizes that making mistakes is an important part of learning, it may help the students feel less anxious.

Furthermore, even though the same situations cause anxiousness in both learning situations, there are some qualitative differences. I have picked two main themes from the findings which I will focus on more closely. The themes are the fear of making mistakes and students' self-awareness. Additionally, I will also focus on the lack of physical presence in distance learning. I have included extracts from the questionnaire to support the analysis.

5.2 Contact teaching

In this section, I will present the categories that I have created in the qualitative analysis: The fear of making mistakes and self-awareness. The category of fear of making mistakes include responses that are related to speaking in front of others, and the fear being judged by other students and the teacher. The category of self-awareness includes answers that are related to appearance, the awareness of one's own language skills compared to others, and also the fear of being judged by others.

5.2.1 The fear of making mistakes

The fear of making mistakes is the most common cause for anxiety during contact classes. 18 respondents mentioned that they are afraid of speaking English out loud in front of others because they are afraid of making mistakes, saying something wrong, or not being understood. The situations related to this are in most cases giving a

presentation or a speech in English. Almost half of the respondents (n=21) feel anxious almost always or always in these situations. In the open-ended questions the respondents were able to explain in their own words, why they experience anxiousness in this situation. The thought of being judged by other students and the teacher is related to the fear or embarrassing oneself. In addition, few respondents feel that speaking in front of other people in general is intimidating even in Finnish. Pörhölä, Almonkari and Kunttu (2019) point out that the fear of making mistakes and acting in a way that is embarrassing is common for socially anxious individuals. They tend to interpret the situation beforehand and are afraid of being negatively perceived by others (Pörhölä, Almonkari and Kunttu, 2019: 727). However, as we can see from extracts one and two, speaking in front of others can also cause anxiety among those who do not usually experience anxiousness:

- (1) "Giving a presentation is a setting that makes me feel nervous and anxious. I think it has to do with being observed and being afraid of failing."
- (2) "I feel like it's not always about having to use English, it can be just about having to talk out loud and other people being able to judge whatever you say. But I'd say that having to do that in English makes it just a little bit more scary, since the others aren't only judging what you say, but also how you say it and your English language skills in general."

The extracts from the respondents reveal that speaking out loud can be intimidating even in their own native language. The situation makes them anxious even if they do not usually experience anxiousness in language learning situations. The questionnaire data also shows that another situation the respondents state to cause anxiety, is having to speak without preparation in class. As we can see from table 3, in total of 13 respondents experience anxiousness almost always or always in these situations. In the open-ended questions, in total of 23 respondents mentioned that they are afraid of

embarrassing themselves by saying something wrong or mispronouncing and stumbling with their words. The anxiety level increases when they are not familiar with the topic, or they are not prepared in advanced. For instance, improvising when the teacher asks a question causes anxiety and makes the respondents nervous. This is related to having to speak spontaneously and being afraid of saying something incorrectly. Also, the 23 respondents mentioned that they are afraid of being judged. The judgment is mainly related to pronunciation, word choices, and fluency.

(3) "Most of the situations when I feel anxiety relate to the situations where I don't fully understand what the teacher is trying to say, especially when they are native speakers of English (it sometimes feels embarrassing if I need to ask what the teacher said again, or admit that I don't understand as an English major)."

(4) "If I am experiencing the bad English day, I get a bit anxious especially when asked to give a speech unprepared."

As extracts three and four show, there seems to be an assumption that English students speak fluent English and do not make mistakes in pronunciation, intonation, or with word choices. It feels embarrassing if the teacher asks a student to repeat or corrects the student. Few respondents mentioned that it is embarrassing, if they do not understand what the teacher says, especially, if the teacher is a native English speaker. They do not want to ask for clarification or the teacher to repeat what they said, because the respondents are afraid of being judged by the teacher or by other students. Also Deterding (2013) points out that asking for clarification may feel embarrassing, especially if the students do not know the teacher or other students very well. A few of the 23 respondents also mentioned that it may not be necessary to ask the teacher to repeat or explain what they said, because in most cases the context helps to interpret the meaning.

5.2.2 Self-awareness

As mentioned before, in the present study, self-awareness is related to the fear of being judged by other students and the teacher, but also being conscious about one's own language skills compared to others. In addition, being aware of the physical symptoms of anxiousness and reacting to them is an essential part of self-awareness. The responses from the questionnaire that are related to these topics, are included in this section.

Self-awareness is a large concept that includes multiple sub-concepts, such as self-control, self-evaluation, self-esteem, and self-reflection (Flavian, 2016: 89). The term self-awareness is broadly used to describe individual's ability to talk and think about feelings and thoughts. It is beneficial to practice self-awareness in order to see things from other's point of view, but also to develop understanding of one's own reactions and behavior models.

The fear of being judged is common among English students. Anxiety is found to be a distraction. As Tóth (2010) points out, in some cases it may prevent anxious students from focusing on the task. Also, anxiety is related to students' perceptions of themselves and others. Students who experience anxiety tend to worry about failing before the situation is even happening. They also compare themselves to others more often than those who do not experience anxiousness. It is common that when one makes a mistake, they feel embarrassed when they realize that they made a mistake, for instance in pronunciation or using the wrong word. Many of the respondents mentioned that they are concerned about what others will think of them.

As we have already discovered, the findings from this study indicate that students are conscious about themselves and their language skills. The fear of failing or making mistakes is closely related to students' self-awareness. Students tend to make perceptions on the situation and how speaking English will affect their performance (Tóth, 2010:166). This happens especially if students are aware of their own linguistic

strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, as we can see from table 3, most of the respondents like to participate in group discussions. Speaking English in smaller groups does not cause as much anxiety as speaking in front of a larger group.

(5) "I get very anxious if I stutter or forget words while speaking or answering, because I feel like wasting everyone's time. Also, I feel like I should be very fluent and have the capacity to discuss complex issues, but when that isn't the case, I get very self-conscious and start to doubt if I even should be among other English students."

(6) "The anxiety causes symptoms such as trembling, shaky hands, sweating, increased heart rate, and sometimes hyperventilation."

Anxiety may appear very differently. The respondents in this study were asked how their anxiety appear and many of them mentioned physical symptoms, such as extracts five and six above show. The main symptoms were trembling, shaking voice, nauseousness, and face redness. Also, sweating and increased heart rate were the most common symptoms. Andrade and Williams (2009) point out FLA is often associated with negative outcomes, such as physical and physiological symptoms. Usually, these physical symptoms appear inevitably without much control. 15 respondents mentioned that they become even more anxious when they notice these symptoms. In contact classes most of the respondents feel that others will notice these symptoms more easily, which may feel embarrassing and even awkward.

5.3 Distance teaching

The technical aspect can have a major effect on students' anxiety levels. For instance, having to use the camera when speaking with other students, poor connection, or using various online platforms may either increase or decrease anxiety. In this chapter I will focus on the same themes but also take a closer look on the technical aspect and

its effect on students' anxiety. Additionally, I will also focus on the lack of physical presence.

5.3.1 The fear of making mistakes

As we can see from table 4, the results for the statement "I am anxious about making mistakes when speaking English" are divided evenly on the scale. However, when the respondents were again asked to explain in their own words why they feel anxious in certain situations during distance classes, the main cause is the fear of making mistakes. The answers revealed that speaking out loud whether it is online or in person causes anxiety. This again is related to the fear of embarrassing oneself by saying something incorrectly. However, in distance classes it is quick and easy to search for words from online dictionaries if one does not remember a certain word in English.

Using the camera in distance classes divided the respondents' opinions. Few of the respondents mentioned that misunderstandings happen more easily during distance classes which can cause anxiety. For instance, when students do not keep their camera on, others cannot see their facial expressions or gestures, which can give important information about the situation or how the other person is feeling. Nonverbal communication can sometimes convey meaning better than words but also helps the flow of the conversation, for instance in signaling turn-taking as one of the respondents mention in extract seven. Moreover, as extract eight shows, when there are technical difficulties with the camera, microphone, or the online platform, anxiety increases for some students.

- (7) "In online classes, it gets awkward more easily because there are often no visual clues and for example other people's silences after what I've said cause me to overthink what they thought about that. Awkwardness in general causes me anxiety very easily. I'm also not very vocal myself in reacting to what others say and it feels unnatural, yet I tend

to nod, smile and make other facial expressions, which of course doesn't show when we don't have our cameras on."

- (8) "I never know how clearly others can hear me, so when I'm speaking in online classes, I tend to try to speak more clearly and carefully, and that makes me struggle even more with speaking and I make more mistakes (which makes me even more uncomfortable). I've also had issues with my microphone, and sometimes people say that my voice just disappears, and that also makes me feel more uncomfortable."

Technical difficulties tend to cause anxiousness to students. As the respondent mentioned above, difficulties with the microphone can make them feel uncomfortable. It may be embarrassing for students, if they do not know what causes the malfunction of the microphone, video connection, or other technical factor. Also, sometimes if the connection is not working properly, students might miss instructions or other important information. When the computer system, online learning environment, or video communication platforms is not working, it can cause anxiety among students if they are not able to follow the lesson (Kuama and Intharaksa 2016; Aydin 2011). The anxiety level increases when students cannot control the situation, for instance if the connection is weak.

5.3.2 Self-awareness

Another anxious situation during distance classes is also related to speaking out loud and is the same as during the contact classes: speaking without preparation (table 3 and table 4). This shows that the situation itself causes anxiety and not the learning setting. Most of the respondents feel anxious sometimes or often when having to speak English without preparation. However, the respondents mentioned the camera usage. They can be at home and do not have to keep their camera on if they do not want to. Few respondents explained that when they have to keep their camera on, they are constantly aware of their appearance. Some feel that not having to keep the camera on

eases their anxiety because no one will see them. It is easier for them to speak English in front of others if they do not have to show their face. Now during the global pandemic, almost all classes have at some point been completely online. Some have never seen each other, so students do not know what their peers look like and therefore cannot recognize them or connect their face to their name if they make a mistake when speaking out loud.

Distance learning allows students to be at home or at a place of their choice. They do not have to keep their camera on during distance classes if they do not want to, even though it is usually recommended. As mentioned before, not keeping the camera on may ease the students' anxiety levels. 12 of the respondents mentioned that they are not as conscious about their appearance as they would be in a classroom. Therefore, speaking in English in distance classes may be easier for some students, as the extract below shows.

- (9) "I find it easier especially when I don't have my camera on because I don't have to worry about my facial expressions, making eye contact with others or otherwise looking presentable and "normal".

Despite many of the respondents feel more comfortable and confident without keeping the camera on, 10 respondents stated that sometimes not using the camera causes anxiety, especially during group discussions. As mentioned earlier, nonverbal communication is an important part of successful communication since facial expressions and body language can help in conveying the meaning or indicating that the other person is about to say something. Speaking with a partner or in small groups in distance classes can cause anxiety, or at least irritation for some students. The extracts 10 and 11 from the respondents show that students do not use cameras very often and tend to be less active during distance classes, which affect the quality of the conversation.

- (10) "It seems like people are more often than not less willing to speak in English during Zoom breakout room sessions. More often than not people just refuse to speak in general. I often feel pretty anxious in these situations, since I don't like to carry conversations on my own. The silence in the breakout rooms feels very awkward"
- (11) "People tend to be less active in online classes than in contact teaching, so the chance of being called on is bigger. That causes anxiety because it is more difficult to listen or engage in online classes, so I am more likely to not know the answer."

The answers from the respondents show that often when students do not keep their cameras on, they tend to be less active, and the conversation turns into silence very quickly. For many students, trying to continue the conversation is uncomfortable. Many feel that in contact classes the conversation does not end as quickly as in distance classes because it is easier to continue to talk about a different topic face-to-face.

The physical symptoms of anxiety also occur in distance classes. The main symptoms are sweating, face redness, and shaking voice. As mentioned before, physical symptoms can cause anxiety and embarrassment among students because they are aware of the symptoms and concerned that others will notice. In distance classes the most noticeable symptom is shaking voice. When being in an anxious situation, the symptoms get worse. The physical symptoms are one of the reasons for avoiding classes. Seven of the respondents mentioned unwillingness to participate and avoiding classes if they know the topic or tasks beforehand. For instance, if the class includes presentations or a difficult topic, some feel already anxious and decide to not attend the class. This negative social behavior may lead to low performance and achievement (Andrade and Williams, 2009: 4). Also, a couple respondents commented that they are embarrassed if their voice begins to shake when they are talking, or they begin to

sweat, and their face turn red on camera. If they know that this will happen when they have to perform a certain task in class, they decide to not attend the class.

5.3.3 The lack of physical presence

The respondents were asked if the lack of physical presence makes them more comfortable or more anxious during distance classes. As we can see from table 4, 17 of the respondents think that it sometimes makes them more comfortable. Other answers were divided evenly on the scale. Also, 16 respondents think that it sometimes makes them more anxious. Here as well the other answers were divided. Moreover, 18 in total mentioned that the lack of physical presence never or very rarely causes anxiety during distance classes.

The open-ended questions revealed that there are mixed feelings about this aspect. There are both positive and negative thoughts. Most of the respondents mentioned that it is beneficial to have the teacher and other students physically around them, especially if they need to ask for help. In distance classes the help is still in reach, however, to ask for it does not feel as private as it would in a classroom. On the other hand, not having others around gives the students more autonomy and independence. The feeling of not having multiple pair of eyes watching helps some of the respondents to focus and make them more relaxed, as mentioned in the next extracts.

- (12) “Even with my camera on it is easier than in contact teaching because I can for example look at myself and look like I’m having eye contact. This allows me to focus on what I actually want to say and makes me a lot more confident, which also makes speaking English easier for me.”

- (13) “Somehow the fact that I am not in the same room with others sort of helps me distant myself from the situation, which might make me feel less anxious when giving presentations etc. In addition, at home I am able to pet my dog while speaking, drink coffee, be wrapped up in a blanket...”

Being at home or somewhere else other than in a classroom seems to make some of the respondents more comfortable. Talking to a computer and not physically face-to-face eases anxiety. Although many of the respondents stated that speaking English in front of others causes anxiety, being at home or somewhere else where one feels safe and comfortable makes speaking out loud easier. One of the most interesting findings is that when asking about participating in group discussions during distance classes, most respondents do like to participate. At the same time, some of the explanations for anxiety are related to online group discussion. The main cause for anxiety during group discussion is not knowing who are in your group until you see them. For instance, when the teacher decides the groups and puts everyone in breakout rooms, the students will then see who is in their group. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, if other students in the breakout room are very passive, quiet, and do not keep their cameras on, it makes some of the respondents anxious. In contact classes everyone can see each other, and the conversation often begins and continues more easily. When asked what factors affect the level of anxiety during distance classes, many of the respondents mentioned group discussions.

- (14) “The activity of other students; I have witnessed breakout rooms where no one says anything, and I get afraid that our group will be called on in the main room with nothing to say.”

- (15) “Teachers are not very inventive and working methods are the same. The biggest issue is that they demand us to do group work

without helping us to form the groups. Normally you could go and ask someone to be your partner or group member but nowadays people just disappear once the class is over.”

- (16) “The fact it is a video call, teacher, other students, break out rooms and having a partner that's not that chatty (then when you run out of things to say you can't really just whip out your phone and go to your own places but you are expected to keep the conversation going and I hate silence in the conversation so I just ramble about unimportant things until the room closes and I am very anxious then)”

Most of the respondents mentioned the lack of conversation in breakout rooms. As we can see from the extracts, it feels uncomfortable if the conversation runs out and no one knows what to do. This then turns the situation very awkward. In contact classes it is easier when students can see each other and often the conversation continues even if the topic of the conversation changes. In addition, in contact classes students are sometimes able to choose their groups, which reduces anxiety for most students. In distance classes if students do not keep their cameras on, others do not know what is happening behind the screen and it may feel embarrassing to start a new conversation with the other group members.

6. DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to study FLA among university English students during distance English classes. The goal was to find out if university English students experience anxiety in different language learning situations during both contact and distance classes, and what are the main factors that affect the level of anxiety. It was beneficial to compare the same situations in contact and distance classes, in order to find out if the anxiety levels increase or decrease when shifting from classroom to distance learning setting. In addition, it was important to focus on how the respondents experience anxiety in certain situations. The reason for the study was to pay more attention to advanced language learners during distance classes and study FLA from a different perspective.

The findings show that most of the respondents do experience FLA in some level in specific situations. The respondents' anxiety levels are related to specific communicative situations and strong self-awareness. The most anxious situation during both contact and distance classes is giving a presentation in English. This involves speaking out loud in a foreign language in front of others. As mentioned before, the respondents were able to explain why they feel anxious in these particular situations, and many of them mentioned that they are afraid of making mistakes and being judged. This indicates that students' self-awareness is strong and many of the respondents are concerned about what their peers and the teacher think of them and their language skills. 22 of the respondents mentioned that they compare their language skills to other

students' skills and are afraid of embarrassing themselves if they say something incorrectly.

Although there is no major difference in students' FLA levels in classroom or distance learning settings, some respondents mentioned that speaking English in distance classes is easier because they do not have to use the camera if they do not want to. Not having the camera on makes the respondents feel that the teacher or their peers are not watching them all the time as they would in a classroom. Sometimes it also makes them feel more confident since they do not have to think about their appearance and are not as exposed as they would be in a classroom. On the other hand, few respondents mentioned that not having the camera on is more difficult in terms of having a successful interaction with other students.

The results indicate that the same learning situations cause anxiety in both learning settings. On the other hand, in this present study 12 respondents stated that there is no major difference between speaking English during contact or distance classes. As mentioned before, FLA is situation-specific, which means that certain types of learning situations are more anxiety provoking. An individual may feel anxious in one learning situation and not in other situations. In this study, the situation is the main reason for anxiety and not the foreign language. For some, the foreign language makes the already anxious situation even worse. Furthermore, some respondents do not generally feel anxious in any situation.

6.1 Further discussion on the findings

Horwitz et al. (1986) studied FLA in a classroom setting. As in the present study, their study shows that foreign language students experience anxiousness when speaking in a foreign language in front of others. Additionally, test situations increase anxiety among most students. Horwitz et al. suggest that the most common cause for anxiety according to their study is the fear of embarrassing oneself and the fear of negative

evaluation. Even though their research is related to classroom settings, the same anxiety-causing factors in both classroom and distance teaching were also strongly identified in this study. Both Tóth (2011) and Naudani et al. (2018) also studied English university students' anxiety levels in different language learning situations. The results of their studies are close to Horwitz et al's. The most anxious situations are related to speaking out loud and making mistakes. The participants in both studies stated that they are afraid of negative evaluation. In addition, Tóth points out that advanced language students are often aware of their language skills in relation to their peers. These results are related to classroom situations; however, they also apply to this study from the perspective of distance learning. Also, the findings from Almonkari's (2007) study are similar to this study. The findings reveal that speaking in a foreign language, such as keeping presentations or answering questions, increases anxiety. On the other hand, having discussions or speaking in a foreign language in smaller groups is not as intimidating as it is in front of the whole group.

Hurd and Xiao's (2010) research showed that Chinese English students felt anxious when they were not sure if they use the correct grammar or vocabulary. They were afraid of making mistakes. Hurd and Xiao's findings are also similar to the findings of this study. Most of the respondents are afraid of negative evaluation and making mistakes in both contact and distance classes. However, Hurd and Xiao's study showed that the environment did not have a major effect on the respondents' anxiety levels. The findings of this study also indicate that students experience anxiety in same learning situations during both contact and distance classes. However, some mentioned that being in distance learning is easier for them because it eases their anxiety. Pichette's (2009) study was more focused on reading and writing, which was not the main focus on this present study. Also, as Hurd and Xiao's, and Pichette's studies are focused on distance learning as independent courses, the findings are not directly linked.

The results of this present study are very similar to the study of FLA in classroom and distance learning by Lisnychneko et al. (2020). They focused on distance learning that

happens live online via different video communication platforms. Their results also indicate that the main reason for students' anxiety is the fear of negative evaluation and making mistakes. These are mainly related to speaking English in front of others and without preparation. These factors were the main cause in the present study as well. Lisnychenko et al. also mentioned the importance of being active during distance learning. It is more difficult to express active listening or understanding in distance learning. In the present study nonverbal communication is closely related to indicating active listening and understanding when having a conversation via video platforms. However, not keeping the camera on can negatively affect the quality of the conversation. In distance classes students also tend to receive less feedback from the teacher, which may be because of the lack of personal contact.

6.2 Implications

The choice of research method was successful, since using a questionnaire and analyzing the data both quantitatively and qualitatively provided a variety of answers. The questionnaire was anonymous, so the respondents and the university were kept anonymous. By using a questionnaire, it was easy to collect answers from multiple respondents in a short period of time. Additionally, the research questions were answered. The open-ended questions gave the respondents the opportunity to explain their thoughts about the statements which offered many personal perspectives and experiences. The results offer knowledge of how advanced language learners experience anxiety during English contact and distance teaching, and how anxiety changes in different learning situations. Also, the present study provided new information from the Finnish advanced learners' perspective. The results of the present study can be utilized in planning lessons to make learning as enjoyable and encouraging as possible during both contact and distance teaching.

The results of this present study emphasize that both students and teachers should be more aware of FLA in distance classes. Since FLA is common in different language

learning situations and settings also in university level, FLA should be addressed and talked about more in classes. Teachers should be aware of its influence on students and learning, and also think about how to prevent and reduce FLA in classes. It would be beneficial for both students and teachers to be aware of the symptoms of FLA and separate it from anxiety that is a part of individual's personality. Additionally, distance classes are most likely here to stay at least partially, which should make this topic a current interest.

6.3 Limitations and future research

There are some limitations of the present study that should be addressed. First, the concept of anxiety can be difficult to define since there are different types of anxieties. It can be challenging to separate FLA from other anxieties that are more related to individual's personality. Especially in learning situations nervousness and anxiety is natural. Second, there are limitations with using a questionnaire as a method to collecting data. One must be very careful with vocabulary and syntax, in order to avoid misunderstandings (Lavrakas, 2008: 653). There is always a chance that the questions or statements are understood or interpreted differently by the respondents. Third, the number of respondents was very limited so the results cannot be fully generalized. Therefore, it would be beneficial to examine a larger group of students. Finally, one could focus more on the previous experience on distance learning in foreign language classes. Their previous experience may affect their level of anxiety, but also differentiate those who experience anxiety in general and not only in language learning situations. In addition, the beginner and advanced foreign language students could be divided in further studies since their experiences may differ in terms of studying languages and learning in different settings.

The present study faced a time limit in which theses should be written. There is not much time to spend in the field to collect the data. In this case, the data was collected from one university. I would have preferred to have English language students from

different universities. It would be interesting to find out if language students in other universities experience FLA in different language learning situations. Although FLA has been found to occur in certain learning situations, there could be minor differences between students from different areas.

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APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Language anxiety during English online classes

1. How long have you studied English at the Department of Language and Communication Studies? (Years)
2. What kind of experience do you have with online classes at the university and before entering university?

This part of the questionnaire is related to contact classes. In each question, choose the alternative from the scale that describes your experiences: (Never, Very rarely, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Almost always, Always).

3. Generally, I feel confident with my English skills
4. I get anxious when the teacher asks me to answer a question in English
5. I get anxious when I don't understand every word the teacher says
6. I get anxious when I get called on
7. I get anxious when I have to give a speech or a presentation in English
8. I get anxious when I have to speak without preparation in class
9. I feel anxious when speaking English with the teacher one-on-one
10. I feel anxious when the teacher gives me written or oral feedback
11. I feel anxious when I get peer feedback
12. I like to participate in group discussions
13. I get anxious when speaking English with a partner
14. I get anxious during test situations
15. I wonder what others think of my language skills
16. I compare my language skills to others
17. Why do you experience anxiety in particular situations during contact classes? (You can also answer in Finnish).

This part of the questionnaire is related to online classes. In each question, choose the alternative from the scale that describes your experiences.

18. I experience anxiety during online classes in general
19. I feel more tense and anxious in online English classes than in my other online classes
20. I get anxious when I have to speak English
21. I am anxious about making mistakes when speaking English
22. I get anxious when the teacher asks me to answer a question in English

23. I get anxious when I don't understand every word the teacher says
24. I get anxious when I have to give a speech or a presentation in English
25. I get anxious when I have to speak without preparation in class
26. I get anxious when speaking English with the teacher one-on-one
27. I like to participate in group discussions
28. I get anxious when speaking English with a partner
29. It is easier to speak English during online classes

30. Why is it easier/why not?

31. The lack of physical presence makes me feel more comfortable
32. The lack of physical presence makes me feel more anxious
33. I get anxious during test situations
34. I am comfortable using all the required technological tools
35. Technical difficulties make me anxious

36. Why do you experience anxiety in particular situations during online classes?
(You can also answer in Finnish).

The last page has open-ended questions. You can also answer in Finnish.

37. What factors affect the level of anxiety during contact classes? (e.g. the teacher, other students, different tasks...)
38. What factors affect the level of anxiety during online classes? (e.g. the teacher, other students, different tasks...)
39. How does your anxiety change in contact classes and online classes?
40. How does your anxiety appear? (e.g. physical symptoms, trembling, avoiding classes...)
41. How do you usually cope with language anxiety?