

"Välillä mua on melkein itkettäny mennä luennolle"

Advanced language learners' experiences with
foreign language anxiety

Master's thesis
Riikka Tikkanen

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
November 2014

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Riikka Tikkanen	
Työn nimi – Title "Välillä mua on melkein itkettäny mennä luennolle" Advanced language learners' experiences with foreign language anxiety	
Oppiaine – Subject Englannin kieli	Työn laji – Level Pro Gradu -tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Marraskuu 2014	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 84 sivua + 1 liite
<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää vieraiden kielten yliopisto-opiskelijoiden kokemuksia kielijännityksestä. Tavoitteena oli tarkastella missä tilanteissa opiskelijat kokevat kielijännitystä, mistä se heiden mielestään johtuu, millaisia vaikutuksia jännityksellä on ja millaisia keinoja opiskelijoilla on pärjätä oman jännityksen kanssa. Tutkimuksessa keskeisessä roolissa ovat opiskelijoiden omat käsitykset ja kokemukset.</p> <p>Kielijännitystä on tutkittu paljon mutta aiempi tutkimus on keskittynyt aloitteleviin kielten opiskelijoihin erityisesti Pohjois-Amerikkalaisessa yliopisto kontekstissa. Aiempi tutkimus on myös ollut pitkälti määrällistä tutkimusta. Tästä syystä tämä laadullinen tutkielma keskittyy edistyneisiin kieltenopiskelijoihin, joiden kielijännityksen tunteita on tutkittu vähän erityisesti Suomessa.</p> <p>Tutkielman aineisto kerättiin teemahaastatteluilla. Haastatteluja oli yhteensä neljätoista, joista kolmetoista otettiin osaksi tutkimusta. Haastattelut olivat Jyväskylän yliopiston vieraiden kielten pääaineopiskelijoita. Haastattelut litteroitiin ja analysoitiin teemoittain hyödyntäen sisällön analyysin menetelmiä. Teemat muodostuivat neljän tutkimuskysymyksen ympärille, jotka avaavat opiskelijoiden kielijännityksen kokemuksia eri näkökulmista.</p> <p>Tutkielman tulokset osoittivat, että opiskelijat kokevat eniten kielijännitystä puhumiseen ja esiintymiseen liittyvissä tilanteissa. Jännityksen taustalla on moninaisia syitä, jotka liittyvät opiskelijaan itseensä, opettajiin sekä kanssa opiskelijoihin. Jännitykseen vaikuttaa opiskelijan käsitykset itsestä kieltenoppijana sekä rooli yliopisto-opiskelijana. Erityisesti opiskelujen alkuaika on vaihe, jossa koetaan kielijännitystä. Kielijännitys vaikuttaa opiskelijan toimintaan, ajatteluun ja tunteisiin. Selviytymiskeinot kohdistuvat kielitaidon parantamiseen, hyvään valmistumiseen, tunteiden- ja ajatustenhallintaan sekä hakeutumiseen tilanteisiin ja ryhmiin, joissa on turvallista harjoitella jännittäviä tilanteita. Kielijännityksen vähentämiseksi tarvitaan keinoja vaikuttaa opiskelijoiden uskomuksiin ja käsityksiin itsestään opiskelijoina ja heihin kohdistuviin odotuksiin.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Foreign language learning anxiety, beliefs, advanced language learners	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository Kielten laitos	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	7
2	FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY	9
2.1	Beginning of foreign language anxiety studies	10
2.2	Defining foreign language anxiety	12
2.3	Effects.....	15
2.4	Causes of anxiety.....	19
2.5	Strategies for coping with anxiety	24
3	PREVIOUS RESEARCH: THE ADVANCED LANGUAGE LEARNER.....	26
4	PRESENT STUDY.....	28
4.1	Aims and research questions	28
4.2	Methodology	31
4.2.1	Interview	31
4.2.2	Participants.....	33
4.2.3	Method of analysis.....	34
5	RESULTS.....	35
5.1	Situations	35
5.1.1	Speaking.....	36
5.1.2	Writing	39
5.1.3	Reading and listening.....	41
5.2	Causes.....	43
5.2.1	The learner	44
5.2.2	The teacher	57
5.2.3	The peers	63
5.3	Effects.....	68
5.4	Coping strategies	74
5.4.1	Skill improvement strategies.....	74

5.4.2	Relaxation and acceptance strategies	76
5.4.3	Social support strategies.....	79
6	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	81
7	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	85

1 INTRODUCTION

“I feel like my French teacher is some kind of a Martian death ray: I never know when he’ll point at me!”

The previous example is from a language student who discussed his/hers feelings towards language learning in a study by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). Most of us can at least on some level relate to those feelings of nervousness that are described in the quotation. Imagine yourself sitting in a language class waiting for your turn to speak or read your answers in a foreign language you have studied for a while. The pressure seems to be building as your turn approaches. How is the Spanish H pronounced or did you get the English passive right? What will the teacher’s reaction to your answer be like? After you have mumbled up the correct answer and the teacher moves her attention on to the next student, you can finally relax.

The example I provided tries to exemplify partly those feelings and thoughts that go through a person’s mind while they are anxious in a language class. However, the description I gave is very much simplified and the topic of language learning anxiety is complex and very individualistic to each person that struggles with it. Foreign language anxiety or foreign language learning anxiety is an important concept because it can hinder learning and most of all take away joy from a joyful process that learning a new language can be. It is therefore that even though this is a concept has received a lot of attention from scholars and suggestions to how to tackle anxiety have been given, we still need further studies that add to the existing knowledge we have.

I have personally struggled with anxiety while learning a foreign language and I have eventually given up on my studies because going to class became too anxiety inducing for me. Preparing for classes took extensive amounts of time and I felt constantly nervous in class. These negative experiences, but also having very positive learning experiences from another foreign language, have made me curious to ask why we get anxious about learning a language and what can be done to alleviate those feelings. In addition, I have a professional interest in the topic because as a future teacher of English I want to do what I can to help my students enjoy and most of all persevere with their language studies even though it might not always be very pleasant.

Moving on from my personal motives and experiences, language teachers and scholars have also recognized the negative effects of anxiety on learning (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986). Thus, teaching methodologies have been developed that aim at reducing anxiety and promoting effective learning. Some of the best known methodologies include Suggestopedia and Total Physical Response. These methodologies aim at making learning enjoyable and relaxed in order to promote effective learning. However, even though these specific methodologies have been introduced to many language classrooms, even these lessons are not without learners that even with the best of efforts struggle with anxiety. In addition, language learners themselves feel that anxiety is one of the major challenges that pose a threat to good language learning outcomes (Horwitz et al. 1986:125). Anxiety, therefore, is a problem that has been identified by both learners and research. Thus, there are aspects to FL anxiety that we do not still fully comprehend or otherwise it could be assumed that language learners would have already been freed of these emotions. It is therefore that further research is needed.

A second factor that supports the need for further FL anxiety studies is that understanding the role of emotions in language learning is important because it is an area that teachers and language learners can actually have an effect on. As Horwitz (1995:578) points out there are areas in language learning we cannot really change such as learners' cognitive abilities or the first language a learner speaks. These factors can influence learning but there is little to be done to alter them. However, what can be altered are learners' emotional reactions to learning and in this domain learners can be helped in order to improve the end results of their learning. In other words, anxiety is detrimental to learning but it also is something that teachers can have an effect on. Teachers as well as learners need to be aware of this phenomenon and how to effectively manage feelings of anxiety.

The goal of the present study is therefore to examine the experiences and thoughts of advanced language learners that struggle with FL anxiety. The main goal is to understand how anxiety affects the experience of learning and what causes anxiety in learners. Further, an area of interest is also to understand how learners cope with anxious feelings and also to uncover the situations that initially trigger anxiety. All of these aspects are studied from the perspective of advanced learners and the goal is to learn from their experiences.

The present study begins with a theoretical background. The theoretical framework consists of two main parts. In chapter two the history and definitions of anxiety will be discussed. In addition, the causes and effects of anxiety as well as coping methods are introduced. Chapter three will look at anxiety from the perspective of advanced language learners. Chapter four will move on to the methodology of the present study. In addition, the research questions, choice of a method for data collecting and the analysis process will be discussed. In chapter five the results with extracts from the interviews will be presented. The final chapter looks at what we can gain from the results of the present study and aims to conclude the most important aspects that have been previously introduced.

2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

This section provides a description of foreign language anxiety and its definitions. Firstly, I will begin by looking at the history of how interest in FL anxiety began. Secondly, I will discuss the different ways that anxiety has been defined and understood especially in the field of SLA studies. Thirdly, the discussion will move on to the effects of anxiety on learning and fourthly I will offer explanations from key studies that explain the causes of anxiety. Finally, the methods that language learners use to cope with anxiety are introduced.

Before moving on to the actual discussion on the history of FL anxiety studies, I want to introduce and explain two key terms used throughout the present study. The field that the present study takes place in is called *second language acquisition (SLA)*. Even though the present study is about *foreign language learning*, indicating that the language learning that is discussed takes place in a setting where the foreign language is not spoken officially, the broader field of study is still called SLA. An example of foreign language learning is Finnish students learning English in Finland. Second language learning or acquisition is a process that on the other hand takes place in a setting where the foreign language is also spoken outside the classroom, in the cultural setting. One example of this would be Finnish immigrants learning English in the United States. Learning and acquisition are also two terms that can refer to different things but in order to save space I will not include the discussion of the differences between the two here (see Krashen 1982 for further discussion). Next, the discussion will move on to the history of FL anxiety studies.

2.1 Beginning of foreign language anxiety studies

“Why do individuals differ so much in second language attainment success?”

The above question was raised by Segalowitz in 1997 (in Dörnyei 2005:1) but many researchers have wondered before and after him about the individual factors that result in differing levels of second or foreign language attainment. Understandably, teachers and scholars are interested in understanding the reasons for differing level of success in language learning amongst students. Such a knowledge can be used to support those that have trouble learning a foreign language. Research on these topics began in the 1970’s when researchers in the field became increasingly interested in this question of why some learners do so well in their language studies, whereas others struggle with it. Keen interest has been especially given to factors such as *language aptitude*, *language learning strategies* and *motivation* and their role in learning outcomes (Dörnyei 2005:6). These individual differences or IDs have been of vast interest in SLA and it is “...one of the most thoroughly studied psychological aspect of SLA” (Dörnyei 2005:6). There also exists vast amount of different ID variables that have been identified to influence learning (Ellis 1994:471), anxiety being one of those variables. In general individual differences can be defined as characteristics that differentiate people from one another and in a sense “...marks a person as a distinct and unique human being” (Dörnyei 2005:3). These characteristics then also affect language learning in differing ways. Some IDs are beneficial whereas others can hinder learning.

Anxiety has been placed inside the field of ID’s but it is also a part of another field of interest called *affect*. Affect looks especially at the role of “...emotions, feelings, beliefs, moods and attitudes which greatly influences our behaviour” (Arnold 2009:145). Interest in affective factors is not new. Already during the fifth century, St. Augustine wondered about the effects of his unpleasant experiences with learning a foreign language (ibid.). However, growing research in the field is much more recent. Affect has been previously seen as second to cognition. Cognitive variables have been in the centre of interest when it comes to explaining differing success in learning. Hence, cognition or reason has been given primary value over emotions. However, Stephen Krashen’s monitor model was a pivotal element in bringing affective factors to the front row of SLA studies. Krashen (1982) suggested that there is a filter that comes forth due to stressful events in learning and this filter then blocks acquisition of new language material. After the release of Krashen’s model several different emotions have

received attention in research. Recently, there has been a growing interest in understanding how both the affective and the cognitive influence learning together.

One of the most studied variables under the umbrella term of affect is *foreign language anxiety* (hereafter FL anxiety). Interest in anxiety began to soar in the 1970's. However, the beginning of anxiety studies yielded mixed results. Researchers were disagreeing whether anxiety was harmful or actually quite useful for learning (Scovel 1978:132). Some studies have indeed indicated that some level of anxiety results in improved performance (Spielman and Radnofsky 2001). However, a much larger body of evidence supports the hypothesis of anxiety as debilitating force. Further, Gass and Selinker (2008:400) point out that anxiety can actually have either positive or negative effects on learning. They describe the relationship between anxiety and performance as curvilinear, meaning that "low levels help, whereas high levels hurt". Scovel (1978:139) has similarly pointed out that anxiety can either be debilitating or facilitating. Facilitating anxiety actually sparks action. In other words, it motivates the learner to try even in the face of difficulties and in a sense small amounts of anxiety have a motivating power. Experiencing small amounts of anxiety usually makes learners to put in more effort in order to learn better which understandably leads to greater know-how. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety has been proven to lead to impoverished proficiency. Debilitating anxiety has a paralyzing power meaning that a learner will rather do nothing than make an effort to learn in order to avoid anxious feelings. Thus, anxiety is not necessarily a factor that needs to be eliminated from language learning entirely. However, debilitating anxiety needs to be removed in order to achieve good results in language learning.

In the early days of FL anxiety studies, anxiety was conceptualized in varying manners and the scales that were used to measure anxiety in learners were also very varied. These varying methods and conceptualizations of the key term led to confusing and contrasting results (Scovel 1978). As Young (1991:427) points out these early studies lacked in clear definitions of anxiety and also did not specify the effects of anxiety on learning clearly. However, there were two significant points in time that set the ground for today's FL anxiety studies. The first is a seminal paper by Scovel released in 1978. In this paper, Scovel collected together earlier research and offered his definitions for different types of anxiety. Another key point in history is a pivotal study by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope released in 1986. In this paper, the researchers defined FL anxiety

and released a scale to measure it. Most importantly, they were the first ones to identify FL anxiety as its own entity that is separate from other anxieties (Young 1991: 427). The scale, called foreign language classroom anxiety scale or FLCAS, has since been used extensively in numerous studies and still to this day continues to be used vastly amongst research and has also been translated to several other languages. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) definition of anxiety also gave rise to new interest in anxiety and due to this seminal paper FL anxiety gained renewed interest in other scholars as well.

2.2 Defining foreign language anxiety

Anxiety is an emotion that all of us can, at some level, describe and relate to. It is, however, a construct that can be harder to define conclusively. The Oxford online dictionary defines anxiety as "a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome". Anxiety is therefore comprised of feelings that are reflected towards an outcome. This definition implies that there must be an anticipation of a certain outcome, an interpretation of what might happen that results in anxiety. Let's look at an example from ordinary life. Imagine yourself to be a student that has just graduated and is looking for work. The job markets in your field are currently in a situation with few places and many qualified applicants. Thus your situation seems difficult and maybe you start questioning your skills and chances of landing a job. Most likely the feeling that rises in your chest is anxiety. It is a sensation of worry and nervousness about what will happen and how will you manage. However, the reality is that before applying and trying out you just do not know, everything might turn out very well. But it is the uncertainty and dread of a bad outcome that affects how you feel and can in the end, affect the way you choose to proceed.

Moving from our every-day understanding of anxiety Pihko (2009:61) describes anxiety as being comprised of emotions of worry and nervousness that arise specially in language learning situations. Generally, these feelings are accompanied by the activation of the body's nervous system which results in symptoms such as faster heart beat and restlessness. These are also things that an individual can identify in him or herself. One of the most often cited and a well-known definitions of anxiety comes from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:128). They define foreign language anxiety "as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". In this definition anxiety is more than an emotional reaction. It affects and

emerges from what we think, feel and how we behave. Anxiety can be seen to be a process that involves several areas of a person's thinking and feeling capacities. This definition of anxiety already examines the causes of anxiety and the other processes that are related to it. They state that anxiety is somehow related to beliefs that learners might have as well as to their self-images. It becomes evident that anxiety is not a factor that exists on its own but is related to factors that are part of who learners are as individuals.

An alternative approach to describe anxiety comes from Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001). They argue that tension (their term for anxiety) results from a discrepancy between student expectations and perceived reality. Students expect or believe something to be true and when this does not take place in reality, anxiety arises. A student might expect a lot of written work to be done in class but becomes anxious when most of the work in an actual class is done orally. To the student this focus on oral communication means less opportunities to practice the most effective way to learn (according to his/hers view). Spielmann and Radnofsky also highlight that there is an interaction taking place between the expectations and reality. Language students monitor the learning situation and make judgements of it based on their own beliefs about effective learning. In the study by Spielmann and Radnofsky, tension appeared to be highly individual and something that "occurs uniquely in the reality of each student and is closely linked to personal expectations and a priori beliefs, especially about learning". For Spielmann and Radnofsky anxiety is a very individual experience and something that is not inherent to any person or situation. Thus, it can be said that anxiety levels vary between individuals depending on their perceptions.

If we go past the surface level of anxiety what we find is a multidimensional construct. There are also differences of opinion about to which basic category anxiety belongs to. In other words, if anxiety is an emotion or is it something else entirely. Dörnyei (2005:198) highlights the complexity of the concept of anxiety by explaining how differently it has been situated to basic category. Anxiety has been seen as an emotion, a part of motivation and as a personality trait. Dörnyei continues by saying that "...anxiety is usually not seen as a unitary factor but a complex made up of constituents that have different characteristics". Different researchers have indeed situated anxiety to different origins. According to Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) anxiety is part of self-confidence and motivation, whereas MacIntyre (VIITE) relates anxiety in general with emotions and amongst different emotions especially to fear. Further, in psychology

anxiety is part of the personality trait of neuroticism, which describes a person who has a tendency to experience more negative feelings.

In psychology there are three concepts of anxiety that are typically separated from one another. These are *state* and *trait anxiety*, which dominate the anxiety discussion in psychology and also *situation specific anxiety* (Spielberger 1983). State anxiety refers to a passing feeling of anxiety that occurs in a moment. One might suddenly feel anxious when asked to speak in front of a class but as the attention moves away from the person they feel relaxed and at ease. However, trait anxiety is something that is a part of a person, their characteristic. This person “has a predisposition to feel anxious” and this anxiety spreads across situations. However, often individuals feel anxious in one particular situation but not in all different ones. Furthermore, the particular situation that provokes anxiety for one person can be vastly different for others. However, a point to remember is that FL anxiety is different from general anxieties and is not an anxiety disorder. The factor that separates these three from another is that FL anxiety is a *situation specific anxiety* (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986). In more detail, FL anxiety is closely linked with a foreign language and language learning situations and at other times in their lives individuals that struggle with FL anxiety do not feel anxious. These emotions are restricted to contact with foreign languages or learning of a one. However, it differs from the broader trait like anxiety where a person feels anxiety across different situations (Horwitz et al. 1986:126). Gardner (1985:34) has also suggested that: “the conclusion seems warranted that a construct of anxiety which is not general but instead is specific to the language acquisition context is related to second language achievement.”

Horwitz has further divided FL anxiety into including three constructs (Horwitz 1986; Horwitz 2001). The constructs are *communication apprehension*, *test anxiety* and *fear of negative evaluation*. Firstly, communication apprehension refers to a students’ fear of face-to-face communication with peers or teachers. Students’ fear the judgments others might make based on their communicative skills in a foreign language. Test anxiety, as the name suggests, comes forth in situations where students’ feel they are being evaluated in an achievement. These situations include different tests and examinations but also any activities the students judge to be evaluative and include proving their skill such as games in class. The last construct of fear of negative evaluation is related to test anxiety but includes all situations where students might feel them being judged not just

situations where they need to show their achievement. Hence, the key factor behind all these constructs are evaluations made by others of a student's skills. Students are fearful of how others might perceive them according to their language skills.

Furthermore, the distinct nature of language learning as anxiety provoking has been shown in studies. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:130) found that on their scale for measuring anxiety the strongest correlations were shown with a statement "I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in any other classes." Hence they argued that this finding shows that there is a unique nature to language learning that causes anxiety in learners. Horwitz et al. (1986:128) continue by saying that: "Probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does."

2.3 Effects

In the previous section, I discussed the basic definitions of anxiety and especially what is meant with the term FL anxiety. In this section the discussion will move on to looking at the effects of anxiety. The discussion will provide research results that indicate how anxiety effects learning and the especially the experience of language learning.

The most studied aspect of the effects of FL anxiety is its relationship with achievement (Aida 1994). In other words, the emphasis has been on proving if anxiety affects negatively the outcome of language learning. The resounding response to this question has been that anxiety indeed affects learning achievement negatively (Aida 1994, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, MacIntyre and Gardner 1991). The focal interest in studies has been on the relationship between anxiety and course grades or other forms that indicate a level of eventual achievement. Hence, the overpowering result has been that those who are very anxious receive lower grades when they are compared to their less anxious peers. This negative relationship between anxiety and achievement has been a pivotal justification for removing anxiety from language learning. However, as achievement has gained vast interest in studies other variables such as the experience of learning has received little interest.

Moving on from achievement, studies indicate that there are other types of effects of anxiety. MacIntyre (2001) argues that when learners' anxiety levels rise their output becomes more simplified. This means that the ideas learners express are less complex

and in general anxious learners speak less in language classes. If one feels very anxious, there will be little interest in talking or discussing a topic in detail. MacIntyre (2001) has also suggested that anxious language learners have trouble listening and taking in new language material. In a language class anxious learners do not concentrate as fully on the language they hear because anxious thoughts interfere with their concentration. The anxious learner is fully concentrated on how to manage anxiety and what to do to escape those crippling feelings instead of taking in language material. Furthermore, learners who tend to produce or speak more also tend to produce, in general, better output. (Clément et al. 1997:274). Non-anxious learners hence get more opportunities to practice producing language and they more actively take on these opportunities because they do not fear making mistakes and seeming foolish as much as their anxious counterparts. It becomes evident that those who are less anxious practice more and understandably became better through this practice. This process of actively participating in language learning is what anxious learners seem to miss due to their negative feelings.

In addition, Eyseck (in MacIntyre 1995:91) has argued that anxiety affects cognition by directing a person's attention towards task irrelevant behaviour. These behaviours include worrying and concern of how one might succeed in the task at hand. The result of these task irrelevant behaviours is that anxious students divide their attention between the learning material and worrying, whereas non-anxious students can put all of their attention on the material. Understandably this process gives the upper hand to those non-anxious students because they actually focus on the learning more and without the distraction of worrying. Anxiety results in this state of divided attention where anxious learners focus both on the task at hand and those anxious feelings. Other studies have also shown that anxious language learners study and prepare harder than their non-anxious peers (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986). The fear of failure in class results in trying to prepare very hard for language classes. However, this increased effort does not necessarily turn into increased learning or achievement (ibid.). This result has been explained by noting that most of the extra time that anxious learners put in to learning goes to worrying about failure or managing the feelings of anxiety. However, it is also possible that anxiety makes a learner not study at all. Avoiding studying can be a way to manage anxiety by trying to avoid everything that relates to the language. Not trying can serve as a way to protect one's self-image from experienced failures. Procrastination is also one of the effects of anxiety because it

serves as a way to avoid those uncomfortable feelings that language learning can bring forth. Procrastination refers to doing other irrelevant things in order to avoid starting to work on the actual task that one is required to do. A good example of procrastination is to decide to do the dishes or clean instead of working on the report that has to be returned by the next day.

MacIntyre (1994: 67) has suggested that one group of effects of anxiety are related to personal effects. These effects are things that the learner struggles with by him or herself. As MacIntyre (ibid.) points out some learners feel very negatively about themselves due to language learning and report feeling like “a babbling baby” or like “a total dingbat”. These effects are not something to shrug off because such thoughts affect learners’ self-images and eventually their self-esteem. Another striking effect of anxiety is that it blocks the learner from showing what he/she is truly capable of. Anxiety and fear of failure can make learners decide to stay quiet in class and not to practice and show what they can do with a foreign language. In a sense the learner is robbed from the opportunity to show what he/she can do.

Anxiety also affects behavior. Oxford (1999:66) illustrates several different kinds of behaviors that can be related to anxiety. She points out that anxious students generally tend to avoid coming to class, they might freeze up when asked something and might also come unprepared to class. Furthermore, there are physical reactions to anxiety such as nervous movements. Oxford also explains that hostile behavior or avoidance of eye contact with peers and teachers might result from experienced anxiety in class. Oxford’s illustration shows how a variety of very different behaviours might indicate that a learner struggles with anxiety and insecurities about failure in class. It is therefore that efforts that aim at reducing anxiety in language classes can translate to extensive changes in student behaviour.

One side effect of anxiety is that emotions, in general, have a tendency to cluster. In other words, negative emotions such as anxiety often result in more negative feelings. In addition, this is a cycle that can form with positive emotions as well. However, anxiety can lead to such strong negative emotions as anger and frustration (Horwitz and Yan 2008:160). This cycle of negative emotion can be difficult to break out of and can lead to the overall experience of learning becoming negatively associated in the learner’s mind. Higgins (1987) also suggests that anxious language learners can be more prone to other negative feelings such as guilt and fear. These, strong negative emotions, can

understandably have profound effects on how a learner experiences language learning. Struggling with anxiety, fear and anger during a language class makes it hardly a thing to look forward to. Understandably a learner will feel it to be easier to give up on learning altogether than to struggle with such strong emotions.

As anxiety is a strong negative emotion, it typically directs people to try to control their feelings. This is where coping strategies come into play. When a person is anxious they choose what to do about it. In other words, there is a choice of a strategy for action. An anxious learner might choose to resort to avoidance behaviours in order to cope with his/hers anxious feelings by avoiding the issue altogether. Poor achievement results often from disengagement. Students decide to (consciously or unconsciously) withdraw from learning because it poses a threat to their self-image. Eventually, protecting one's self-image is more important than learning or achievement. Surely, we can exist without learning a certain language but living with a shattered image of self must be more demanding.

Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) have studied the relationship between perfectionism and anxiety and found that the way a learner reflects on mistakes and successes in learning varies between anxious and non-anxious learners. Both anxious and non-anxious learners do recognize mistakes in their language output. However, these learners differ in the way they react to these mistakes. Whereas anxious learners tend to dwell on their mistakes their relaxed peers concentrate on their successes and feel satisfied with not becoming anxious during a task. The anxious learners also blame their anxiety for their poor performance (Gregersen and Horwitz 2002:566-568). Anxiety is linked to self-perceptions of achievement and skills. Anxious language learners underestimate their skills and abilities, whereas non-anxious learners tend to overestimate their skills. (MacIntyre et al 1997:278).

However, the most profound effect of anxiety is to a learner's experience of learning. Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001:274) point out that some of the learners who had finished an extensive language course with good grades reflected on their experiences later on rather dimly. The students described themselves as "grateful survivors of an ordeal that they would not wish upon the fainthearted". Hence, even though these same students might have few observable effects on the end result of their learning process or even demonstrate actual avoidance behaviour the effects result in the way these students will in the future view language learning and what they believe it to be.

In general, the effects that have been listed in several studies vary a lot. There are numerous effects but not all apply to every anxious language learner. Two learners will most likely have very different manifestations of anxiety in their behaviour and at times it can be almost impossible to observe any outside effects at all. In other words, anxiety can result in the experience of learning causing tremendous amounts of negative feelings that do not become visible to anyone else but the person themselves. Horwitz has also stated that language teachers might be surprised to find out that some of the learners in class are indeed anxious because anxiety is not necessarily visible to others.

Overall, then anxiety has effects on many levels. In the end, many of anxiety's effects can affect students' perseverance and willingness to learn a language. Furthermore, language learning will not be very effective without motivation and continued practice. However, Horwitz and Yan (2008:151) have noted that even though anxiety has been studied a lot still the effects of anxiety as well as its sources is an area that needs to be studied more as these variables have not been established yet in a precise manner.

2.4 Causes of anxiety

Anxiety affects learning and the experiences that language learners have with learning. As I argued in the previous section these effects are detrimental to learning. In order to be able to remove these disadvantageous effects we need to understand the causes of anxiety. In this section, I will present findings from previous research that aim at offering explanations for the roots of anxiety. A discussion of the causes of anxiety needs to look at other variables that affect the ignition of an anxiety reaction. In other words, anxiety is closely linked to other variables and as Horwitz and Yan have stated it "does not work in isolation" (2008:152).

There are several reasons that explain FL anxiety. Firstly, FL anxiety rises from the uniqueness of language learning itself. Language learning includes a process where an individual conveys messages that are personal through a new and unfamiliar system that another language is (Horwitz 1995:574). These messages must be conveyed through "unfamiliar syntactic, semantic and phonological systems" (ibid.). In other words, learners in language classes are asked to talk and write about different things with a limited skill. Especially those older or adult learners can become frustrated with having ideas and opinions to talk about but no language to express these things with. In a sense, one cannot express his/hers identity or personality in class and this can lead to feelings

of frustration and anxiety. Sometimes language learners are also limited to discussing menial or even childish topics which again can feel upsetting for an adult learner. It is therefore that by nature language learning can result in feelings of anxiety. The question here is not merely about unpleasantness in being able to express those complex thoughts one wishes to but as Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:182) explain learners cannot express their true selves which makes, in the end, learners' self-esteem vulnerable.

Secondly, there are variables that relate to individual learners that have been shown in previous studies to predispose learners to these negative emotions. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999:227) studied university students and found that those with the highest levels of measured anxiety shared also some other characteristics. These are "older, high academic achievers, had never visited a foreign country, had not taken any high school foreign language courses, had low expectations for their overall average for their current language course, had a negative perception of their scholastic competence, or had a negative perception of their self-worth". Onwuegbuzie et al. findings are supported at least partly by Tóth (2010:53) who also discovered that language learners who had never visited the target language culture were the ones to struggle with anxiety. Obviously, these findings raise the question of why having little contact with foreign cultures induces anxiety in a language class. The finding that anxious learners are also high academic achievers is what Gregesen and Horwitz (2002) have also concluded in their study of perfectionism and FL anxiety. It seems that some learners set very high demands for their performance and consequently become anxious because meeting those demands is hard if not impossible. Perfectionist learners in general tend not to tolerate any mistakes.

Further, anxiety is closely related to self-perception. Onwuegbuzie et al (1999:228) report that there are three aspects of self-perception that in their study correlated with anxiety. These were perceived self-worth, perceived idea of one's own competence and how well the participant expected to do in their language course. Onwuegbuzie et al. suggest that it is anxiety that causes a learner to form expectations about the self that are overtly negative. A vicious cycle is then formed where these negative expectations serve to decrease the learner's motivation and effort which will inevitably have effects on eventual achievement. In addition, Laine and Pihko (1991:15) point out that language learners' self-image affects learners' attitudes towards learning as well as what learners demand and expect of themselves. They note that because self-image affects

learners' attitudes towards learning it also affects how effective learning eventually is. In other words, if learners think that they can learn a language, they will look for practical ways to learn and embark on doing. However, if one feels incapable of learning a language he/she will see opportunities to practice as fruitless. These two routes obviously have very different consequences. Onwuegbuzie stated that anxiety affects our self-image negatively and as it has been suggested that self-image affects the eventual success of learning negatively. In addition, Cheng (2001:83) has suggested that low perceived competence correlates with high anxiety levels. It becomes evident that what learners think of their own skills and abilities affects how anxious they are when taking part in language learning situations.

Young (1991) did an extensive review on literature on anxiety to find out what research at that time said about the sources of anxiety. She formed six categories of sources based on her findings. These sources of anxiety can be linked with the learner, the teacher or the instructional setting. The categories are called personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language learning, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, language testing. I will now present these categories in more detail.

The first group of sources by Young includes low self-esteem and competitiveness. Bailey (1985) has studied anxiety through a diary study and found that competitiveness leads to anxious feelings. This is especially so when learners compare themselves to idealized models or to other learners. These idealized models are something that the learner feels like they should be like. A learner can view the native model of pronunciation as something he/she should possess and becomes anxious when he/she notes that he/she is not able to pronounce as natives do. Further, peers can seem to have very good language skills which makes the anxious learner belittle his/hers own skills and leads to greater anxiety. Tóth (2010:62) has identified these feelings of being less able than one's peers in class to increase anxiety. Another factor contributing to anxiety is learners' feelings of personal competence. Thus, anxiety increases if a learner does not trust their own skills (Tóth 2010:43).

The second group of sources by Young (1991: 428) called learner beliefs is in her words "a major contributor to language anxiety". According to Kalaja and Barcelos (2003:1) beliefs are "opinions and ideas that learners (and teachers) have about the task of learning a second/foreign language". Horwitz (1985) has identified that believing such

statements as *learning a foreign language is difficult* to hinder eventual learning outcomes. Further, Cheng (2001:79) examined the relationship between learner beliefs and anxiety and noticed that those learners who think that FL learning requires a special gift tended to also be highly anxious. In addition, these same learners viewed their own skills negatively. According to Cheng's finding it seems that anxiety, beliefs and self-image are related issues. Young (1991:428) points out that when there is a discrepancy between learner beliefs and the reality, what results is anxiety. This finding has been reinforced by Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) who also concluded that differences between what learners believe to be true and what reality actually is in the language classroom results in anxiety. Further, Aragão (2011:307) argues that beliefs and emotions are tightly related in language learning. Beliefs influence our emotions and understanding how beliefs and emotions influence each other can also help to understand why students in class behave in certain ways and what anxiety's role in initiating these behaviours is.

Another example of a belief mismatch leading to anxiety comes from a study by Yoshida (2013). Yoshida studied language learners that held conflicting views about language learning. This conflict in their beliefs resulted, in the end, in feelings of frustration. On the one hand the learners viewed accuracy in speaking as important. On the other hand, the learners also valued communication as an important tool for learning. The belief in accuracy made the learners fear making mistakes which eventually caused the learners to remain silent when they had opportunities to speak. However, remaining silent also caused frustration in learners because they realized that the opportunity to learn was missed. This cycle then resulted in more feelings of frustration. This cycle of fearing mistakes and valuing communication can leave learners with little chance of success. The choice is limited to either losing accuracy or losing chances to communicate. Further, in order to break this cycle learners need to challenge their beliefs which will lead to less anxiety.

Now let's return to the anxiety source categories by Young. Her third group entitled *instructor beliefs about language teaching* refers to, as the name suggests, beliefs held by teachers about effective language teaching. One occasion where anxiety is the result of beliefs is when there is a mismatch in learner and teacher beliefs. Learners and teachers can have very different ideas about what constitutes as good teaching or effective learning. When these two belief systems do not meet, learners will become

frustrated with the teacher's behaviour. This has been shown by Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001:270) who note in their study how beliefs and expectations about effective language teaching result in anxiety (they use the term *tension*). The students believed grammar drills and repetitions to be an effective way to learn. Hence, taking part in a class where the teaching was more inductive and there were no specific grammar lessons made students anxious. There was a mismatch between the expectations the students had towards teaching and the actual reality. This eventually led to feelings of nervousness in learners. Even though the goal of teaching in that particular class was to make learning more enjoyable, it was not something the learners perceived to be effective teaching. Hence, the learners felt anxious and frustrated with the course. Spielman and Radnofsky finding suggest that implementing new teaching methodologies to reduce anxiety is not that straightforward. Language learner beliefs must first be challenged.

The fifth group in Young's study is called *instructor-learner interactions*. This refers to ways that errors are corrected in language class and demanding learners to speak in the target class, especially in front of the class. Speaking has been identified as the one skill that causes most anxiety in learners. Language learners fear how they will be evaluated by others when asked to speak with a limited language skill. In addition, the way in which teachers correct language errors can induce anxiety. In general, learners fear making mistakes in class.

The final, sixth group is titled *language testing*. Learners feel especially anxious in those situations where the test type and the exercises learners are required to do are unfamiliar. In addition, discrepancies with classroom teaching and testing cause anxiety. Young reports that if classes are based on communicative approaches but testing drills grammar points learners will feel frustrated. As I have previously pointed out Horwitz also included in her dichotomy of anxiety the fear of negative evaluation which similarly to Young's proposal includes the fear of formative language testing.

There have been contradictory views amongst the field of FL anxiety studies about the cause of anxiety. Ganshow and Sparks (1994, 1996) view anxiety as a result of poor skills in the learner's L1 abilities. They have suggested that anxiety results from a type of a coding deficiency. Furthermore, Ganshow and Sparks (1994:49) have suggested that non-anxious learners have superior language skills in their first language and also score high on foreign language learning aptitude scales. In other words, these non-

anxious learners possess better L1 skills and have a natural tendency to learn foreign languages better than their anxious peers. However, Horwitz and McIntyre have replied by emphasizing that learners' L1 abilities do not explain FL anxiety, its causes and effects, adequately. Furthermore, Horwitz (2000) points out that anxiety is present in good language learners as well, which serves to argue against Ganshow's and Sparks arguments. However, these contradicting views on anxiety and whether it actually is the cause or effect of poor achievement show that further research is still needed in this area.

2.5 Strategies for coping with anxiety

As I have argued in previous sections, anxiety is a debilitating force that hinders and limits language learning. However, not all anxious language learners give up on their studies or even gain poor results. Obviously, there are methods to deal with anxious feelings and in this section I will present earlier studies that shed light on how to reduce the negative effects of anxiety.

A study by Williams and Andrade (2008) examined how Japanese university students cope with FL anxiety. The students were asked about their coping with a questionnaire that revealed that most of them felt helpless and believed that they could not really influence their feelings of anxiety. Williams and Andrade (2008:187-188) found that these feelings of helplessness were especially true in the group of students whose perceived language ability was low. In other words, those students that felt that they had poor language skills also felt that there was nothing to be done about anxiety. It is of value to keep in mind that low perceived ability does not necessarily indicate true low ability, a student might have good language skills but can still think poorly of one's own skills. However, this is an important finding because it shows that language students do not necessarily have any strategies at hand to use in order to alleviate anxiety. It is therefore that language learners need to be guided to find ways to cope with feelings that rise in the process of learning.

However, there are previous studies that have indeed found methods for coping. Firstly, there has been vast interest in how to reduce anxiety and several studies indeed suggest strategies for reducing language learning anxiety in class and emphasize the role of the teacher as the anxiety reducer (see Tsui 1996, Foss and Reitzel 1988). The methods are typically related to classroom practices and entire teaching methodologies. One of the

most often cited way of reducing anxiety in class is to use co-operative and small group tasks. These working methods allow students to work with each other and in smaller groups when the pressure of others or the teacher evaluating one's language skills is more limited. Horwitz (1988:292) has suggested that teachers should discuss with their students about the types of beliefs about language learning that students have. The teacher can consequently help students to challenge any beliefs that might result in FL anxiety. Another aspect of teacher behaviour that can reduce anxiety is closely examining error correction methods used in class. As students can become anxious about language errors, it is vital that teachers react to errors in a supportive manner and by such behaviour that help students avoid anxiety.

Furthermore, Ewald (2007:131) lists teacher characteristics that according to her study boost student confidence and at the same time help to reduce anxiety. These characteristics are creating an atmosphere that is comfortable and supportive, helping learners speak and being reassuring and uncritical. In addition, students feel anxious when they are forced to speak, especially when they feel that the teacher is looking for the "one right answer". Further, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991:303) suggest that anxiety could be reduced by helping learners to improve their self-images as language learners. They emphasize that teachers should aid learners to focus on their positive qualities as learners and help them reinforce those characteristics. This focus would in time lead to more confident and capable language learners. Learners experience apprehension especially related to speaking and therefore by promoting positive speaking experiences removes excess frustration and anxiety from speaking in the target language.

The second line of interest in anxiety and coping relates to the methods that anxious students can use without teachers. Kondo and Ying-Ling (2003) found five categories of strategies that university students in Japan use to cope with their anxiety. These five categories consist of preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. Preparation strategies include studying hard and in general, efforts that aim at controlling anxiety by trying to become better in the language studied. Studies have reported that anxious learners spend a lot of time preparing for classes even though this preparation does not always lead to improved learning outcomes. Relaxation strategies aim at reducing the body's reactions to anxiety by trying to calm down. An example of a positive thinking strategy is imagining that despite anxiety one gives a great performance and reminding oneself that one has survived other similar situation

successfully. Peer seeking reduces anxiety as learners become aware that they are not the only ones that have trouble with a certain issue. Discussing and sharing anxious thoughts with other learners help to alleviate anxious thoughts. When a learner decides to do nothing about his/her anxiety and refuses to face the problem at hand, he/she is resorting to a resignation strategy. Sometimes anxious learners quit studying or dropout of classes because the anxiety they experience becomes too overwhelming.

3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH: THE ADVANCED LANGUAGE LEARNER

FL anxiety has been viewed generally as a problem for beginner's level learners. Studies on FL anxiety have consequently focused on studying learners that are viewed as beginners (Ewald 2007:123). It has been argued that anxiety will decrease when the ability level of a student increases in a particular language. It has therefore been thought that language learning anxiety is related to actual poor language skills and that acquiring better skills will diminish anxiety. Furthermore, Ewald (2007:123) makes an important point by noting that often language teachers are very sensitive to those anxious feelings that language learners have in the beginning of language studies. However, when learners advance in their language studies the assumption often is that these learners are not anxious or if they are it is something that these learners must deal themselves. However, there have been a growing body of evidence that shows that anxiety is not only about poor skills and also troubles advanced language learners and even those who receive good grades from their learning efforts (Ewald 2007, Horwitz 1996, Tóth 2010, Tóth 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that advanced learners are not free from anxiety and knowledge of their experiences with anxiety will deepen our understanding of FL anxiety in general.

Horwitz (1996) argues that non-native foreign language teachers also struggle with FL anxiety. Horwitz (ibid.) studied foreign language teachers and their possible anxieties about the foreign language they teach and found that even these teachers feel inadequate and feel pressured by the demands set out by classroom teaching. One can hardly assume teachers to be beginners in their language learning. Language teachers are skilled users of the language they teach and have studied it for a number of years. It can therefore be stated that Horwitz's study is one of those that point out that advanced language learners can also suffer from anxiety. Furthermore, Horwitz (1996:367)

suggests that language learners that are highly motivated to learn a language might become anxious because of their personal investment in the language learning process. This argument is true for those anxious teachers as well. The foreign language is part of their livelihood and professionalism and thus there exists a pressure to prove oneself to others that one is capable and skilled in that foreign language. Having put years of time and effort into learning can create its pressures. Horwitz (1996) also notes that those who are motivated to learn a language well and worry how their communicative efforts will be judged are those also prone to anxiety. Understandably being interested in the end result of one's learning can put one in the risk of feeling anxious about the fear of not succeeding.

Tóth (2012:58) has identified several reasons for FL anxiety that relate especially to advanced language learners. She studied English majors at a Hungarian university. The participants were interviewed and they also filled in the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale that has been devised by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). The results indicated that amongst the participants of the study were advanced learners that were also highly anxious. The study also showed that the participants' anxiety was related to a fear of making mistakes. Learners seemed to fear making mistakes and also fear the uncomfortable feeling of realizing that one has actually made a mistake. Out of the first year English majors 46 per cent feared making mistakes in class. Other reasons for anxiety included the nature of foreign language learning, personality factors, majoring in a foreign language, the classroom and aspects related to it, one's own proficiency level, instruction and not having had direct contact with the target language culture. In general, it seems that anxiety stems for various sources at least for these advanced language learners.

Tóth (2010:55) made another discovery in her study of advanced learners of English at a Hungarian University. She compared two groups of students to each other, those that study English as their major subject and those that major in something else than a foreign language but are required to take some courses in English as part of their degree. According to her findings, students majoring in English were more anxious than students at the university who took part in English studies but majored in something else than English. This finding poses the question of why students majoring in English feel anxious in their studies even though they are advanced language learners and supposedly less prone to anxiety. This finding indicates that the relationship between

anxiety and proficiency is not straightforward but rather complex. In addition, it seems that majoring in a foreign language somehow makes a learner more prone to anxiety and therefore studies focusing on advanced learners and the anxiety they experience are much needed. It can be argued that university language students possess good language skills but according to Tóth's findings these skills do not protect from language anxiety.

A study by Llinás and Garau (2009:101) also provides support for the claim that advanced learners struggle with anxiety. They found a correlation between years of study and anxiety. In other words, the students who had studied the longest and, thus were the most advanced, were the most anxious ones too when compared with students who had less years of study. In this study, it seems that anxiety increases when students proceed in their studies. However, a point revealed in the study was that even though some students had high anxiety they also had very good grades. It is therefore that anxiety does not seem to have an effect on their eventual achievement on the language course. Advanced language learners can also be very anxious and nervous but merely looking at course grades will not indicate who suffers from anxiety and who does not.

The inconsistencies in findings about anxiety and the advanced language learners require more research. The voice of advanced language learners has often been dismissed in studies utilizing questionnaires. It is therefore that in the present study I aim at uncovering if advanced language learners struggle with anxiety and what their experiences with anxiety are like.

4 PRESENT STUDY

The next section will present the study and its aims in detail. I will begin the chapter firstly by presenting the motivations and aims of the study followed by the research questions. Secondly, I will present the process of collecting the data, the participants of the study and finally discuss the method of analysis.

4.1 Aims and research questions

The aim of the present study is to examine foreign language learning anxiety from the perspective of advanced language learners. To goal is to learn about the concept of FL anxiety through the opinions and experiences of learners that struggle with it. Thus, the present study is by nature descriptive and the focus is on describing the participants'

personal experiences. By learning about the personal experiences of anxious learners we gain knowledge that helps to conceptualize FL anxiety and also gives methods to make language learning less anxiety inducing.

The reasons for conducting a study that explores learners own reactions to FL anxiety are twofold. Firstly, research in the field has strongly focused on quantitative study methods and it has relied on structured questionnaires. These methods have provided knowledge about the overall existence of the phenomenon and it has drafted a picture of how anxiety links to achievement and behaviour. However, what is missing is an understanding of the learners' personal experiences and how learners cope with anxiety. Research has indicated that even some of the successful language learners experience anxiety. Secondly, university language learners are all advanced, good language learners. They have spent years studying the particular languages and have a good understanding of what it takes to learn a language. Therefore, understanding how these advanced learners cope with possible feelings of anxiety can provide information for others to cope with anxiety. Furthermore, it is possible that even some of the advanced learners do not have effective strategies for coping with anxiety. Therefore, it is vital to provide these learners with knowledge about the existence of foreign language learning anxiety and help them manage challenging emotional states that rise in learning more effectively.

Tóth (2010:3) points out the neglected group of advanced language learners in the field of FL anxiety studies. Most, if not all, research has focused on studying beginning or intermediate language learners. Thus, studies particularly focusing on advanced learners are needed for a more holistic picture of the anxiety concept. Advanced language learners have throughout their studies gained good results because they have been able to proceed with their language studies. Nonetheless, their experience with learning languages can be troublesome. Spielman and Radnofsky (2001:260) stated in their study that those language students that gained the best results were also the ones that were least satisfied with their language course in general. Then again students with lower grades were actually happy with the course they had taken part in. Therefore, students might receive good grades but actually do not enjoy learning.

Previous studies on anxiety have been done mostly in the United States and Canada. The most often cited study paradigm includes university students in an Anglo-American context. These students are often required to take a foreign language class as part of

their degree. Thus, language study is only one part of their degree and usually these students study something else than a language as their major subject. However, in recent years the context of studies has started to broaden. Zsuzsa Tóth (2010) has examined FL anxiety in the Hungarian context and several scholars in China and Japan (Williams and Andrade 2008) have studied anxiety in their cultural contexts. In Finland Marja-Kaisa Pihko (2007, 2009) has studied anxiety in elementary school students. Her focus has especially been on school learning and differences between traditional language teaching and CLIL language teaching. However, studies focusing on university students and their anxiety in the Finnish context are scarce. Further, Pihko (2009:67) has stated that to better understand anxiety we need studies that look at anxiety in different contexts and the present study aims indeed at bringing forth a new context and a new group of participants.

As I have previously mentioned, foreign language anxiety is a concept that has received a great deal of attention. Especially researchers have been interested in studying anxiety and its effects on achievement. There has been a keen interest to prove that anxiety does effect achievement and performance in language learning negatively. However, my interest is to better understand the learning experience of language students. The experience of learning, what it feels like to learn a language, has notable effects on learner motivation and willingness to persevere with language studies. Furthermore, Horwitz and Yan (2008:151) note the lack of studies that have actually focused on the experiences of the learner dealing with anxiety. My view on the topic is in line with Elaine Horwitz's statement from 2001. Horwitz states that she has become "more interested in the experience of second language learning than in the simple prediction of its success".

From the above mentioned reasons of how anxiety has previously been studied, the present study aims at examining FL anxiety in a less studied context, with a scarcely used method and amongst less studied language learners. This perspective will hopefully offer new insights into FL anxiety and spark more research that will widen our understanding of FL anxiety and ultimately help with finding ways to reduce anxiety in different contexts and with different learners.

Finally, based on those points that I have made in this chapter, the research task is to find out about FL anxiety from individuals who identify themselves as anxious

language learners. Thus, the research questions are from the perspective of the advanced language learner:

- What are the learning situations that induce anxiety?
- What causes anxiety?
- What are the self-perceived effects of anxiety on language learning?
- How do advanced learners cope with anxiety?

I am interested in understanding what is common in the experiences of all or most of the participants and on the other hand, what is different. All the participants struggle with anxiety but the developmental pathways that have led to their anxiety are different and unique. Anxiety cannot be separated from the context or setting where it takes place. Different tasks, situations or teachers do not have characteristics in them that would automatically provoke anxiety but the anxiety stems from the task/situation/teacher and the evaluation made by an individual.

4.2 Methodology

The main goal in choosing the correct methods for data collection and analysis is to answer the research questions set in chapter 4.2. Qualitative methods offer the best opportunities to reach this goal and I will therefore now present the methodology of the present study.

4.2.1 Interview

The reasons for choosing an interview as the method for data collection are twofold. Firstly, studies on FL anxiety have seldom utilized interviews as a data collection method. The most often utilized method for data collection has been scales and surveys. One of the best known and most utilised scale is the FLACS formed by Elaine Horwitz in 1986. However, in the present study the data was collected with a thematic semi-structured interview. Previous research has recognised the value of adding new methods to better understand anxiety. As Horwitz and Yan (2008:153) point out interviewing language learners would be an effective way of better understanding FL anxiety. They also point out that interviewing is a method often neglected in anxiety studies. Another aspect that supports the choice of interviews as a method for data collection is that interviews give a better understanding of how anxiety effects learning from the point of view of learners that struggle with it (ibid.). Secondly, the choice of interviewing is

supported by the aims of the present study. An interview makes it possible to let the participants to describe their experiences in detail and also gives the interviewer an opportunity to ask further questions if necessary.

The interviews were conducted as a semi-structured theme interview. In this type of an interview the questions are same for each participants and the participants are free to answer questions in their own words (Eskola and Suoranta 2003:86). The purpose, in the interviews, was to bring forth the voice of the participants and to understand their individual experiences with language anxiety. As Kvale (2007:11) explains qualitative interviewing uncovers the experiences and meanings that the interviewees attach to their every-day experiences. It is about what the topic of the interview means to the interviewee, not to the interviewer or to any other person. All the interviews were based on the same set of questions. However, the interviews varied according to the experiences of the particular participants in question and when needed I adjusted my questions accordingly. Each participant was free to speak of any experiences they felt were central to their experience and therefore all the interviews were unique.

In theme interviews the questions are based on the research questions and on knowledge already acquired of the phenomenon (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:75). Thus, I began planning the interview questions around the four research questions and formed several questions under the four main topics to be discussed. The main idea was to start with a rather general and open question in order to give the participant the opportunity to speak freely of any aspect he/she felt was important. However, I formed and also asked other more precise questions to help the participants with thinking about the topic in more detail and from different aspects.

The process of collecting data began in February 2013. I wrote an email message looking for interviewees for a study about FL anxiety. This email was sent to the email lists that all the different languages have for sending information to their students. In other words, the email was sent to everyone who has listed him or herself to the email list of English, Swedish, French, German or Italian. The goal was to reach as many language students as possible. The choice of sending an email through these lists is a valid method for looking for participants because it is an easy method to contact a large number of people. Within two days I received altogether fifteen answers and made arrangements to meet with all of the respondents. One of the interviewees was in the end unable to take part in the study and one of the interviews was not taken as part of

the study. The interview that was dismissed lasted only for ten minutes and it became evident that the participant had no personal experience with FL anxiety. Hence, the data consist of thirteen interviews that were recorded and transcribed.

The interviews took place at two different locations, the department of languages and the university library. They lasted in general, from twenty-two minutes to fifty minutes. The interviews were conducted in Finnish in order to make the discussion as easy as possible and comfortable to the participants. The use of the participant's native tongue makes it easier to express complex emotions and thoughts more freely. Further, as the topic of discussion is FL anxiety it is important to use a language that the participant does not feel anxious about using.

I explained at the beginning of the interviews to each participant that the interview and the following study will be done anonymously. Thus, the names used in the results section are ones that I have chosen at random, not the real names of the participants. I have also deleted all references to particular languages in the interview examples. This is done to also protect the participants and their identity but also to keep the focus on the anxious learner and not to in any way draw attention to any certain language or to any other people.

The interview questions were formed around my research questions (see Appendix 1). I began the interviews with questions about the participant's background before moving onto the actual questions. The goal was to start the interviews with casual discussion before moving onto the main topic. The main part of the interview was built around four themes. The first theme focused on the questions about when and in what situations anxiety takes over, the second part focused on the causes of anxiety, the third on the effects that anxiety has had on the participants studies and learning and the final theme dealt with coping methods. The participants talked about many aspects that they felt relate to anxiety and language learning.

4.2.2 Participants

The participants of the study were all students at the University of Jyväskylä. All of them spoke Finnish as their native tongue. They majored in a foreign language and presented all the different languages that are taught at the department of languages in Jyväskylä at the time of the interviews. In addition, eleven out of thirteen participants had another language as a minor subject. The backgrounds of the participants were

otherwise varied. At the time of the interviews they had studied at the university from two to four years and eight reported having taken part in a student exchange program or a period of working abroad. Furthermore, all the participants were female. All of this background information was gathered from the participants at the beginning of the interviews.

4.2.3 Method of analysis

The present study is qualitative by nature. Qualitative research is the suitable method for the present study because it aims at describing experiences and views in detail. The main interest, in the present study, is to understand the experience of these individuals to “find...*their* truth” (Riley 1997:128). Qualitative analysis is also a less used method in anxiety studies and therefore the aim is to also study the topic with a less used method. Qualitative methods are also often used in studies that include a smaller number of participants than quantitative study paradigms.

The data was analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is a method used to form a consistent and general description of data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:105). The analysis in content analysis aims at revealing meanings and ways that the participants view and organize their world (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:68). Content analysis prepares data into such a form that the actual conclusions can be formed out of it. In other words, content analysis does not produce ready conclusions that is left for the researcher to do once the data is in reduced form.

The analysis stems from the data. In qualitative research theories can be formed from empiric data (Eskola and Suoranta 2003:19). This type of analysis is often used in areas of research where there exists little previous knowledge of the topic. Even though anxiety has been studied in detail, it has gained less interest in Finland. My goal is to offer detailed information on the anxiety experienced by advanced language learners and thus I have chosen to complete the analysis as a process that rises from the data.

The process began with the taped interviews being converted into texts by transcribing the interviews. I then began the analysis process by reading and rereading the transcribed interviews. After having familiarized myself well enough with the material, I started dividing and sorting the data. I devised four general groups: situations, causes, effects and coping. These are the same four groups that formed the research questions and also guided the formation of the interview questions. I then picked all the extracts

from the interviews that dealt with any of the four topics and ended with having sorted the data that I needed for the present study and left all the other irrelevant material out of the next phases of analysis. Now I had four categories with extracts from the interviews. I then read through each category and formed sub-categories by trying to find instances of similarities and differences. This was a phase that I repeated often because understandably it was a challenge to group the individualistic experiences of the participants. However, eventually through repeated categorizing and rereading the categories and their subcategories started to form. These categories are the ones I will present in the next chapter with my conclusions.

As mentioned, the results will be presented in the next chapter. I have included extracts from the interviews to support my discussion. I have also added English translations immediately after the Finnish extract. I have removed all references to particular languages in order to protect the identity of the participants and any other people that the participants might talk about. When I have removed a name of a language I have replaced it with the term *X kieli/X language* in italics or possibly some other phrase in order to restore the readability of the extract.

5 RESULTS

In this section, the results of the present study are discussed with extracts from the interviews. The discussion is divided according to the themes that rise from the research questions of the study. The analysis is therefore divided into four sections that each provides a discussion related to one of the research questions. I will present each research question and the aims of each paragraph in more detail at the beginning of a section.

5.1 Situations

The first research question presented in section 4.2 aims at uncovering those learning situations that the participants find anxiety inducing. During the interviews the participants were asked in general which situations they find anxiety inducing. Having knowledge of situations that cause anxiety for advanced language learners' helps teachers as well as learners to modify these situations in ways that will make them less debilitating and more opt of actual learning.

In general, according to the experiences of the participants, foreign language anxiety is related to all language skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening of a foreign language. However, most often the interviewees relate anxiety to the output stages of language learning. In other words, speaking and writing provoke anxiety more often than reading and listening. I will next present the findings related to anxiety in particular situations in more detail.

5.1.1 Speaking

Previous studies on FL anxiety show that language learners feel anxious when they are expected to speak in a foreign language. This finding is supported by several previous studies (Macintyre and Gardner 1991). Horwitz (1995:575) has also concluded that even those students that do not feel anxious otherwise are anxious when it comes to speaking publicly in a foreign language. The first theme that the participants also discussed about was speaking in a foreign language. In the extract (1) Katri brings forth a situation that she finds anxiety inducing:

- 1) Katri: ...sitä mä jännitän jos pitää mennä jollekin lehtorille puhumaan tuolla niinku kysymään jotakin että mitä tuli läksyksi tai jotain niin puhuuko suomee vai kieltä X vai kieltä Y ja miten sen sanoo

Katri: ...I'm anxious if I have to go speak to a teacher there to ask something like what was given as homework or something so whether to speak Finnish or language X or language Y and how to say it

Katri explains that she is nervous about asking a teacher what was given as homework. She feels especially hesitant about whether to speak Finnish or a foreign language to the teacher and how to phrase her words when addressing a teacher. In this case, anxiety is related to a spontaneous speaking situation in the university environment. Katri is unsure about the convention of speaking to a teacher and what it actually entails. Furthermore, the choice of a right language to use is important because it causes anxiety. Maija relates her anxiety to a similar spontaneous situation as Katri in extract (2):

- 2) Maija: Joo totta, no itse asiassa noissa X kielen opinnoissa, että se oli aika ahistavaa välillä ku se nyt varmaan on heikoin kieli noista kolmesta mulla ja just se oma tuottaminen tunneilla spontaani kommentointi johonkin niin se oli kyllä aika semmosta ahistavaa, että se jotenkin meni sinne tunnille, että ei taas se kysyy multa ja mä en osaa sanoo mitään järkevää ja se oli ehkä.

Maija: Yeah true, well actually in the studies of X language it was quite nervousome at times because it is the weakest language out of those three for me and producing it

spontaneous commenting during a class that was quite anxiety inducing I went to classes like thinking that oh no the teacher is going to ask something and I don't have anything smart to say

Maija describes how spontaneous commenting during class makes her nervous. She also explains how going into class and anticipating how the teacher might ask her something to which she would have nothing smart to say results in an anxious state. She begins her turn by emphasizing that these experiences are especially related to a language that is the weakest one for her. Maija feels insecure about her ability to spontaneously produce language that would be regarded as good enough.

Maija's as well as Katri's anxiety is by nature anticipatory. The anxiety reaction is provoked by thinking about the situation one is faced with and anticipating being called for to speak. Thus, anxiety can be a reaction evoked by a present situation or by thinking about a specific situation that is deemed as anxiety inducing. For this reason anxiety is not limited to events inside the classroom but learners can feel nervous before classes when they dread the possible situations they will be placed in once in class. Language learners can also dread any situation that requires speaking to a teacher because of a fear of being evaluated.

In addition to spontaneous speaking, presentations or speeches are anxiety inducing for the participants. Janika describes what makes her anxious in extract (3):

- 3) Janika: Ittee ainakin täällä yliopistolla jännittää jos pitää pitää joku kurssilla joku esitys tai puhe tai sellanen että ite vaan puhuu luokan edessä sellanen jännittää ja joskus jännittää ihan joku ryhmätyö tai siis no ehkä sellanen jos vaan keskustellaan pöydässä ja opettaja tulee viereen kuuntelemaan niin sekin jännittää.

Janika: I feel nervous here at Uni if I have to give a presentation or speech during a course or something where I speak in front of the class that makes me nervous and sometimes some group works or when we speak around a table and a teacher comes to listen

Janika relates anxiety to presentations or speeches where she is in front of the class by herself and others just listen. She also mentions group work and discussions with peers especially when a teacher listens while students talk in groups. In these situations there is an outsider who listens while Janika speaks and this listener makes her anxious.

Public speaking and presentations are generally challenging situations for most learners and several studies have reported findings that support the view of speaking as anxiety inducing. However, group discussions are generally seen as more neutral and this form of working in class is often suggested in order to reduce anxiety (Ewald 2007:123).

However, as Janika points out some learners might feel pressured by a teacher's presence even in these more relaxed situations. Pirjo echoes similar thoughts as Janika in extract (4):

- 4) Pirjo: X kieli tuntuu, että ei se niinkään jännitä mutta ehkä tämmösissä esitelmien pidossa siinä sit miettii, et nyt se kuuntelee mua ja kattoo kaikkia virheitä mitä mä teen

Pirjo: X language feels that I'm not nervous of it but presentations there you think that now they are listening to me and looking at all the errors I make

Pirjo explains why presentations make her nervous by saying that it is those feelings of being watched and thinking that others will focus on language errors she makes. In other words, Pirjo believes that giving a presentation entails that those in the audience will spot errors as supposed to focusing on listening what the presenter has to say. While students give presentations in class they should receive feedback that focuses on content and on building trust in one's skills as opposed to listing language errors one has made while speaking. Minna also identifies giving presentations in a foreign language to be anxious in extract (5).

- 5) Minna: No varmaan se on ekasta vuodesta ollu että esitelmiä pitää vieraalla kielellä vaikka aina on ollu sellanen että pystyy pitään esitelmiä ja oleen esillä mutta sitten kun siihen tuo sen kielen ja jos on vähääkään epävarmuutta eikä oo tehny tarpeeks kotona työtä että ei oo varmistanu kaikkia sanoja tai kyllä ne aina jännittää aika paljon

Minna: Presentations have been I've always been like I can give a presentation and be in front of others but when you bring a foreign language in to it and if there's any insecurity and I haven't worked hard enough at home haven't checked all the words or those always make me quite nervous

Minna points out that normally she is not nervous about presentations but when she has to do it in a foreign language she does feel anxious. She adds that if she feels insecure and thinks that she has not done enough work at home preparing and checking words she feels nervous. Giving a presentation seems to mean giving a perfect, mistake free spoken production. For both Pirjo and Minna anxiety is especially related to performing in a foreign language as they both mention that they do not feel nervous about giving presentations in general. This finding also supports the notion of there being a form of anxiety that is especially related to foreign languages (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986). It is not presentations per se that cause anxiety but the addition of a foreign language.

In conclusion, having to use a foreign language orally is the most anxiety inducing situation for the participants. The participants fear how they will be judged according to their spoken performance and they fear language errors. Anxiety is especially related to presentations but asking for advice from teachers and taking part in small group discussions can result in anxiety as well. Even those participants who do not feel insecure about presentations in general, do feel anxious when asked to give a presentation in a foreign language.

5.1.2 Writing

For university language students writing is an important skill. Language studies require a lot of writing ranging from course papers to writing a thesis. For the participants in the present study, writing anxiety comes up in situations where the participants anticipate the evaluation of the piece they are writing such as writing a course report or even writing an email to a teacher. The same belief that came up in relation to speaking is present in writing as well. The participants fear evaluation and what others will think of them as a result of a written work. The evaluation is not merely related to the participants' language skills but to them as worthy language students. Thus, the anxieties related to writing touch deeply the participants' self-concepts as language learners.

The results indicate that anxiety about writing includes typical course assignments but also other types of writing. Katri explains in example (6) how writing an email is at times frustrating:

- 6) Katri: ...jos mä laitan sähköpostia ai sähköposti on muuten aika paha! Sitä mä mietin aina ihan sika kauan että miten mää ne laitan ja onko nyt oikein kaikki ja mutta niille suomalaisille mä yleensä vaan laitan suomee ei jaksa aina sitä hirveää että minkä kuvan antaa jos laittaa sähköpostit silleen vasemmalla kädellä se on vaikeeta

Katri: if I send an e-mail oh e-mail is bad! You think for a really long time like how I'll put it and is everything right and but to those Finns I usually just write Finnish I'm tired of all that what kind of a picture I'm giving of myself if I send e-mails that have been written bit poorly it is hard

For Katri writing an email to a teacher raises anxiety. She explains thinking about how to write it and whether there are any mistakes in emails written by her. She adds that for Finns she writes Finnish and does not concern herself as much with thoughts about the image she gives of herself if she writes emails carelessly. Katri seems to be frustrated by the thought of giving a certain image of herself in an email. The process of writing to a

teacher thus seems to entail much more than just asking for advice. Katri seems to believe that the teacher will evaluate and mentally mark her written piece and based on this form an opinion of her. Pirjo, on the other hand, in extract (7) relates her writing anxiety to written assignments that will be returned for evaluation:

- 7) Pirjo: mua jännittää se kirjottaminen koska mä jo siinä mietin, että kohta se opettaja lukee tän ja onkohan tässä joku virhe mä en pysty silleen rentoutumaan kun mä kirjoitan niinku kielellä X tai kielellä Y se oli niinku gradua tehdessäkin suuri haaste kirjoittamisen aloittamisessa kun mä vaan mietin miten paljon mä teen virheitä siinä

Pirjo: I'm nervous about writing because I'm already thinking that the teacher will read it and whether there is a mistake I can't relax when I'm writing in a foreign language. It was a challenge when I was writing my thesis the start of writing because I kept thinking how much I'll make mistakes

Pirjo fears the errors she might make while writing an assignment. She anticipates the moment a teacher will read her work. She identifies how anxiety makes her tense and makes it hard for her to start writing because her focus is on the possible errors. She points out that this is especially troublesome while she wrote her master's thesis. In general, anxiety over errors makes it difficult to concentrate on the task at hand. The anxiety and fear of errors takes away from the time that could be used to actual writing of an assignment. Anna-Kaisa reports in her turn (8) another type of a frustration with writing:

- 8) Anna-Kaisa: niiden ensimmäisten pitempien tekstien kirjottamisesta se kun se teksti ei vaan meinannu tulla, sitä niinku muka yritti kaikkensa mutta siltikkään se ei ollu kauheen hyvä loppujen lopuksi

Anna-Kaisa: writing those first long texts the text just would not come you just kept trying but still the end result wasn't good

Anna-Kaisa felt frustrated with writing long written pieces for the first time at the beginning of her studies. She notes that it was hard for her to produce text. Anna-Kaisa felt that she tried very hard but still, in the end, the result was not very good. The process of writing a long text often includes a great deal of frustration that obviously Anna-Kaisa felt too. For Anna-Kaisa, writing anxiety most likely relates to the overall process of writing a long text. Writing in upper secondary school is usually limited to only up to five hundred words. However, at the university level students write reports that vary between five to twenty pages. It is therefore that the process of writing the first long texts requires a different process than writing a short paragraph. If a student does not have knowledge of the process of writing and rewriting that long texts require,

nervousness in the face of the writing task is inevitable. Mirja in extract (9) describes how the requirements of writing academically feel frustrating:

- 9) Mirja: sellanen kirjallinen ilmaisu kanssa koska tuntuu, että kaikki osaa semmosta hirveen akateemista tekstiä ja kuulostaa hienoilta ja mä en ehkä tule semmonen olo, että mä en osaa...mä mietin, että nyt ne opettajat lukee tän ja luulee silleen, että on varmaan joku kahdeksaluokkalainen kirjottanut tän tai jotain tulee sellanen olo, ettei haluis ees et välillä tuli sellanen, että en mä haluu antaa täällstä työtä, että tuntuu, että on sellasta epäakateemista mutta mä varmaan vaan aliarvioin itteeni

Mirja: written works because it feels like everyone knows how to write a very academic text and how to sound fancy and I can't maybe it feels like that I can't. I'm thinking that teachers read this and thing that an eight grader has written it and it feels like that I don't want to it at times feels like that I don't want to submit this work because it feel that it is very unacademic but I'm probably just undermining myself

Mirja feels nervous about the expectations of writing academically. She compares herself to other students and feels that she is not as skilled as those around her. She talks about the possibility that from the outside it might seem that she actually is on the same level with everyone else. However, Mirja still feels that she is not as good as others. Further, Mirja describes how she feels about submitting her work to teachers. She is afraid that the teacher will think that her level of writing resemblance that of an eighth grader and this results in Mirja feeling like she does not want to submit her work at all. However, she does remark that maybe she does undervalue her own skills. Mirja echoes similar fears as Katri and Pirjo previously about the image she will project of herself to a teacher.

Horwitz (1995:573) argues that language learning requires students to communicate in an unfamiliar language and culture and this produces anxiety in students. However, she has also suggested that writing is an exception to this rule and writing has been viewed as a private process that only includes the learner and thus, has been viewed as a process that does not induce anxiety. However, as the previous extracts point out writing is not as private as one might assume. The participants are very much aware of the fact that a teacher will read their work and evaluate it. Furthermore, writing has received less attention when it comes to anxiety.

5.1.3 Reading and listening

During the interviews, I especially asked about reading and writing and how the participants felt towards these language skills. The participants did not bring these skills up in the interviews spontaneously and even after having especially asked about anxiety

in relation to reading and writing, both of these skills was only mentioned once. The response in most cases was that reading and listening are not anxiety inducing.

However, Maija explains how, in her opinion, reading anxiety comes about in extract (10):

- 10) Maija: Voi liittyä siis lukemisessakin tietysti se että jos on semmosta tekstiä mikä on jotain ihme erikoissanastoo sitten niinku, että ei tästä tajua mitään niin jos siitä nimenomaan pitäis tajuta jotain juttua varten, että pitäis ne olennaiset asiat saada siitä niin totta kai se voi ahdistaa.

Maija: It can be part of that in reading if it is a text that has special vocabulary then that I don't understand anything of it so if I precisely have to understand it for something else that I should get the key points so of course it makes me nervous

When I especially asked Maija if reading or listening can cause her anxiety she replied by saying that anxiety can indeed relate to reading if the text is something that needs to be understood for some other purpose and the text includes some sort of special vocabulary. Reading anxiety, in this case, can relate to anticipating the situation where understanding of the text needs to be shown. Reading is often used as a prerequisite for later discussions where the discussion is based on previous reading. If there have been problems with understanding the particular text, taking part in a discussion can prove to be difficult. Others will then spot that a certain learner has not understood the text that the discussion is based on. Hence, anticipating how others might react to the inability to take part in the discussion results in anxiety over one's performance.

Minna describes how listening or more precisely understanding relates to anxiety in extract (11):

- 11) Minna: ...mutta se voi olla jossain ymmärtämistilanteissakin jos se toinen osapuoli ei yhtään aattele millanen on se kielentaso, kyllästyy siihen että pitäis selittää tai liian nopeesti puhuu sekin voi olla ahdistavaa että ei ymmärrä mitään

Minna: ...but it can be present in situations when understanding is required if the other party doesn't think at all about the level of language, gets bored with having to explain or speaks too fast that can be frustrating that you don't understand anything

The only mentioning of listening and its relation to anxiety came up in Minna's interview. This point again came forth only after I especially asked about anxiety and listening. Minna explains how in situations which require understanding, anxiety can come up if the other party is bored with one's language skills or speaks too fast. In this case Minna anticipates the frustrations her speaking partner might feel if her language skills are not up to level.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) have reported that understanding foreign language input is a major concern for anxious students and several students reported feeling afraid of not understanding. However, in the present study the participants did not mention listening as anxiety provoking. The conclusion here might be warranted that these participants are truly advanced learners that are accustomed to listening to the foreign language they study. Another possible explanation is that errors, that in general seem to bother the participants quite a lot, are not as visible in comprehension tasks.

The most often cited definition of FL anxiety, that I presented earlier, by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) related anxiety to especially classroom learning. However, as can be seen in the examples provided in the previous sections the participants in the present study relate anxiety to both inside the classroom and also outside of it. Anxiety can then be present in all situations that relate to an individual's language studies whether they take place during a class, at the department or at home.

In conclusion, language learning anxiety come forth especially in situations related to speaking but also it can appear when learners write, read or listen. However, the relevant point is that behind the physical reaction of anxiety are beliefs that make learners view learning situations as evaluative of their skill and ability. In general, the anxiety that these participants feel is related to situations in and outside classrooms. It is present in all the situations that relate to being a language student and in a sense anxiety can be difficult to escape from.

5.2 Causes

This section aims at answering the second research question which considers the effects of anxiety according to advanced language learners. The goal is to grasp what the participants think and feel results from anxiety, to their learning and the experience of learning. Uncovering these causes gives information on how beneficial or hindering anxiety is from a personal point of view of a language learner. This type of knowledge can be used to examine how to develop language teaching in ways that improves the experience that learners have while learning.

The following discussion on the causes of anxiety is divided into three categories that I formed from the interview data. The categories include sub-categories that show different aspects of each category.

5.2.1 The learner

The first category of causes for anxiety is titled **The Learner**. With this title I want to express that these causes relate to the participants and to their thinking processes. I have divided the causes related to the learner into following subcategories:

- being a language student,
- perceived inadequacy/fraudulence,
- perfectionism and
- inability to express authentic personality.

Next, I will present each of these topics in more detail and provide examples from the interviews to support my analysis.

5.2.1.1 *Being a language student*

The participants feel anxious because they believe that as language students they should know everything of the foreign language they study. In addition, the participants' expectations of their own language skills are high. The participants feel that others have high expectations for their level of skills and feel that they cannot meet these expectations. This belief becomes most evident when the participants talked about their experiences at the beginning of their university studies. The pressures of majoring in a FL can be overwhelming and deem the learners to feeling disappointed with their language skills.

Studying a language at a university requires a lot more than the mere skill in a language. Being able to read, write and speak fluently is a prerequisite of entering studies. Further, the students are to become language experts that are also familiar with the target language culture and history. Katri points out the different skills that are needed in language studies and how these can result in anxiety. Katri explains in extract (12):

- 12) Katri: Pitäs just olla niin hyvä yleistietämys niinku jotenkin opiskella sitä kieltä niin monipuolisesti lukee kirjoja, kattoo elokuvia ja tavata vaihtareita ja käydä *opiskeltavan kielen kohdemaassa* vaihdossa niinku kaikkea. Et ehkä ne on välillä vähän rankkoja ja että tuntuu, että ei musta oo mihinkään ku pitäs kaikkee osata ja just sit ku lytätään että ettekö te osaa vaikka jonkun verran lukiskin lehtiä tai jotain niin ei sitä voi kaikkee tuoda sinne tunnille jotenkin esille

Katri: You should have good general knoweledge to study the language to read books, to watch movies and meet exchange students and to visit the target language culture. Maybe the goals are hard at times and it feels like I can't do anything because I should

be able to do everything and then when you're put down like don't you know even if I read some magazines or something you can't bring forth all of it in class

Katri explains that a language student needs to have a good general knowledge of the target culture. One has to read books, watch movies, meet exchange students and take part in an exchange program. She notes that with one of the languages she studies she has done all of this but now she studies another language and feels frustrated by the demands. She feels discouraged because there is so much that she should know. Katri sees the demands that pile on before her and feels that meeting and doing all these things would require a tremendous amount of work. There seems to exist an idea of all or nothing, Katri feels she should do everything, doing just one of these or little of everything is not enough. It seems that Katri also strives for doing the best she can and in the face of these demands she feels discouraged because she feels that she could not possibly do it all.

Pirjo further explains the demands she faces as a language student in extract (13):

- 13) Pirjo:mutta tietysti se miten laaja se kieli on, että ethän sä osaa ees äidinkieltä täydellisesti ja yhtäkkiä jos opiskelee vaikka *vierasta kieltä* tuntuu, että vaaditaan että sä osaat siitä kaiken joka eri osa-alueelta niin tulee semmonen olo, että pystyykö niitä kaikkia ees hallitsemaan

Pirjo: but of course like how board the language is like you can't speak your first language perfectly and suddenly if you're learning a *foreign language* it feels like it's expected that you know everything from every area so it makes you feel like if it's even possible to master them all

Pirjo feels that studying a foreign language equals with knowing everything about it. It seems curious to her though because no one knows their first language throughout. This belief of having to know it all brings tremendous pressure. Even though Pirjo states that she does not know Finnish thoroughly it does not free her from the expectation that in regards to a foreign language she should know all. This shows how beliefs do not have to be rational or even make sense for a person to still believe in them. This is an unproductive belief that does not support Pirjo's learning and can cause unneeded pressure and anxiety.

Pirjo feels, like Katri that it is expected of her to know everything about the FL she studies. She uses the passive voice when she speaks of these demands. This indicates that these demands come from somewhere outside of her but she does not specify from where. Dörnyei (2009) and Higgins (1987) have proposed ought to self as a construct that relates to motivation and theories about discrepancies between self-related beliefs. This ought to self includes attributes that a person feels he/she should possess. These

attributes are needed to meet the expectations of others and to avoid negative outcomes (Dörnyei 2009:29). This self has motivating power because it makes the person try to avoid negative outcomes by working to meet the demands set from the outside. A part of being a university student is to acquire the role of a language student. This role with its individual meanings results in experiences of anxiety to some of the participants like Pirjo and Katri. The role includes beliefs about what one ought to be or ought to be able to do. In this case, it seems that the participants should pass off as unerring experts. The participants have constructed an image of this perfect language student and compare themselves to that internalized model. Consequently, as the model of a language student is something that seems to be impossible to reach it results in anxiety.

In conclusion, in the previous examples the participants discuss how others expect them to have a certain level of skill. However, they use the passive voice to indicate that it is not known who this other is that expects and demands certain things. The question that remains is whether this pressure comes from teachers, peers or actually the participants themselves. It becomes evident though that there exist this ideal, onto which the participants hold, of the ideal language student. It is this ideal model that the participants strive for, a model that speaks perfectly and knows everything about the foreign language and its culture. Failure to match with these ideals especially in front of others will result in being exposed as a type of an imposter. Anxiety results from the process of trying to be this ideal but at the same time fearing exposure. Furthermore, there is little room to be oneself and focus on learning and improving one's skills.

5.2.1.2 Perceived inadequacy/fraudulence

Perceived fraudulence or the imposter syndrome are concepts used to talk about feelings that some high-achieving individuals have about not having the required skills to be in a certain position (Kolligian and Sternberg 1991). A student at a university can think that they are not good enough to be there and that any moment someone else will also realise that the student should not be studying at university. The second category of learner related causes for anxiety relates to these feelings of being inferior to others and fear of not being accepted. The participants also question their chances of fitting in the community of other language students as equal members, thus explaining those feelings of inferiority. An especially troublesome time is the beginning of university studies when students compare their own skills to those of others and can become anxious

because they feel unable to meet the expectations that the new role of a university student requires.

A common theme discussed in the interviews was the high skill level of peers in university studies. Most of the participants felt that their peers had higher level of knowledge of the foreign language and this realisation made them feel inferior. Mirja describes in extract (14) how she became anxious in the beginning of her studies:

- 14) Mirja: se enemmän tuli esille täällä yliopistossa vasta sitten kun tuli tänne ja kaikki puhu tosi hyvää *kieltä X* ja tuli sellanen, että voi ei en mä osaa puhua noin hyvin vaikka ehkä ei ois ollu niin paljon aihetta jännittää sitä niin ehkä eniten tuli täällä tavallaan esille yliopisto opinnoissa ja ehkä myös sisällön puolesta tuntu, että sillä puheella pitäis olla oikeesti jotain merkittävää niin en mä osaa sanoa mitään hienoja juttuja ja kaikkee tavallaan on hirveet paineet kuulostaa akateemiselta

Mirja: it became more evident here at university after I came here and everyone spoke very good *language X* and I felt that I can't speak that well and even though there might have not been so much reason to be nervous it became evident in university studies and also for content it felt that the speech should be something remarkable I can't say anything meaningful I don't know any fancy ways of saying things and everything there is this pressure to sound academic.

Mirja identifies the feelings of fraudulence in herself. She became anxious about her level of skill at the beginning of her studies when she noticed how good other students were and became unsure whether she was up to their level. Mirja also felt the pressure of sounding like an academic. Part of studying a foreign language at university is to acquire the academic way of speaking and writing that is required in order to take part in a scientific community. However, Mirja seems to believe that she should have been able to meet these requirements set for academic language use already when she started her studies. Speech is here a tool for gaining access to a certain group of professionals. However, speaking that does not meet the perceived requirements would result in being perceived as an outsider, someone who does not belong to that group of individuals or to a university. Anxiety, then results from these thoughts of being a fraud for having gained access to this closed community but not being up to the standard.

Niina also reports how she felt at the beginning of her studies in extract (15):

- 15) Niina: ...mä olin ryhmän paras oli silleen että vähän mä oon hyvä kielessä X, oli vaikka lukion lyhyt kieli X se on vaan lyhyt että ei sitä niin hulluna osaa mutta sitten tuli tänne yliopistoon kootaan kaikki huiput yhteen niin tajus että vitsi mä en ookaan niin paras että ei mulla silleen lukiossa ollu jännitystä

Niina: ...I was the best in our group and like I'm so good at this language even though I studied the shorter version it's the shorter but when I came here university you collect all the best together and I realized that I'm not the best like in upper secondary school I wasn't nervous

Entering university and observing her peers and their language skills resulted in Niina's case to anxiety and to questioning her abilities. Niina noticed that all other students seemed to be very good, they were as she says the top, and this thought led Niina to think that she cannot be as good as she thought she were. Comparing her skills to those of others was a knock on her self-image as language learner. Understandably, these thoughts lead to anxiety because she started to question if she ever was as good as she thought she was and again the feelings of being an impostor or a fraud raised its head. In a sense, Niina seems to have been used to evaluating her own competence in contrast with that of others. In upper secondary school, language classes are rather heterogeneous and learners' skill levels vary. However, the ones that enter language programs at universities are all very skilled. Furthermore, a question related to Niina's anxiety is that do our schools reinforce the type of an evaluation where learners are compared against each other and students learn to base their evaluations of their own skills to that of other students? This at least seems to be true in Niina's case and for her these form of evaluating herself lead to tremendous anxiety.

Anna-Kaisa reports having similar experiences as Niina when entering university. She discusses this in extract (16):

- 16) Anna-Kaisa: no siis sillon ku alotti niin sehän oli vähän tai siis iso muutos lukiosta ja sitten siinä oli tietysti se kun oli aina ollu hyvä ja yleensä parempi kuin muut ja sitten sä olit niiden muiden parempien kanssa yhdessä niin se pieni kulttuurishokki siinä että ei tää ollukkaan ihan niin ku mä meinasin

Anna-Kaisa: when I started it was bit or big change to high school and there was that that I've always been good and usually better than others and then you were amongst those other good ones so it was a culture shock it didn't go as I had thought

Anna-Kaisa pin points the beginning of her studies as a moment of vast change. Previously, she had been better than others in her class but in the university setting everyone had outstanding language skills. Anna-Kaisa reports having experienced a small culture shock at that time. Anna-Kaisa's comment on how things did not go as she had thought reveal her thoughts and beliefs about university studies before she actually entered university. She seemed to have thought that she would have sensed a certain feeling of belonging and being amongst equals. However, other students somehow knocked her out of the realization of having a very good knowledge of the FL. At least that is how things seemed to Anna-Kaisa. There is no actual way of indicating if her skills were somehow lacking or was it just a question of her perceiving her skills to be less than needed. Anni discussed her thoughts about anxiety and the start

of studies in similar terms as both Niina and Anna-Kaisa. Anni also mentions in extract (17) that noticing how skilled everyone else was knocked her self-esteem down:

- 17) Anni: kun kukaan ei oo huono jos ne on päässy lukemaan *vierasta kieltä* yliopistoon niin sit silleen ku se on ollu itelle se yks aine missä on ollu hyvä se tulee semmonen että enkö mä nyt ookkaa missään hyvä kun joku muu on parempi

Anni: no one's bad if they'd gotten into university to study *a foreign language* for me it's the one subject that I'm good at then you start questioning if I'm good at anything when someone else is better

Anni recognises that entering university to study a foreign language requires excellent language skills. Nevertheless, she feels somehow robbed for being amongst other very skilled language learners. Being a good language student seems to have been a topic of pride for her but now that special status has somehow gone. Further, altogether six out of the thirteen participants mentioned that the beginning of their studies was a period that caused them a great deal of anxiety. Key experience that provoked these feelings was being amongst others that had really good language skills. Some mentioned that they had been at the top of their class in upper secondary school. However, coming to university they were suddenly amongst peers that were all very good in their language studies. This caused anxiety and insecurity about one's level of knowledge.

Sini points out another aspect of change she noticed at the beginning of her studies in extract (18):

- 18) Sini: Kyllä sitä on joutunu vähän murehtimaan ja se on niin hullua kun aina on ollu hyvä koulussa ja ei tänne varmaan tuu sellasia, jotka ei oo kovin motivoituneita sitten täällä joutuu miettimään sellasta, että entäs jos mä saan hylsyn

Sini: I've have to think about it and it's crazy because I've always been good at school and people who aren't motivated don't come here and here you have to think about things like what if I fail a course

The participants as I have mentioned are advanced language learners who have passed entrance examinations to come and study a language at a university. Most probably they have received good grades in previous schooling. This notion is mentioned by Sini in extract (18) as well. She recognizes that everyone at this level must be motivated in their language study and therefore she feels it is rather peculiar that she has had to be worried about failing courses. In a sense, Sini feels that she should not have to question whether she passes courses or not. These nervous thoughts make her anxious.

Minna feels that a break from studying is what resulted in her case in anxiety. She explains her feelings as follows in extract (19):

- 19) Minna: No oli kyllä vähän jännitys ku oli siinä semmonen vaihe että en ollu käyttäny tai opiskellu kieltä mulla oli vielä välivuosi lukion jälkeen niin oli tunne että mitäköhän tästä nyt tulee...

Minna: There was anxiety when there was this stage that I hadn't used or studied the language I had a gap year after high school then I felt like how is this going to turn up

Minna had a break from studying the foreign language after high school and before entering university. This break led to her questioning how she would manage. She was fearful of what would happen and how she would manage after having had little contact with the target language during the break.

The participants have foreign languages as their major and minor subjects. Aino highlights in extract (20) how having a foreign language as a minor results in anxiety for her:

- 20) Aino: mun eka vuosi kun luin *kieltä* kun mä oon sivuaineopiskelija tai jotkut ajattelee et toi on vaan sivuaineopiskelija ei se oo niin hyvä

Aino: the first year I studied the language and I'm a minor student or some might think that she's just a minor, she's not that good

Aino feels that her role as a minor student in a language means that she is not as good in the language as those that major in it. She especially feels that this is the way that others see her when she takes part on the courses of the language she minors in.

Anxiety seems to increase as students proceed in their university studies. Thus, those students who have studied for several years feel anxious because they feel that others expect even more from their language skills than before. This topic is raised by Pirjo in extract (21):

- 21) Pirjo: ... ehkä se kun on viidennen vuoden opiskelija ja luulee, että odotetaan ihan hirveesti, että osaa puhua täydellisesti

Pirjo: ...maybe because I'm in my fifth year and I think that others expect that I can speak perfectly

Pirjo feels that others expect a lot of her because she is in the fifth year of her studies. Her anxiety relates to how she perceives that others have set demands to her language skills and that these demands grow as she moves further in her studies. She especially mentions speaking as the skill that she is expected to be able to do perfectly. This

finding is contrary to many previous studies that have stated that anxiety is mainly a problem for beginner's level learners. Pirjo has studied a foreign language for five years at the university as her major and for years before entering university. One can hardly assume her to be a beginner in her language study. In this case anxiety is not about language learning in itself but about being an advanced language student. Pirjo feels that others have these high demands for her performance and feels that she will be exposed as not as good as she ought to be. Miia's thoughts about the cause of her anxiety echo those that Pirjo mentioned. Miia explains in extract (22):

22) Miia: Ehkä mua nyt jännittää enemmän koska ei mua silloin kun aloitin niin ei multa oo odotettukaan, että mä osaisin sitä mitenkään hyvin puhua mutta nyt niinku mä ajattelen, että toiset odottaa multa enemmän kun ennen.

Miia: Maybe I'm more nervous now because when I started no one expected that I would be able to speak it very well but now I think that others expect a lot more of me than before

Miia explains that she feels more nervous now than at the beginning of her studies because when she first started her studies no one expected her to speak perfectly. However, having studied longer she feels that the expectations that others have, have indeed grown. Neither Pirjo nor Miia identify where these expectations come from. However, they both speak of this unidentified other that puts pressure on them to excel.

5.2.1.3 Perfectionism

A previous study by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) identified the individual trait of perfectionism to induce anxiety. Perfectionist learners demand perfect performance from themselves in every aspect of their learning and feel very disappointed if they do not meet the expectations they have set out for themselves. A key factor in perfectionism is intolerance of any mistakes or hesitations. This point is also expressed by Maija in extract (23):

23) Maija: Mullakin semmonen, että pitää tehdä hyvin ja pärjätä hyvin ja näin ja just aina jos joku menee pieleen niin sitten se harmittaa tosi paljon sekin luo tietysti semmosia paineita totta kai

Maija: I've had this that I have to do well and manage well and like every time if something goes wrong then it feels really bad that also brings pressure of course

Maija recognizes in herself that she wants to do well and succeed and that if something fails it does bother her quite a lot. She feels that this way of thinking puts pressure on her. Anxiety is in this case the product of high demands and expectations that the

student feels she cannot meet. The demands for one's performance can be so high that some sort of failure is almost inevitable. These expectations in themselves can already induce anxiety and the perceived failure can bring forth frustration and disappointment. These feelings can lead to even more anxiety when a person embarks to perform in the language the next time. Miia expresses similar feelings of demands that she has set out for herself in extract (24):

- 24) Miia: jollakin voi olla omista lähtökohdista että ite haluaa pyrkiä että puhuu sitä oikein eikä hyväksy mitään virheitä

Miia: for someone it might come from their own requirements that you yourself strive for speaking it correctly and don't allow any mistakes

Miia relates anxiety to her own efforts to speak a foreign language accurately and not to accept any errors. This level of demand for performance will result in anxiety. By nature the language that we produce whether it is our L1 or L2 is plagued with mistakes and hesitations. This is especially the case when speaking or writing spontaneously. When a person who believes that every single error in language is unacceptable he/she will lose fluency from his/hers speech. When this error occurs a person will stop speaking because he/she is terrified of the error. However, a person who sees errors as a part of learning, will continue speaking even if there is an error in production. Janika echoed similar thoughts about demands for one's own language use as Miia by saying "I have set myself high goals like I should reach that too".

Further, Aino reports thinking that because a language is her major she should be able to produce it fluently and without errors as is pointed out in extract (25):

- 25) Aino: Kieltenopiskelussa vaikka ne ei liittyis niin isoihin asioihin ne virheet niin kuitenkin se pitäs kohde tai se mitä opitaan sitten oppia hyvin ja mahdollisimman sujuvasti puhumaan ja käyttämään niin...

Aino: In language learning even though errors wouldn't be big still the target or what there is to be learned should be learned well and to speak fluently and to use it...

Aino is studying a foreign language at university and thus she feels that it needs to be learned well. She adds that she should be able to speak the language as fluently as possible. In Aino's statement it becomes evident that pressure to perform well comes from the language being the main goal of learning. However, learning a new skill usually includes repeated sets of trial and error. While learning a language, mistakes are a natural and often vehicles for improved learning. Most importantly, often learners can

internalize errors they make in their production. In other words, learners see errors and failure as signs of their own inferiority or even stupidity.

Language learning is by nature about trial and error. A learner produces language and at times that production is more accurate than at other times. However, learning takes place when a learner notices mistakes, adjusts his or her speech and continues. A learner who will not tolerate any mistakes will be paralyzed by a mistake and possibly choose to remain silent. This learner will focus on feeling ashamed of a mistake instead of learning from it and trying again.

5.2.1.4 Inability to express authentic personality

The participants have an advanced, good knowledge of the target language they study. They have been selected as students through entrance examinations and at the moment of taking part in the study they have already completed at least two years of studies. However, the content of university studies requires discussing complex topics. Thus, there will be situations where it can be a challenge to express oneself as one wishes. This mismatch between what an individual wants to say and what he/she ultimately can say results in frustration. The participants tend to hold a belief that states that making an error in the foreign language makes them seem foolish. Language is an integrated part of identity and therefore producing language with perceived inadequate skills results in feelings of losing something from one's identity. Language anxiety is tied to one's *self-image* as a language learner.

Pirjo describes how speaking a foreign language can make her feel in extract (26):

26) Pirjo: kieli on niin tärkeä osa identiteettiä ja semmosta miten ilmasee itteensä ja sitten kun puhuu vierasta kieltä siinä on semmonen vaara, että annat itestä kuvan jos sanot jotain väärin, että sitä ehkä jännittää että jos et osaa jotain kieltä hyvin niin uskaltaako sitä puhua ollenkaan antaa itestään ihan tyhjän kuvan tietenkään ei ehkä pitäis sitä niin ajatella

Pirjo: a language is such an important part of identity and how you express yourself and then when you speak a foreign language there's a risk that you give a certain image of yourself if you say something wrong that makes you nervous if you don't know a language well will you be brave enough to speak it at all you give an image of yourself being stupid of course you shouldn't think like that

Pirjo brings forth two points that relate to anxiety and self-image. Firstly, Pirjo points out that language is an important part of identity and a way to express oneself.

Secondly, she continues by saying that when speaking a foreign language and making a mistake it results in others perceiving her as stupid.

In Pirjo's comment there seems to be two different voices that she struggles with. On the one hand, Pirjo feels nervous about the way she might be viewed negatively by others if she makes mistakes in the FL. On the other hand, she acknowledges that she should not think this way. There is a type of a crossfire of voices. Feeling anxious about using a language and then thinking that one should not feel this way. Sini identifies similar causes behind her FL anxiety in extract (27):

27) Sini: no se on varmaan kiinni myös siitä omasta persoonasta ja mulla itellä se jännitys on sen takia, että mä mietin ylipäätään hirveesti sitä mitä muut musta ajattelee mutta ehkä se mä ajattelen että jos mä puhun jotain kieltä ja mä puhun sitä jonkin mielestä huonosti ehkä lähinnä omasta mielestäni niin mä ajattelen, että mä leimaudun sen mukaan että mikä on mun kielitaso missäkin kielessä ja sit mä oon mielummin hiljaa

Sini notes that anxiety can also be related to one's personality and says that she in general thinks quite a lot about what others think of her. She explains that if she feels that someone else might think that she speaks poorly she will be labelled according to her level of skills in a particular language. Lastly, she notes that she would rather be quiet than put herself through this process. Sini's decision to rather remain silent than risk being seen as stupid by others could be viewed as a way to protect her self-image. Ultimately, protecting self-image is more important to a person than learning a foreign language because a shattered self-image affects a person's life in general.

In general, being fearful of judgment by others can be a trait that is present in several situations in an individual's life. These fears then also become present in language learning. It is therefore that in Sini's case it is possible that anxiety originates from a more general type of an anxiety such as communication apprehension. Students might perceive different types of situations that often take place in language classes as performances where they are evaluated.

Aino describes in her turn how mistakes can affect the chemistry between people. She explains in extract (28):

28) Aino: Jos ihan yleisesti miettii niin se on kun kommunikointi on aina kumminkin hankalaa siihen liittyy niin paljon kaikkea ja se kieli on siinä kumminkin oleellinen niin jos siinä tekee jonkin virheen niin saattaa vaikuttaa ihan siihen henkilökemiaan ja muuhun sitten.

Aino: If you in general think about communication it's always difficult there's so much related to that and language is a crucial part of that if you make a mistake in it it can affect personal chemistries and other stuff

Aino highlights that errors in producing language can ultimately affect the chemistry between people. While individuals communicate with each other it is language through which we exchange information. If in this communication one person struggles to produce understandable output

Using an L2 can result in loss of parts of one's identity. The language skills that even advanced learners of an L2 have do not in general match those of their L1. Katri discusses this point in extract (29):

29) Katri: No varmaan se on vähän sillai ku jos ei oo se oma äidinkieli niin ainakin mulla on silleen, että en mä tunne itteeni hirveen varmaks mä en osaa sanoo ajatuksiani mä en osaa kertoa kunnollisia vitsejä vieraalla kielellä tai sillai jotenkin siitä omasta persoonallisuudesta lähtee niin paljon pitää jotenkin yrittää kompensoida että yrittää sanoo jotain hienoa ja jännittää sit sitä miten se onnistuu.

Katri: Well guess it's like when it's not your first language for me at least it's like that I don't feel very certain of myself I don't know how to express my thoughts I don't know how to tell jokes in a foreign language or somehow something of my personality is lost have to try to compensate that by saying something fancy and then be nervous about how that will succeed

Katri notes that because the foreign language is not her native tongue she feels insecure. She continues by saying that she is not able to speak her mind, tell jokes and that she loses a part of her personality when using a foreign language. She makes the effort to say something fancy in order to compensate this loss and is nervous about how she succeeds in this effort. Katri's description exemplifies the idea that Horwitz (1986) has presented about a limited self. Katri struggles between these two selves, the limited and the real. Because Katri cannot express herself in L2 as she wishes she tries to deal with this sense of restriction by

Maija extract exemplifies her thoughts in extract (30):

30) Maija: No siis tavallaan just jos sitä kieltä ei hallitse niin sitten voi sanoo jotain tavallaan kun tarkoittaa jotain niin sanookin aivan muuta ku ei välttämättä tiä sitä oikeeta sanaa niin voi tolla hassuja tilanteita ja ihmiset voi just aatella, että eipä tuo nyt puhu kauheen hyvin, että ois voinu vähän panostaa enemmän ja valmistautua paremmin niin ehkä semmonen niinku porukan jotenkin mielipiteet

Maija: Well like when you don't know the language then you can say something else than you mean to when you don't know the right word there can be these funny situations and people can think that she doesn't speak very well like she could have made more of an effort and prepare better like the group's opinions

Maija points out that when a person does not master the language he/she can say something different than what is meant to. This can lead to awkward situations and make others think that she does not speak very well or that she could have put in more effort. Maija does refer the reason for this insecurity to be the opinions of others. What is a challenge are the learners' feelings of competence. The feelings of inadequacy and fear of rejection however, strip away the feelings of competence from these learners which can ultimately affect their self-confidence as users of the L2.

Horwitz (1986:128) brings forth similar concerns in relation to language learning as the participants of the present study in the previous comments about identity and personality. Horwitz points out that L2 communication is threatening to "one's self-concept as a competent communicator". This threat can lead to resistance or feelings of panic and fear. This threat rises from the discrepancy between the knowledge and ease with which an individual communicates in their native language in contrast with the still developing skill of the L2. In the native language an individual is competent, whereas in the L2 one is forced to express oneself with limited skills. Hence, an individual struggles between these two selves; the real and the limited.

Anxiety can be tied to feelings of disappointment related to language skills or the ability to express oneself. Minna discusses these points in extract (31):

- 31) Minna: ...mutta sitten jotenkin vielä tuntuu että ei oo ehkä niin hyvä mitä haluais olla niin sitten kandin tekeminenkin siihen tulee heti semmonen jännitysmomentti että eihän tästä tuu mitään koska en osaa sanoo mitä ajattelen niin sitten tulee väkisinkin vähän tyhmä olo että ois sitä sanottavaa mutta ei osaa sanoo sitä sillä vieraalla kielellä

Minna: ...but somehow you feel like you're not as good as you'd wish to writing my candidate's thesis there's this anxiety like this is not going to work out because I'm not able to say what I think then it makes you feel bit stupid because you'd have things to say but you can't say them in that foreign language

Minna has felt disappointed with her ability to express the things she wishes to. Working on her candidate's thesis was from the start anxiety inducing for her because she felt that it was a too challenging task. She adds that she cannot avoid feeling stupid because of the limitedness of her ability to express herself. Anxiety about not being able to express her thoughts led to struggles before even starting to work on her thesis because it can feel pointless to work on something that feels impossible.

Typical school learning is very much tied to the classroom. Students in school study several different subjects and their self-image as learners is comprised of several subjects, in some students do well and in others they are less skilled. However, for

university students the language is at the centre of their being, there are no other areas in which to excel. Language is also present outside the classroom, when communicating with teachers, studying by themselves, meeting other students. In essence, the foreign language is an essential part of these students lives at least considering the context of their studies.

In conclusion, the learner category includes causes for anxiety that echo beliefs that the participants have about what is expected of them, beliefs about their own possibilities to manage and do well, beliefs about having to be perfect and beliefs about how others will see them.

5.2.2 The teacher

The second category of causes of anxiety is related to *the teacher*. Anxiety is closely tied to interactions with teachers. The way that students perceive teachers and their role is a key factor. The analysis in this section is divided into two parts. The first part looks at causes that echo how students see the teacher's role. The second part discusses causes of anxiety that are related to native speakers and especially the native model for pronunciation.

5.2.2.1 Teacher: observes, corrects and demands

The participants reported causes for their language anxiety that are tied to the teacher or the teaching situations the participants have been in during their university studies or in previous education. Anxiety is tied to three beliefs about the teacher and his or her role in the language classroom. These beliefs are:

- the teacher is an all seeing observer who
- corrects mistakes and
- demands perfect language output

According to the analysis the teacher characteristics that cause anxiety to these participants relate to what the participants believe about the teacher's expectations and role. In general, the participants feel anxious when they see the teacher as an observer who sees and corrects all language errors and demands perfect language output from his or her students. The teacher is viewed as rather an authoritarian one. Pirjo describes her experiences in extract (32):

- 32) Pirjo: sä tiedät, että se opettaja pystyy koko ajan näkemään ne parikymmentä opiskelijaa, jotka siinä on ja tarkkailee ja sun pitää olla kauheen skarppina se saattaa millon tahansa kysyä sulta,

Pirjo: you know that the teacher can see all the twenty students that are there and observes and you have to be alert she might ask you something at any time

Pirjo notes that the teacher can see all the students in class all the time and observes what these students are doing. Pirjo notes that she has to be alert because the teacher might ask her something at any moment. Because the teacher is seen as an observer who judges what students do, it makes the student anxious. Pirjo is therefore at all times preparing to answer and at least a part of her focus and concentration has to be on the teacher and her own readiness to respond. What results from this alertness is a lost ability to concentrate on the actual language content of the class.

Katri discusses in extract (33) how she tries to read teacher expectations and adjust her behavior accordingly:

- 33) Katri: kenen opettajan tunnilla on että uskaltaako siellä vastata semmosia vähän puolinaisia vastauksia vai pitääkö olla todella hyvä vastaus että uskaltaa edes avata suunsa se on vähän harmi joskus ei sitten uskalla avata

Katri: whose the teacher like can you give answers that are not perfect or do you have to have a very good answer before you can open your mouth it's a shame sometime if you're afraid to open

Katri tries to anticipate what the teachers will or will not accept as an answer. If she feels that the teacher accepts less than perfect answers she can relax, but believing that the teacher expects perfection will result in anxiety. Katri tries to adjust to the teacher's expectations. Moreover, there seems to exist this assumption that Katri has to first and foremost please her teacher with the answers she gives in class. Whether she feels tense or relaxed is eventually dependent on the teacher. In a situation like this, the student is focused on acting a certain way or trying to be something he/she feels he/she should be like instead of trying to learn new things. MacIntyre (1995:96) has previously reported a similar finding and states that learners think about the "social implications of the answer while giving it". It is therefore that for anxious learners answering teacher questions is not just about saying something but a complex process of trying to come up with the right thing to say in order to save face.

Sini points out how a teacher focuses on errors and demands perfection and how this leads to uncomfortable feelings in her case. She explains in extract (34):

- 34) Sini: siitä puhumisesta ei tehdä mukavaa vaan hän sieltä spottaa kaikki mahdolliset virheet korjaa ja niinku haluaa sitä täydellistä kieltä mitä se ikinä onkaan mutta ei suostu ymmärtämään ensimmäisellä kerralla

Sini: speaking is not made pleasant but he/she spots all the possible mistakes corrects and like wants that perfect language whatever that is but won't understand on the first time

Sini points out that it is not always pleasant to speak in class. She relates this unpleasantness to the teacher's style of noticing and correcting all errors. Sini feels that the teacher wants students to produce perfect language and notes that the teacher refuses to comprehend on the first try. Language teaching that focuses on errors is also anxiety inducing for Pirjo. She describes her experiences in extract (35):

- 35) Pirjo: Usein liittyy ahdistusta ja jännitystä ja mä oon aatellu, että se liittyy eniten just siihen miten keskitytään niihin virheisiin mitä tekee vaikka ois joku historian kurssi jossa sä kirjoitat historian aineen niin sä saat sen takasin täynnä punakynää siitä mitä kielioppivirheitä sä oot tehny eikä siitä, että oisit voinu tästä asiasta kertoa enemmän

Pirjo: Often there is anxiety and I've thought that it mostly has to do with how the focus is on the mistakes that you make even if it's a history class and you write a history essay you get it back with red marks about grammar mistakes that you've made and not about what you could have written more about

Pirjo explains that even if she writes a history essay for a course she receives feedback only on the grammar mistakes she has made. The content of her writing does not receive feedback. Pirjo would prefer feedback on the content of the text whenever she is required to write about a certain topic. Receiving feedback only on language errors is always demotivating, especially for a language learner that feels that errors mean that one's level of skill is inadequate. Negative feedback can reinforce a learner's belief that all the learner does, is errors. It is therefore that the next time a learner will write an assignment they feel anxious because they dread getting only negative feedback again.

Minna explains in extract (36) how in her view the teacher can induce anxiety:

- 36) Minna: varmaan mitä se vaatii ja millä tavalla puhuu oppilaille kannustaako se vai moittiiko ja onks se vaatimustaso liian korkea siihen opiskelijoiden tasoon nähden

Minna: perhaps like what he/she demands and like how he/she talks to students does he/she motivate us or criticize us and is the level of requirements too high in contrast with the level of students'

Teacher's demands and the way a teacher speaks to her students can cause anxiety, according to Minna. She continues by saying that if the teacher demands too much of his/her students it can also induce anxiety. Anxiety results from the way a teacher

behaves with his/hers students. Again, the learner tries to read the teacher to understand what is expected of students.

Niina points out in extract (37) how differently teachers can react to students with differing backgrounds with a foreign language and how this manifests itself in anxiety:

- 37) Niina: se vähän suosii niitä joilla *se vieras kieli* on toinen äidinkieli tuntuu, että se kattoo meitä silleen, että tuo ei puhu niin hyvää *kieltä* se on silleen negatiivisempi meitä kohtaan se aiheuttaa sitä, että apua uskallanko mä puhua täällä yhtään mitään

Niina: he/she favours those that speak the foreign language as their second language it feels like he/she looks at us like she doesn't speak so well is like more negative towards us it makes me feel like oh my do I dare speak here at all

Niina feels that a teacher she has had favours those students that speak the foreign language as a first language. She notes that the teacher is more negative towards those students that do not have such good language skills. This unfairness in student treatment makes Niina feel like she is afraid to speak in class at all. The situation described by Niina leads to learners' feeling as there are those learners that are accepted and good and the there are others who are not as much appreciated. Being in the latter group raises negative emotions and frustrations.

Anna-Kaisa emphasizes how the teacher's body language and reactions while she speaks in class affect her anxieties in extract (38):

- 38) Anna-Kaisa: Ehkä se on semmonen että millanen sen opettajan tyyli että kuinka virallista se nyt siellä on vähän se että miten se itte ottaa kontaktia ehkä oppilaisiin jos tuntuu siltä että se kuuntelee puolella korvalla ja kättelee muualle lopun ajasta niin siinä ei ehkä hirveesti huvita puhua tai sitten se rypistelee koko ajan kulmiaan kattoo sieltä tiukasti että sanookohan tuo nyt varmasti kaiken oikein

Anna-Kaisa: Maybe it's like what's the teacher's style like like how official it's there how does he/her take contact with students if it feels like that he/she listens with half an ear and looks the other way for the rest of the time that doesn't really wanna make you talk or frowns and looks sternly like is she saying everything correctly

Anna-Kaisa feels that the way a teacher reaches out to students affects how she feels in class. Teachers that do not listen intensively to their students or do not express interest with their facial expressions lessen Anna-Kaisa's interest to take part in class. Students need to feel appreciated and accepted in class in order to commit to language learning. Teachers and their facial expressions and body language inform students about how the teacher feels about them. Thus, students can become anxious if they see and feel that teachers do not value what they have to say.

Sini discusses the differences between her experiences in different languages and why the other language classes make her more nervous in extract (39):

- 39) Sini: kielten välillä on eroja, että X kieltä mua pelottaa puhua tosi paljon Y kieltä ei niin paljon esimerkiksi ja mä luulen, että se johtuu ihan siitä, että Y kielessä virheet on sallitumpia eihän nyt enhän mä pysty puhumaan täydellistä kieltä koska mä en tiedä ees mitä se on mutta mä teen virheitä ja mä saan ne siellä anteeksi toisin kun siis X:n puolella...

Sini: between languages there is a difference like X language I'm scared to talk a lot Y language not so much for example and I think it's because in language Y the errors are more allowed I can't speak perfectly because I don't even know what that is but I make mistakes and I'm forgiven for them in there unlike with language X

Sini describes the differences in her feelings towards the two different languages she studies and explains why she feels more at ease during her Y lessons. She emphasizes how making errors is allowed during Y language lessons and also that she feels that if she makes a mistake, she is forgiven. The choice of words in Sini's turn... She uses the phrase *saan ne siellä anteeksi*, she is forgiven something she has done wrong, to be forgiven one has to do something that is wrong towards someone else. Making errors in language class is serious, something you have to be sorry about.

5.2.2.2 *Native teachers*

As part of their studies, university language students interact with both native and non-native teachers. This study shows that interacting with native teachers can induce anxiety in some cases. In general, the participants describe how they feel that natives pick up language mistakes more easily than other teachers. In addition to native speakers also those Finnish teachers that have near-native skills can bring forth anxiety in the participants. Anna-Kaisa explains in extract (40) why interacting with native teachers is anxiety laden for her:

- 40) Anna-Kaisa: ja sit tietysti jännitti sitä, että täällä on natiivia opettajia että mitä nekin nyt musta ajattelee kuinka toikin on tänne päässy kun ei se mitään osaa tyylin ja tota niin siis ehkä se on lähinnä liittyny siihen onko sitä tarpeeksi hyvä ja kelpaako

Anna-Kaisa: and of course I was nervous about here being native teachers like what are they gonna think of me how has she gotten in because she doesn't know anything like and maybe it has mostly been about whether I'm good enough

Anna-Kaisa anticipates what native teachers might think of her. She is afraid that they might question how she managed to get in to university when she obviously knows very little. Ultimately, she states that her feelings relate to wondering if she is good enough and worthy as a person. Feelings of anxiety rise from interpretations and can relate to

needing validation and acceptance for our being. Native teachers can spot language errors more easily and they understandably are more sensitive to notice pronunciation mistakes. Thus, interaction with natives can make a learner sensitive to those fears of not meeting the standard set for a language student studying at this advanced level.

Aino echoes similar thoughts as Anna-Kaisa in extract (41):

- 41) Aino: jos on natiiveja opettajia ihan sama missä kielessä se tuntuu et sitä kun sen tietää että ne huomaa vielä paremmin jos tekee jonkun virheen niin kyllä se ahistaa silleen välillä mut sitten se on henkilökemiastakin kiinni vähän et jos muuten tulee muuten mukava ilmapiiri luokassa niin se auttaa

Aino: if there are native teachers it doesn't matter in which language it feel like you know they notice even better if someone makes a mistake that makes you anxious at times but it depends on personal chemistry because if there's otherwise a nice atmosphere in class then it helps

Aino also feels that natives notice errors more easily. She becomes anxious if she notice an error in her production due to knowing that the teacher will notice it too. However, Aino emphasizes the role of personal chemistry between a student and teacher by saying that it plays a role. Presumably, she means that with some teachers it is naturally easier to get along than with others.

However, Minna identifies with feeling anxious with native teachers but also comments on non-natives in extract (42):

- 42) Minna: natiiveja tietysti jännittää vähän enemmän, kyllä mä sanon että meiänkin professori vaikka se on suomalainen niin se tietää niin hyvin kielen X että kyllä sen kanssa jännittää jos puhuu

Minna: you're more nervous with natives but I think that our professor even though he/she is Finnish he/she knows the language so well that you're nervous when you speaking to him/her

When I asked Minna about interacting with teachers and if she feels anxious then she responded by saying that she is more anxious of native speakers but one of her professors has such a good command of language X that she is also anxious when speaking with him or her. Minna's anxiety reaction is tied to viewing someone else as a superior, a person who has better language skills than she does. Because this person is better they are also more able to judge Minna and her skills. It is not just natives that can possess this ultimate level of skill but also those who have acquired great skill in the language. Somehow these skilled others automatically judge you and are somehow entitled to do that?

Janika emphasizes the role of the image she has of a teacher in extract (43):

43) Janika: No kyllä oon huomannu, että just täällä yliopistollaki niin vähemmän jännittää vieraan kielen puhumista ku suomalaisten opettajien kanssa sitten natiivien kanssa kyllä enemmän jännittää mutta sitten niissä taas vaikuttaa että millasen kuvan siitä opettajasta on saanu, että onks se jotenki tai tuleeko itelle semmonen olo että arvioiko ne mua vai ollaanko me enemmän kavereita tai että yhdessä opiskellaan eikä silleen että tosi iso auktoriteettiasema

Janika: Well I've noticed that here at university you're less nervous about speaking a foreign language with Finns then with natives you're more nervous but it also depends on what kind of an image you have of a teacher like is he/she somehow does he/she evaluate you or are we more like friends or like studying together and not like there's a really big authority

For Janika it is easier to speak a foreign language with Finns than with natives. However, she does point out that her anxious feelings depend on other aspects as well. If she feels the teacher does not evaluate her and is more like her friend there is no anxiety either. Thus, anxiety in relation to teachers can ease if the student feels that the teacher is on their side and supportive. For the students to feel relaxed they need to feel that the teacher is approachable and nice.

In conclusion, the participants fear the judgements of native language teachers because they believe that teachers judge them based on possible language errors they make. These participants also feel that native teachers are the ones to notice errors more easily and therefore interaction with these teachers raise more anxiety in the participants than interacting with non-native teachers.

5.2.3 The peers

The third category of causes for FL anxiety relates to peers. Studying at university includes interacting and working with other students in class and outside of it. The context of being amongst other advanced language learners results in anxiety for the participants. These skilled others make the participants question their own level of knowledge and whether they have what it takes to be a language student in the university context.

The analysis revealed that FL anxiety, in this study, has a social characteristic to it. There are four groups that relate to peers and anxiety. The first two relate to how well participants know others in class, whether they are familiar or unfamiliar and the second group relates to the skill level of peers, whether they are native or very skilled non-

natives. In other words, the **Peers** category includes characteristics that relate to the peers in relation to them being:

- familiar or unfamiliar
- natives or very skilled non-natives

First of all, the familiarity of peers was recognized as lowering anxiety. Janika explains this in extract (44) in more detail:

44) Janika: Jos jotenkin tuntee, että varsinkin mitä paremmin tuntee useimmat oppilaat siellä tai luokkakaverit niin silleen vähemmän jännittää... mutta jos tietää, että ne kaikki on tosi hyviä eikä tunne niitä niin sitten on silleen että apuaaa et sitten ehkä jännittää enemmän

Janika: If you know the better you know most of the students there or class mates the less you're anxious... but if you know that they're all really good and you don't know them then you're like omg then you're maybe more nervous

Janika points out that knowing other students in class makes her less anxious. However, for Janika knowing that others in class are skilled and they are unfamiliar to her on the other hand makes her feel more nervous. It seems that being amongst familiar peers eases anxiety and helps to relax in classroom learning situations. Helping students to get to know each other and focusing on building a good atmosphere in language classes can help to reduce anxiety also at the university level. Niina echoes similar thoughts about the familiarity of peers in example (45):

45) Niina: jos on läheisiä kavereita etenkin me jotka oltiin siellä vaihdossa tutustu kunnolla niin sit niiden eessä kehtaa enemmän mokailla ja tehdä virheitä mutta sitten jotain etäisempiä just siellä kandisemmassakin muutamia jotka ei oo mun kanssa samalla vuosikursilla niin niiden kanssa niin tulee sellanen että ei kehtaa ihan mitä tahansa alkaa sanomaan niin sanotusti tutumpien ihmisten kanssa ei jännitä niin paljon

Niina: If there are close friends like all of us that were in that exchange program we got to know each other well in front of them you can mess up and make mistakes but those that are more distant like in the candidate's seminar there were some that are not in the same year that I am you feel like you can't just say anything with familiar people you're not that anxious

Niina describes how she feels more comfortable about making mistakes with other students that she has grown to know rather well. However, she notes that in her candidate's seminar group there were students who were not in the same year group as she and this made her feel more anxious. However, the reasons for why the participants are more anxious of unfamiliar peers did not surface in the interviews. Miia comments on the subject in extract (46):

- 46) Miia: kun siellä istuu semmosia joita ei oo ikinä nähny, että monenkohan vuoden opiskelija toikin on ja miten hyvin se ossaa ja vertaa heti itteensä vaikka ei pitäs...

Miia: there are those sitting in class that you've never seen before like how many years have they studied and how good they are and you immediately compare yourself even though you shouldn't

For Miia seeing strangers in class makes her question how many years these strangers have studied and how good they might be. She notes that she starts comparing herself to these strangers even though she should not. Somehow these strangers pose a threat to her and she becomes anxious. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002:567) have indeed reported in their study that it is the fear of others negative evaluations of one's skill that specifically separates anxious and non-anxious language learners.

Janika, Miia and Niina share the same predisposition or belief in their peers' automatic superiority. Anxiety becomes present when there are strangers in class because these strange peers might have excellent command of the target language. These thought of others being excellent users of the target language scares these participants because they fear not being as good as them.

In contrast, Sini becomes tense in a language class where there are familiar people present. Sini points out in extract (47) how familiar peers make her feel tense:

- 47) Sini: itse asiassa aika hölmöö mutta mulla se on niin päin että mitä enemmän siellä on tuttuja sitä enemmän mua jännittää koska jos ne on tuntemattomia niin mun ei ehkä tarvii enää kohdata niitä mun ei tarvii sinällään ajatella mitä ne musta ajattelee mutta jos mä oon kavereitten kanssa jossain ja mun pitäs heidän kanssaan puhua *kieltä X* niin mä kohtaan heitä myöhemminkin ja mä pelkään että ne ajattelee, että miten toi voi olla noin huono tai että siitä lähtien ne ajattelis musta tavallaan sen perusteella

Sini: actually quite stupid but for me it's more like the more there are those that I know the more anxious I am because if they are strangers I might not need to face them again I don't need to think about what they think of me but if I'm there with my friends and I should speak language X with them and I'll face them later and I'm afraid what they might think like how can she be that bad or from that on they would judge me based on that.

Sini says that the more there are familiar people in class the more anxious she feels. If peers in class are strangers to her there is the possibility that she does not have to face these people after the class or course has ended. Thus, it does not matter what these others think of her because she does not need to face them again. However, if Sini has to speak a foreign language with her friends she is afraid of what they might think of her based on her language skills. Anxiety is tied to the reaction one thinks poor language skills will have on others. With strangers there is no real threat to lose one's face if one

makes mistakes in front of them. They might judge her based on her language skills but at least one is not forced to confront them again. However, when these others are one's friends there is a need to feel accepted and appreciated. For Sini she fears losing this acceptance and appreciation of her friends if she does not impress them with her language skills.

Second aspect related to peers is concerned with the skill level of the person one is interacting with. In the previous examples the participants also mentioned how the perceived skill level of peers affects them. Janika brings forth her experiences in extract (48):

- 48) Janika: Varmaan jännittää enemmän jos kokee että se henkilö jonka kanssa puhuu on parempi kun ite että sit jos kokee että se toinen on samalla tasolla tai huonompi niin sitten ei jännitä koska on jotenkin tasavertasempi tilanne mut jos on parempi niin sitten tulee että voi ei mä kuulostan ihan hirveeltä

Janika: perhaps you're more nervous if you feel that the person you're talking to is better than you if you feel that the other is on the same level or worse then you're not that nervous because the situation is somehow more just but if the other is better then it's like oh gosh I sound terrible

For Janika anxiety is induced when she feels that the person she is talking to is better than her. In contrast, if the interlocutor is on the same level or inferior in skill, Janika does not feel as anxious. She relates this feeling of less anxiety to the situation being more equal than speaking to someone with better skills than herself.

Niina describes how peers make her feel in extract (49):

- 49) Niina: nämä muut jotka on meidän ryhmässä jotka on vaan lyhyen X:n lukiossa lukenu niin tuntuu että jotkut niin tuntuu että se miten ne käyttää kieltä se on ne on paljon parempia kuin minä vaikka minäkin yritän tulee sellanen olo että en kehtaa puhua kun menee kaikki päin mäntyä

Niina: these others that are in our group that have only studied the shorter version of language X in high school it feels like some feels that how they use the language it's they are much better than I even though I try too it makes me feel like I don't dare to speak cos everything will just go wrong

Niina feels threatened by other students that seem to speak more fluently than she does. This happens especially when those others have a similar background with studying the same L2. Niina expresses her disappointment when she notes that even though she tries she does not seem to be able to be as good as others. These thoughts lead to disappointment in her skills.

Mirja brings forth another point of view about peers and her feelings about wanting to take part in class activities in extract (50):

50) Mirja: jotka vähän ehkä luulee olevansa silleen tosi hyviä on ne vähän semmosia, että mä oon tosi hyvä niin tulee semmonen olo, että apua en mä haluu puhua täällä

Mirja: those that think that they are very good they are like I'm so good it makes me feel like oh my I don't want to speak here

Feeling that peers in class think highly of their own skills makes Mirja want to leave the class she is in. Perceiving how others might seemingly feel about their own skills is fighting to Mirja.

Elina explains how she anticipated others reaction to her in extract (51):

51) Elina: semmonen fiilis et se toinen voi reagoida jollain tavalla negatiivisesti siihen mitä mä nyt yritän tässä sanoo tai ilmaista tällä kielellä...mulle siitä tulee se ahistus, että mä niin ku ennakoin sen vastapuolen reaktiota ja jos mulla on semmonen tunne, että ihan sama mitä mä teen niin se tulee oleen negatiivinen niin sillon kyllä rupee ahistaan

Elina: that feeling that the other person can react in some negative way to what I'm trying to say here or express in this language... it makes me anxious like I'm anticipating the other person's reaction and if I feel like no matter what I do it's going to be negative then I'll become anxious

Elina feels that others can react negatively to what she has to say and that makes her anxious. She comments that sometimes she feels that no matter what she does the person she is interacting with will react negatively.

Krashen (in Young 1991) has discussed an idea he calls "club membership" as an explanation for anxiety. This membership refers to being a member of a group that one is in while learning a foreign language. This club membership idea troubles the participants of the present study as well. The participants feel that they do not have what it takes to be equals with their fellow students that have seemingly greater language skills. This raises anxiety in them because they start to question their own language skills and whether they have what it takes to study a foreign language in the university setting.

In conclusion, the causes of anxiety are complex. The causes can originate from the learner, the teacher or from peers. It seems that behind anxiety is a network of beliefs that guide the perception of a language learner. In general, the participants demand a lot from themselves and try hard to be good language learners but still view themselves as less capable than others around them.

5.3 Effects

The third research question examined what kinds of effects the advanced language learners perceive anxiety to have. The participants were asked how they felt that anxiety has affected their studies, their learning and motivation to learn a language. The results indicate that anxiety has effects mainly on three levels; behavioural, cognitive and affective. Thus, anxiety affects the way learners behave, what they think and how they feel while learning a foreign language. In sum, it can therefore be said that the effects of anxiety affect the whole person. I will present these three categories next, in more detail.

FL anxiety affects language learners in different ways. There are effects that others can perceive from the outside and there are effects that only the anxious learner notes. Understanding the effects of anxiety that learners themselves identify is of value because it gives knowledge of how detrimental learners perceive anxiety to be. In the end, learners make the ultimate judgement of whether anxiety harms or helps their learning.

The first category, behaviour, includes the actual behaviours of avoidance of and resignation from learning. At this level anxiety results in different types of behaviour that the anxious person takes part in, in order to reduce or escape the crippling feelings of nervousness. In other words, avoidance and resignation are methods to control anxiety.

Janika describes in extract (52) how anxiety manifests itself in her behaviour:

52) Janika: No joo kyllähän sitä toivois, että pystyis sanoon kaiken mitä haluaa sanoa mutta ehkä semmosissa kielenkäyttötilanteissa niin sitten tulee sellanen, että äh en halua sanoo mitään kun en pysty sanoo sitä mitä haluisin et sitten niin...

Janika: Well yeah you'd hope that you could be able to say everything you want to but in those situations where you use the language you get a feeling like I don't want to say anything because I can't say what I'd want to...

As seen from the previous example (52) anxiety results from not being able express thoughts and opinions in a way that one would like to. This inability leads to withdrawal. In other words, a learner does not want to participate at all in class activities. Janika's statement shows that she would rather not say anything at all than risk saying something that she did not intend to. She feels frustrated with her inability to express herself. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) have pointed out that protecting

one's self-image is more important for a learner than the actual process of learning a language.

Another behavioural effect of anxiety is to physically position oneself in such a manner that feels safe. In previous studies one often cited effect of anxiety is sitting at the back of the class or by other means positioning oneself in a way that aims at hiding (Young 1991). Aino expresses similar ideas in extract (53):

53) Aino: ehkä saatan istua kauempana tai niinku luokan takana vaikka, siellä on vähän turvallisempi olo sitten tavallaan jos on puhuttu jos on ryhmäkeskustelu niin sitten kaikki ei kuule samalla tavalla ku jos ois siinä keskivaiheilla

Aino: maybe I'll sit at the back or at the back of the class, there it feels bit safer if we're speaking if there is a group discussion then not everyone can hear if I were sitting in the middle

Anxiety can make us try to physically hide from those things we perceive to cause those anxious feelings. This way of physically situating oneself at the back of the class works as a way to handle one's anxiety. Sitting at the back of a classroom brings Aino a feeling of safety and makes her less visible and audible to others in class. This too works as a way to protect the self. Generally, when others cannot hear what an anxious learner might say in class there is no risk of sounding silly to others. In addition, Sini expresses similar thoughts as Aino by saying that: "*I'm in the corner like don't notice me don't ask me anything*". Sini like Aino tries to hide from being asked to say something which might end up sounding less than perfect.

In addition to the previously mentioned effects of anxiety, anxiety also leads to procrastination. Procrastination is a process of avoiding doing something because of nervousness. Procrastination is typical in demanding and time consuming projects and often procrastinators are fearful of not being able to finish the task they are supposed to do. This fear leads to anxiety. Janika explains in extract (54) how she felt about planning an oral presentation:

54) Janika: mä vaan lykkäsin ja lykkäsin sitä suunnittelua jotenkin mua ei yhtään innostanu rueta miettimään...vähän tollasta lykkäyksen makua on koska muuten mä oon aika sellanen että kaikki kirjalliset hommat saatan tehdä jo tai silloin kun pystyy tekeen että palauttaa vaikka pari viikkoo ajoissa vaikka että ei niissä tuu sellasta halua lykätä

Janika: I just postponed and postponed the planning I wasn't at all interested in starting to think... there's this postponing because otherwise I'm like all written pieces I might do already or when I can I might return them two weeks early with those there is no need to postpone

Janika describes how she has avoided working on a certain presentation. She further explains how procrastination is untypical for her. Usually she starts her work early, ahead of deadlines, but when she feels anxious starting becomes difficult and postponing comes into play. There seems to be a difference in how she views oral and written assignments because the way she feels towards completing these different tasks is rather different. In extract (55) Janika reflects on the reasons for her procrastination:

55) Janika: no ehkä just siitä, että jotenkin tulee vähän sellanen tunne, että no ei tää kumminkaan onnistu ja kaikki menee huonosti ja jotenkin ei vaan halua tarttua siihen en mä tiää mut ois parempi, että aloittas aiemmin ja sitten sais jotenkin kerkeis enemmän harjotella ja sais varmuuttakin enemmän jostain syystä sitten vaan niinku ei ryhdy siihen

Janika: well maybe that somehow it makes me feel that this won't be good and everything will go badly and somehow you just don't want to start but it would be better to start earlier and then you get somehow there'd be time to practice more and you'd get that certainty but for some reason I just don't do that

Janika gives an example of how anxiety can provoke a circle of thinking that results in giving up on trying to finish or learning a new thing. She describes how she anticipates failure and that makes her not want to start at all. She indicates that she knows it would be good to start early so she could have more time to practice which again would result in a greater feeling of confidence. However, she ends her comment by noting that for some reason she just does not do this. This fear of failure combined with feelings of anxiety and resignation form a vicious cycle where each one of these components feeds the other one. Even though Janika knows the type of behavior that would help her she does not engage in it. This shows how difficult it can be to break the cycle of anxiety even though one wants to. Pirjo expresses similar ideas as Janika in extract (56):

56) Pirjo: ehkä lähinnä kirjallisissa tehtävissä mä oon jännittäny niitä niin paljon, että en oo saanu mitään aikaseks. Vaikka ois joku lyhyt essee niin mulla on saattanu lykkääntyä joku kurssi vuodella sen takia, että mä en saa sitä lopputyötä tavallaan tehtyä siihen kurssille...

Pirjo: maybe with written assignments I've been nervous so much that I haven't been able to get anything done. Eventhough it would be a short essay I might have postponed a course for a year because I haven't been able to finish the final essay for the course.

Pirjo feels that anxiety has resulted in not being able to start working on her written assignments. She also says that completing a course might have been delayed by a year because she has been unable to finish even short written assignments. Anxiety about a written task, in a situation like the one Pirjo describes, can indeed have an impact on

finishing courses and could deteriorate to delayed graduation. In these cases that Pirjo and Janika have described the inability to finish assignments is not a case of laziness but due to great amounts of anxiety and emotional stress.

A final point about the effects of anxiety and emotions comes from Sini in extract (57):

57) Sini: mutta että pystys vuorovaikutukseen niin täytyy roheta tuottamaan ja siihen ei pysty jos jännittää ja pelottaa että kyllä sikäli

Sini: to be able to interact you should be courageous enough to produce and you can't do that if you're nervous and afraid

Interaction with others requires ability and especially enough courageousness to speak a language. As Sini points out without courage to speak one cannot interact with others. Anxiety, in her words, robs that courageousness. In a sense, anxiety takes away that desire to try and communicate and eventually without taking advantage of those situations that one can practice in, the chances for language learning are quite slim.

The third category of effects relates to cognition. This category includes factors such as being unable to think of anything else than one's anxiety. The students also report experiencing a mental block that makes it impossible to focus on the topic of learning. In other words, anxiety takes over the learners' thoughts and mental capacities that would otherwise be used to process the language material at hand. It becomes therefore difficult to concentrate on the actual matter of learning.

Maija explains in extract (58) how she has noticed that anxiety becomes a type of a wall or block that makes learning more challenging. She explains in her own words:

58) Maija: jos ajatellaan, että ihan hirveesti jännittää niin kyllä silloin aika paljon blokkaa kaikkee, että kun yrittää vaan selviytyä siitä tilanteesta niin ei pysty oleen luontevasti ja ei pysty omaksumaan sitä kieltä silleen tavallaan, jos mietitään, että toiset puhuu niin sit yrittää vaan miettiä, että apua kohta mun pitää sanoo jotakin ja sit ei enää kuulekaan mitä muut puhuu ja näin niin kyllähän siinä jää aika paljon tai voi jäädä paljonki niinku ihan sivuun

Maija: if we think that you're very anxious then you block things, when you just trying to survive that situation then you can't be very natural and you can't acquire the language in a way if we think that others are speaking then you just try to think that soon I have to say something and then you don't hear what others are saying then you lose quite a lot or you miss a lot

Maija describes how being very nervous blocks out the possibility to hear and take in the language around her. The main focus in an anxious state is to survive through the situation that is causing the anxiety which, in the end, makes it hard to be natural or

relaxed. Further, it can become almost impossible to acquire the language. Maija gives an example of how one is not able to listen to what others say in class because of being only able to think of what one is going to have to say. Anxiety, on illustrative terms, forms an invisible bubble around the person who is nervous. This bubble blocks everything outside of it and turns the focus solely on the nervous thoughts that ramble in a person's head. All the language material, written and spoken will in those moments be unattainable to the learner inside that bubble. Clearly learning is hindered and frankly rather unpleasant. This process resembles the one that Stephen Krashen has described in his monitor model. Krashen has explained how affective factors (anxiety being one of those) raise a filter between a learner and the language material present to that learner.

In addition to anxiety making it hard to access language material in learning situations, it can limit learner's ability to show his/hers ability. Minna explains in extract (59) how anxiety limits her ability to do the best she can on assignments.

- 59) Minna: No varmaan just se jos on hirveet paineet tai jännitys koko ajan päällä ei pysty semmoseen suoritukseen mitä normaali prosessointi tilassa pystyis varsinkin kandissa oli varmasti monesti sellanen että ei tästä tuu mitään lähtökohtanen oletus kun lähti tekeen jotain niin sit ei se tuloskaan ollu kauheen hyvä

Minna: probably if there's a lot of pressure or anxiety all the time you can't perform like you would in a normal processing state especially with my candidate's thesis there was this this is not going to work well presumption when I started then the end result wasn't that good either

Minna says that anxiety makes it impossible to do as well as one would do in a more relaxed state of being. Minna is also able to pin point how her anxiety and beliefs about her chances of doing well affect the eventual end result of her work. This shows how even though she acknowledges how her own thinking might harm her learning, it is difficult to break out of it. The fear of failure limits her ability to work on the task such as her candidate's thesis. Minna remembers the thesis being a challenge because she was certain that she would not be able to do it.

Anna-Kaisa further reports having experienced similar effects of anxiety. She explains in extract (60):

- 60) Anna-Kaisa: jos sä oot koko ajan hermostunut stressaantunut ahdistunu niin sillan aivot vähän niinku sulkeutuu etkä sä opi mitään ja vähän se että jos ite uskoo että mä en oo tässä hyvä tai mä en tätä opi niin sillon on aika huonot todennäköisyydet että sä sen opit

Anna-Kaisa: if your nervous all the time stressed anxious then your brain like shuts down and you don't learn anything and that you believe that this is not going to go well or I won't learn then there's a small chance that you won't learn

Anna-Kaisa also feels that anxiety can in a sense make your brain shut down or close off. It is quite a strong metaphor because having a brain that has turned off is really like having no brain at all. She also highlights the role of believing in the ability to learn. Anxiety as Anna-Kaisa describes is related to our self-efficacy beliefs concerning learning. Negative beliefs cause anxiety because being asked to do something that feels impossible releases anxiety.

On the affective level the interviewees feel lack of joy from learning. Pirjo describes her experiences in extract (61):

61) Pirjo: ...jos jännittää niin kyllä se laskee motivaatiota että siitä tavallaan menee se ilo se oppimisenilo sitten siinä samalla ja sit jos siitä tulee semmonen kierre, että rupee miettimään niitä virheitä ja tekee virheitä niin koko ajan itekkin keskitty

Pirjo:...if you are nervous it does lower your motivation so in a way you lose the joy of learning at the same time and it can become a circle that you start thinking about those errors and you make them so you focus on them yourself all the time.

Pirjo explains that anxiety affects her motivation and through that she loses the joy of learning. Pirjo also point out how focusing on errors makes her think about errors even more and leads to actually making more errors. The essential point in Pirjo's comment is that she feels that the joy of learning is lost due to anxiety.

Anxiety has different consequences for different learners. In general, for these participants anxiety causes them to lose interest in their studies and leads to different types of avoidance behaviours. In other words, anxiety provokes learners to avoid the situations where they might feel anxious. In addition, one cause mentioned by several participants is the mental block that these participants experience when they are anxious. This block makes it difficult to concentrate on learning as the learners' focus in on the anxious thoughts that ramble in their heads. In the end, perseverance is a key to learning and especially so in foreign language learning. However, as has become evident from the results presented in this chapter, anxiety severely affects learners' eagerness to persevere with their efforts to learn. It is therefore of essence to try and help learners to free themselves of these limiting anxious feelings. It also begs the question of how do these advanced learners then cope with FL anxiety. This is a question I will turn to next.

5.4 Coping strategies

In the final part of the interviews, I asked the interviewees about the ways they cope with these feelings, thoughts and physical symptoms that language learning anxiety causes. The interviewees gave several different methods that they use in order to prevent or manage their anxiety. Hence, this section aims at answering the final research question: how do advanced learners cope with anxiety?

The coping strategies are divided into three groups. These groups are skill improvement strategies, relaxation and acceptance strategies and finally social support strategies.

5.4.1 Skill improvement strategies

The first group of skill improvement strategies consists of methods that aim at skill improvement. Indeed, foreign language anxiety has often been redeemed as a problem for beginner's level learners and thought of as easing as learners master the language better. The participants seem to also believe that anxiety would cease to exist if they had better skills in the foreign language. It is therefore that they aim at practising and putting themselves into situations where they can practice as often as possible. In the following extract (62) Minna explains what actions could help but also indicates that not doing these things can lead to insecurities:

- 62) Minna:...ja toinen juttu että sitä epävarmuutta siitä kielestä vois poistaa oikeesti arjessa käyttäs sitä *vierasta kieltä* lukis jotain lehtiä tai kuuntelis radiota tai että ois vaan koko ajan siinä kieliympäristössä mutta se jää monesti vähän huonoksi ja sit kun ei tee sitä niin on epävarma

Minna:... and another thing with which you can remove insecurity from the language is to use the *foreign language*, would read some magazines or listened to the radio or just would be all the time in the language environment but often when you don't do it then you are insecure

Minna explains that reading and listening to a foreign language during her free time would diminish her anxieties. In her turn she mentions two of the four language skills, reading and listening but not writing and speaking. She feels that using a language is important but she does not actually use it herself but tries to expose herself to language input. Further, Minna relates being in the language environment as something that would help with anxiety. The word choice *being* brings forth the belief that one learns languages by rather passively being somewhere. She is not actively using the language in order to improve her skills but is someone who absorbs language and acquires it

through this input. She, however, continues by saying that these things are actually something that do not get done frequently enough which then leads to insecurity and presumably to more anxiety and even to feelings of guilt for not having practised as planned.

Niina also lists different things she does to practice all different language skills in extract (63):

63) Niina: Ite mä yritän silleen että juttelen mun avomiehelle *sitä vierasta kieltä* vaikka se ei ossaa sanoo muutakun kiitos mä sille selitän kaikkee ja yritän sillä madaltaa sitä kynnystä puhua ja sitten välillä mä kirjotan päiväkirjaa *sillä kielellä* kirjotan osan tapahtumista ja silleen ite yritän...mä välillä kuuntelen yhtä *vieraskielistä* kanavaa sit tota luen uutisia välillä ja sit jos saa jostain *sen kielisen* cosmon niin sitten mä luen sitä

Niina: I try like I talk to my partner in the foreign language even though he can't say anything else than thank you I explain things to him and try to make speaking easier and at times I write in my diary in that language write some events and like that try...I at times listen to a radio station in that language then I read the news and if I get the cosmo in that language then I read that

Niina has included in her repertoire ways to practice all different language skills. She aims at making the use of a foreign language easier. She writes, speaks, reads and listens to the language to actively improve her skills and to feel more competent as a user of that foreign language. Interestingly, both Niina and Minna mention practicing in their spare time. Somehow it seems that Niina or Minna do not see their studies as a way to practice and improve their language skills but conclude that it is something that should be done on their own time.

One of the ways to manage anxiety reported in previous studies is to prepare well before hand for the situation that one feels anxious about. Aino also points out that anxiety can be controlled by preparing well for any situation that makes her anxious. She describes these experiences in extract (64):

64) Aino: mutta jos tietää että tulee jännittämään seuraavaa tuntia tai luentoja niin valmistautuu hyvin et tietää että on tehny kaikki jutut lukenu jotkut artikkelit ja muut sekin auttaa.

Aino: but if you know you're going to be nervous about the next lesson or lecture then you prepare very well so that you know that you've done all the things read the articles or else that helps

As mentioned, Aino controls anxiety by preparing well. She points out that knowing she has done everything that is required helps her to feel calm. Preparing well gives a

feeling of control and that one is prepared for whatever happens during the particular anxiety inducing event. Preparation helps to control how one is able to respond in class and diminishes the chances of having to respond without having a proper answer to give. However, previous studies have shown that the time anxious learners use on preparation does not necessarily pay off in terms of eventual achievement.

However, as the previous comments show anxiety can lead to increased efforts to learn and prepare well. These coping methods obviously can have very good effects on a learner's actual skills and aid in learning a language. Maija also points out that anxiety's effects are not always necessarily negative. This is what studies often label as facilitative anxiety which pushes learners to try and work harder. Maija explains in extract (65):

- 65) Maija: Ei silleen ei ainakaan mitenkään negatiivisesti enemmän positiivisesti sitten kun sitä on vähän ollu niin on valmistautunu paljon paremmin ja sitä kautta oppinu enemmän, että ei se oo ollu missään vaiheessa ylivoimasta enemmän silleen, että minähän tästä selviän semmonen fiilis

Maija: Not really not in a negative way more positively when it has been there I have prepared much better and that way learned more it hasn't been overpowering at any stage more like I'll get through this kind of feeling

Maija explains how anxiety actually can spark action and result in an attitude of working through any situation. She points out that anxiety's effects are not for her necessarily negative but have indeed motivated her to prepare better than she would have with zero anxiety. Thus some level of anxiety can motivate or spark action in students. Maija also states that feelings of anxiety have resulted in improved learning and that those anxious feelings have never for her been overwhelming. The difference between Maija's positive experiences with anxiety acting as a facilitative force and that debilitating anxiety that most participants of the study experience is how anxiety is interpreted. Maija highlights her attitude of perseverance and pushing through challenging situations. However, debilitating anxiety is a paralyzing force and can cloud learners to think that there is no way to get through a learning situation successfully.

5.4.2 Relaxation and acceptance strategies

Whilst anxiety has already taken over, the participants resort to methods that control their thinking. They try to change their reaction to anxious feelings by making new interpretations of the situation that has triggered anxiety in the first place. They aim at reevaluating the situation in a more positive light or reassuring themselves that the

situation is not that important or dangerous as previously considered. It is a method to control one's emotional reaction by re-evaluation and aimed to reduce the body's stress reaction. Aino describes the process of trying to see things in a more positive light in extract (66):

66) Aino: ... ja ihan fyysisesti jos niin pahasti ahistaa niin yrittää ajatella että tästä selviää ja hengittää syvään ja rauhallisesti sekin voi laukasta sitä

Aino: ...and physically if anxiety is bad then trying to think that I will get through this and breathing deeply and calmly that can release it

Aino's coping method aims at reducing the physical symptoms of anxiety. She emphasises the power of positive thinking by saying to herself that she will get through the anxiety provoking situation and she also takes deep and slow breaths to reduce anxiety. This is a self-soothing method that affects the physical symptoms of anxiety. Deep breaths generally lower blood pressure and heart beat. Once a person feels anxious it is quite natural to try to somehow relieve one's state and deep breathing helps to sooth the body down.

Anna-Kaisa controls her anxiety by trying to reframe the situation in her mind that has sparked anxiety. She discusses her method in extract (67):

67) Anna-Kaisa: ...sitä yleensä vähän pysähtyy hetkeksi silleen ja miettii et cmoon onko tää oikeesti niin paha juttu et on sitä pahempaakin tehty ja niistäkin on selvitty vähän niinku vakuuttelee itteensä siitä että se menee hyvin että ei tää nyt oo niin vakavaa...

Anna-Kaisa: ...usually I stop for a moment and think that cmoon is this really such a bad thing, I've been through worse and survived those assuring myself that it's going to go well and this is not that serious...

Anna-Kaisa points out that by reminding herself that she has gotten through worse situations she can ease the physical symptoms of anxiety. In addition, she highlights the notion of thinking that the situation is not that serious so there is no need to feel overtly anxious. In the face of stressful events efforts to reframe the situation can help with coping with strong negative emotions.

In the causes section of the present study I suggested that perfectionism results in induced anxiety for some participants. Sini was one of those participants that talked about her high demands for her own performance. In Sini's comment in extract (68) she points out how trying to change this perfectionist way of thinking helps her to manage with nervousness:

- 68) Sini:...antas itelleen enemmän anteeks ehkä ite hyväksyis sen millä tasolla on eikä vaatis iteltä liikaa...

Sini:...forgave myself more maybe accepted the level that I'm on and didn't demand too much from myself...

Sini tries to forgive herself and accept the level of skill that she currently is in. She continues by saying that she should not demand too much of herself. Minna echoes similar thoughts about acceptance in her comment: *ei vaan koko ajan nipota jostain ja vaadi vaadi ihmeitä vaan on silleen kannustava*. Furthermore, Aino's comments in extract (69) reflect on a similar idea of realistic acceptance:

- 69) Aino:...Ehkä siinä on tullu semmonen itelle sietokyky sietää niitä omia virheitä ja onhan sitä oppinukkin lisää niitä ei tukkaan niin paljon ja sitten on vähän semmonen asenne et niin kauan kun kaikki ymmärtää mitä mä sanon se on niinku ihan sama jos mä sanon jonkun väärin joku prepositio tai ihan jonkun pikku jutunkin niin en jää miettimään niitä.

Aino:... Maybe I've become more tolerant of my own mistakes and I've learned more so there isn't so many and then there is this attitude that as long as everyone understand what I'm saying it doesn't matter if I say something wrong some prepositions or some little thing I won't think about those.

Aino has developed more tolerance towards the errors she makes. She notes that she has adopted an attitude of thinking that as long as she is understood, errors she makes do not matter. She adds that she does not dwell on these mistakes either. Her words echo the way she has viewed errors.

Katri emphasises the importance of not being too hard on oneself in extract (70):

- 70) Katri: mulla on semmonen olo, että välillä ei kaikessa tarvii olla hyvä, että mä oon siinä yhdessä vieraassa kielessä ok jotenkin, että mä oon siinä parempi ja tää on vaan mun sivuaine, että ei mun tässä nyt tarvii olla jotenkin semmosta omaa taakkaa ku just on se, että pitäs kaikkee osata vähän laskee

Katri: I have a feeling that you don't have to be good at everything that I'm good at that *one foreign language* I'm better at that and this is only my minor so that I don't need to take that burden I should know everything lower that

Katri talks about how lowering the demands that she has set out for her skills helps with managing anxiety too. Katri feels that being good in one language is something to be proud of and if her skills in the other language she studies are not equally good it does not weigh her down. Katri identifies thinking that she should be good at everything but in a sense has learned how to let go of some of those demands. She recognizes the importance of not putting too much burden on herself but to be proud of what she can do.

Pirjo also feels that being less demanding helps. She exemplifies this in extract (71):

71) Pirjo: ...oma asenne pystyy myös aika paljon päättää vaan, että mä teen parhaani ja sen pitää riittää ja mä nyt osaan tätä kieltä tän verran että mä teen sen mukaan jos se opettaja sanoo mulle jotakin niin se vaan haluaa auttaa mua eteenpäin eikä se oo tarkotettu henkilökohtaseks kritiikiks

Pirjo: ... my attitude you can just decide that I'm gonna do my best and it's going to be enough and I know this language this much and I'll go with that if the teacher says something to me he/she just wants to help me forward and it isn't meant as a personal criticism

Pirjo tries to view her efforts in language learning in a more positive and accepting light. She also tries to reframe teacher actions that might seem at first to be criticism. Obviously, these participants have reflected on their emotions and how they could affect those feelings of anxiety. They also miss feeling accepted for who they are and try to work on accepting in a sense themselves. Continually trying to be a lot better than one already is can become quite draining.

5.4.3 Social support strategies

Social support coping strategies include help for anxiety that comes from others or from seeking other people's company. The participants feel that positive feedback, especially from teachers, eases their nervousness as does finding others with whom to practice in a safe non-judgemental environment.

Aino emphasises the role of an encouraging teacher in extract (72):

72) Aino: Mitä mä oon huomannu, että jos on tosi hyvä semmonen reipas otteinen opettaja semmone rento niin se rentouttaa jos vaikka se muuten ei tuntis ketään sieltä niin on sitten aina se opettaja siinä semmonen joka luo sitä henkee hommaan

Aino: What I've noticed is that if there is a good firm teacher relaxed that makes me relax even if I don't otherwise know anyone there is the teacher that is building the atmosphere to it

Aino feels that a supportive teacher helps with managing anxiety. If the teacher can create a good atmosphere in class it helps with feeling more relaxed and at ease. The supporting teacher can act as a source of confidence and reassurance which makes students relax even though they might otherwise feel uncomfortable or anxious in class.

Minna highlights how working with a pair helps with managing anxiety in extract (73):

73) Minna: tuntuu että ei en minä osaa mitään mut sit kun piti sen kaverin kanssa oli paljon helpompi olla siellä eessäkin siitä heti lähti sitä jännistystä pois

Minna: feels like I don't know anything but when you gave it with a pal it was easier to be there in the front it eased the anxiety

Minna identifies how working with another student helped to reduce anxiety even when she was asked to give a presentation. Sharing the pressure with someone else can release anxiety. The other person also offers support in that anxiety inducing situation one is faced with.

Aino points out how finding a group of students can help in extract (74):

74) Aino: Sit ehkä semmonen ryhmään hakeutuminen että ei jää yksin kuitenkaan et ois joku sitten joku tutumpi henkilö siellä ...

Aino: Finding a group so that you don't stay alone that there'd be someone you'd know a little better...

Aino highlights how finding a group or another student in class helps with anxiety. She argues that the main thing is not to be alone. Building and aiding the formation of social groups within a class can thus help learners to relax and feel more ease in language classes.

This chapter reported the findings of the present study. Firstly, anxiety is most often experienced while the participants speak a foreign language in their studies. However, the participants also reported feeling anxious when they write, read or listen. Secondly, anxiety is caused by beliefs about language learning and about the self. The part of being a language student in the university context brings pressure to live up to expectations that the participants feel are set out for their language skills. The participants also fear not being good enough to manage in their studies and further they report demanding perfection of themselves. The causes of anxiety also relate how teachers interact with students and especially what teachers demand. The participants feel that teaching that causes anxiety focuses on mistakes. Especially native teachers provoke anxiety in students because they fear how easily these natives will spot mistakes in their production. The final set of causes relates to peers. Other students that are unfamiliar and seem to have better skills can also cause anxiety. Thirdly, the effects of anxiety were presented. These effects were divided into three groups: the behavioural, affective and cognitive. Finally, the coping methods the participants use to deal with anxiety were presented.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to study anxiety experienced by advanced language learners. The goal was to examine anxiety from four perspectives. The first area of interest was the situations that advanced learners experience anxiety in. The second topic to be studied focused on the causes of anxiety. Knowing what causes anxiety provides knowledge of how to eliminate debilitating amounts of anxiety from learning. The third perspective focused on the effects of anxiety and finally the fourth area of interest focused on how advanced learners manage and cope with anxiety. The purpose was to learn from anxiety through the experiences of advanced language learners that identify themselves as having suffered from FL anxiety. As there has been relatively little research done on the anxiety of advanced learners, the focus in the present study was kept on gaining knowledge from different perspectives.

The reason for studying advanced language learners was that they are a group that have generally been neglected in studies examining FL anxiety. Previous research has mainly studied beginning level language learners and especially in the Anglo-American context. It was therefore that the aim was to study anxiety from a new perspective in order to offer new insights into current research knowledge. Advanced learners are claimed not to be ones to suffer from anxiety but there has been research that has already shown that it is not that simple and indeed even advanced learners are not free of FL anxiety. The goal thus was to examine closely an area of research where there exist mixed and limited research findings.

The participants of the present study were university language learners. The participants majored in a foreign language and studied at the department of languages. At the time of data collection, the participants studied different foreign languages at the University of Jyväskylä. The data was collected with interviews. These interviews were semi-structured and followed a set of beforehand prepared questions. The interview questions were formed around the four research questions of the study. After the collection of data, it was transcribed and analysed using qualitative study methods. The data was analysed for content and the goal was to uncover themes that would raise from the data.

The results showed that the situations that require producing language also induce most anxiety. Learners are especially anxious of speaking and writing in a foreign language. The participants seem to be fearful of how others will perceive them and judge them

based on the language that they produce. The causes of anxiety are individual and not very straightforward. They relate to the learner, the teacher and peers. The effects take place on three dimensions; the affective, the cognitive and the behavioural. It can therefore be argued that anxiety affects learners on all levels of their being; their emotions, their thoughts and eventually their actions. However, the participants have continued with their studies even though anxiety feels overwhelming at times. This continuation has at least partly been the result of using different coping methods to manage one's anxieties. The coping methods the participants utilize are especially targeted at improving existing language skills. The participants seem to believe that anxiety would diminish if they mastered the foreign language better. Thus, the participants try to practice, especially outside of the university setting.

In general, the participants, these advanced language learners are under tremendous pressure. They try very hard to fit in, to act and be like the perfect language students. The participants feel pressured by the demand to sound like a native speaker, to master the academic style of writing and also knowing the target culture and history in detail. This ideal of perfection makes the participants belittle their own achievements and cause anxiety which makes it challenging to learn effectively. First and foremost the participants and other language students need ways to see themselves as language learners in a more realistic and positive light. Positive and encouraging feedback is needed as is a feeling of community and acceptance within the university setting. Even though the participants are adult learners they still miss those feelings of belonging to a community of equals. Language classes that are aimed at advanced learners need to take into consideration the emotional needs of students. Teaching that takes place in a supportive and warm atmosphere is in the end more effective.

The present study was successful in several aspects. The choice of study method was the right one in order to answer the particular research questions of the study. Interviewing and content analysis were successful choices because the research questions were answered with these tools. The study succeeded in its goal of providing new insights on the advanced language learners in a Finnish context. The results offer knowledge of how anxiety affects advanced learners and also provides insights into how teaching and learning can be developed to make language learning an encouraging process for all. Further, the present study serves to provide those interested in studying

the same target group in different universities or surroundings an opportunity to reflect on the differences and similarities between those future studies and the present one.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations of the present study that need to be addressed. First of all, the definitions of FL anxiety, in research, are broad and vary between different scholars. My understanding of FL anxiety is rather broad but I want to emphasize how anxiety effects the whole person. In the present study some anxiety reactions uncovered in the results section might be related to social anxieties or other personal characteristics in the participants. There indeed is some difficulty in separating different types of anxieties from another. Separating between FL anxiety and anxieties that are more dependable of a participant's personality or of a general inclination to feel negative emotions can be challenging. This is an important question to examine when studying anxiety. However, I feel that regardless of where anxiety comes from teachers and scholars need to find methods that can help all learners learn better and enjoy their learning more.

All different study methodologies have their advantages and disadvantages. Future studies might benefit from using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to measure anxiety levels but to also hear the experiences of learners themselves. In the present study the level of the participants' anxiety was not measured in any way. I did not want to use scales or questionnaires to identify the ones that struggle with anxiety the most but to give the power to the participants to decide whether they feel anxiety is harmful in their respective lives. This could perhaps be viewed as a limitation but I myself view it as strength. I wanted to provide the participants with the opportunity to decide for themselves if they feel that anxiety is something they have struggled with. In such personal experiences the individual in question is the best expert to decide what is actually harming to them and what is not. In general, I feel that individuals are the best experts on their own experiences and this is a key reason why I wanted to leave the decision of anxiety's harmfulness to the participants.

Understandably interviewing is not without its problems. The interviewer can prompt the interviews in a certain way or the participants might answer in a socially acceptable manner. Another issue with qualitative studies, especially such a descriptive one as the present study, is the nature of analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:134). I as a researcher have analysed the words and descriptions of the participants and this is a process that is inherently affected by my understanding of anxiety and in the end of the world.

However, as I have worked on the analysis there has been previous research that has been the guiding force in my efforts to understand the data and I have made the effort of staying as objective as humanly possible.

Some questions have still remained unanswered and thus future research on the topic is needed. Advanced language learners and their anxiety has been studied relatively little and thus more research is needed. Future studies could also benefit from using the FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986) to measure and find the individuals who most suffer from anxiety even though being advanced learners. Replicating a similar study paradigm at different universities and with different participants would add to our knowledge and show whether the themes present here are something that can be found in other contexts too. In addition, a valuable area of research would be to plan and execute an intervention that aims at helping advanced learners struggling with anxiety. The intervention could focus on supporting positive beliefs about the self and about language learning and measure the levels of anxiety before and after the intervention.

Finally, a question that needs to be addressed concerning anxiety in general and language learning is if those two can really be separated from another. Learning of any new skill causes, at some stages, anxiety in all of us. It is perfectly natural. However, it is essential to know what to do with those unpleasant feelings and whether to let them interfere with our goals and behaviour. Learners, in my view, need tools to challenge their thought patterns that lead to debilitating anxiety. I would therefore suggest that we accept some anxiety as a part of learning and give students these tools to continue with learning even if it causes strong emotions in them. I have come to believe that encouragement and support will take learners far. It serves as a lesson about how to succeed in learning new skills but also how to move towards one's goals in life.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: the case of Japanese. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78 (2), 155-168.
- Aragão, R. (2011). Beliefs and emotions in foreign language learning. *System* 39, 302-313.
- Arnold, J. (2009). Affect in L2 learning and teaching. *ELIA*, 9, 145-151.
- Bailey, K.M. (1983). Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: looking at and through the diary studies. In M.H. Long and H.W. Seliger (eds.), *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*. Rowley: Newbury House Publishing Inc, 67-103.
- Cheng, Y-S. (2001). Learners' beliefs and second language anxiety. *Concentric: studies in English literature and linguistics*, 27.2, 75-90.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eskola, J. and J. Suoranta. (2003). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. Jyväskylä: Vastapaino.
- Ewald, J. (2007). Foreign language learning anxiety in upper-level classes: involving students as researchers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40 (1), 122-142.
- Fozz, K and Reitzel, A. (1988). A relational model for managing second language anxiety. *TESOL Quarterly* 22 (3), 437-454.
- Ganschow, L. and Sparks, R. (1996). Anxiety about foreign language learning among high school women. *The Modern Language Journal*, 80 (2), 199-212.
- Gardner, R.C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: the role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Arnold.
- Gass, S. M. and Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: an introductory course*. Routledge: London.
- Gregersen, T. and Horwitz, E. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86, 562-570.
- Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: a theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review* 94 (3), 319-340.

- Horwitz, E. (1996). Event teachers get the blues: recognizing and alleviating language teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29 (3), 365-372.
- Horwitz, E. (1995). Students' affective reactions and the teaching and learning of foreign languages. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 23 (7), 573-579.
- Horwitz, E. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language method course. *Foreign Language Annals*. 18 (4), 333-340.
- Horwitz, E. K, Horwitz, M. B. and Cope, J. A. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132.
- Horwitz, E. and Yan, X. J. (2008). Learner's perceptions of how anxiety interacts with personal and instructional factors to influence their achievement in English: a qualitative analysis of EFL learners in China. *Language Learning*, 58 (1), 151-183.
- Kalaja, P. and Barcelos, A.M.F. (2003). Introduction. In P. Kalaja and A.M.F Barcelos (eds.) *Beliefs about SLA: new research approaches*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1-4.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Kolligian, J, Jr. and Sternberg, R, J. (1991). Perceived fraudulence in young adults: is there an "impostor syndrome"? *Journal of personality assessment*, 56 (2), 308-326.
- Kondo, D. S. and Yang, Y-L. (2004). Strategies for coping with language anxiety: the case of students of English in Japan. *ELT Journal*, 58 (3), 258-265.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews*. Lontoo: Sage publications Ltd.
- Laine, E. and Pihko, M. (1991). *Kieliminä ja sen mittaaminen*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopiston monistuskeskus.
- MacIntyre, P. D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79, 90-99.
- MacIntyre, P. D, and Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and second-language learning: toward a theoretical clarification. *Language Learning*, 39 (2), p. 251-274.
- MacIntyre, P. Noels, K. A. and Clément, R. (2001). Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: the role of language anxiety. *Language Learning*, 47 (2), 256-287.
- Marcos-Llinás, M. and Garau, M. (2009). Effects of language anxiety on three proficiency-level courses of Spanish as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42 (1), 94-111.

- Oxford, R.L. (1999). Anxiety and the language learner. In J. Arnold (eds.), *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 58-67.
- Pihko, M-K. (2007). *Minä, koulu ja englantia. Vertaileva tutkimus englanninkielisen ja perinteisen englannin opetuksen affektiivisista tuloksista*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän Yliopistopaino.
- Pihko, M-K. (2009). ”Pahinta on omin sanoin sanominen” Kielijännitys tavanomaisessa vieraan kielen opetuksessa ja vieraskielisessä sisällönopetuksessa. *Kasvatus*, 40 (1), 60-68.
- Riley, P. (1997). BATS and BALLS beliefs about talk and beliefs about language learning. *Mélanges CRAPEL*, 23, 125-153.
- Ruusuvuori, J., Nikander, P. and Hyvärinen, M. (eds.) (2010). *Haastattelun analyysi*. Tallina: Vastapaino.
- Spielberger, C. D. (1983). *Manual for the state-trait anxiety inventory*. Palo Alto, CA: Mind Garden.
- Spielmann, G. and Radnofsky, M. L. (2001). Learning language under tension: new directions from a qualitative study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85, 259-278.
- Scovel, T. (1977). The effect of affect on foreign language learning: a review of the anxiety research. *Language Learning*, 28, 129-142.
- Tuomi, J. and Sarajärvi, A. (2009). *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi*. Helsinki: Tammi.
- Tóth, Z. (2011). Foreign language anxiety and advanced EFL learners: an interview study. *WoPalP*, 5, 39-57.
- Tóth, Z. (2010). *Foreign language anxiety and the advanced language learner: a study of Hungarian students of English as a foreign language*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Varto, J. (1992). *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia*. Tampere: Tammer-Paino OY.
- Wilkinson, D. and Birmingham, P. (2003). *Using research instruments a guide for researchers*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Yoshida, R. (2013). Conflict between learners’ beliefs and actions: speaking in the classroom. *Language Awareness* 22 (4), 371-388.
- Young, J. D. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: what does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75 (4), 426-439.

APPENDIX 1 Interview questions

Taustatiedot

Pääaine/sivuaineet:

Opintojen aloitusvuosi:

Mahdollinen vaihto-opiskelu/työharjoittelu ulkomailla:

Kielijännitys:

Millaisia tunteita liittyy kielten opiskeluun?

Voiko kielten opiskeluun liittyä jännityksen tai ahdistuksen tunteita?

Missä tilanteissa X kielen opiskelu jännittää/ahdistaa? Puhuminen, esiintyminen, lukeminen, kirjoittaminen, ryhmätyöskentely?

Missä tilanteissa puhuminen ahdistaa? kenen kanssa?

Missä opiskelu tilanteissa puhuminen jännittää? Kenen kanssa jännittää, kenen ei?

Miten puhuminen opinnoissa ja vapaa-ajalla eroaa toisistaan? Vai eroaako?

Eroaako X kielen käyttö opinnoissa ja niiden ulkopuolella jännityksen kannalta? Millaisia tunteita liittyy x kielen käyttöön vapaa-ajalla? Eroaako jotenkin opiskelutilanteista?

Tuleeko mieleesi jotain erityistä tilannetta, jossa koit X kielen opiskelun ahdistavana? Haluaisitko kertoa tuosta tilanteesta? Mitkä asiat/tekijät vaikuttivat jännitykseen tuossa tilanteessa?

Muistatko missä vaiheessa x kielen opiskelua sinua on alkanut jännittää? Peruskoulu? Lukio? Yliopisto? Miksi juuri silloin?

Onko jännittäminen muuttunut mitenkään opiskeluvuosien aikana? Mikä vaikuttanut muutoksiin? Onko mahdollinen vaihto/työharjoittelu vaikuttanut suhtautumiseen kielen opiskeluun?

Kielijännityksen syyt:

Miksi kielten opiskelu voi jännittää tai ahdistaa?

Vaikuttaako:

- Omat odotukset omasta suoriutumisesta?
- Kyky ilmaista itseään vieraalla kielellä?
- Yliopisto opiskelun vaatimukset?
- Kurssivaatimukset?
- Opiskelukavereiden osaaminen?
- Työskentelymuodot? Arviointi? Opettaja?
- Vaikuttavatko aiemmat kokemukset kielten opiskelusta jännitykseen nykyisissä opinnoissa?

Mikä puhumisessa aiheuttaa jännitystä?

Onko eroa jännityksessä pääaineen ja sivuaineen välillä? Mistä ero johtuu?

Onko muita syitä, jotka voivat vaikuttaa jännitykseen?

Kielijännitykset vaikutukset/seuraukset:

Miten tämä jännitys/ahdistus on vaikuttanut opintoihisi?

- Kurssivalinnat?
- Vetäytyminen opetuksesta? Poisjättäytyminen kursseilta? Valmistuminen?
- Suhtautuminen kieleen?

Miten jännittäminen vaikuttaa oppimiseen mielestäsi? Keskittymiskyky? Tunnin sisältöön keskittyminen/ jännitykseen keskittyminen?

Vaikuttaako jännittäminen motivaatioosi opiskella X kieltä? Miten?

Selviytymiskeinot:

Voiko jännitykseen vaikuttaa? Miten? Millä keinoin? Etukäteen valmistautuminen jännittävään tilanteeseen? Rentoutuminen (syvään hengittäminen...)? Positiivinen ajattelu? Opiskelukavereiden tuki? Vetäytyminen opetuksesta?

Miten muut opiskelijat ja opettajat voisivat vaikuttaa jännitykseen? Miten jännitystä voitaisiin poistaa/lievittää?

