

# Is there a Relationship between Motivation and Fear to Learn a Foreign Language?

<sup>\*1</sup>Tan Su Ling, <sup>2</sup>Mok Soon Sim, <sup>3</sup>Leona Kiu King Chieh, <sup>4</sup>Chia Jee Luen, <sup>5</sup>Noor Hanim Rahmat

<sup>1,2,3,5</sup>Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia,

<sup>4</sup>Jabatan Pengajian Cina, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Sosial, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**\*Corresponding Author**

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.922ILEIID0026>

Received: 22 September 2025; Accepted: 30 September 2025; Published: 22 October 2025

## ABSTRACT

Learning a foreign language involves both motivation and emotions, with their relationship being more complex than a simple “one goes up, the other goes down.” Drawing on Gardner’s (2001) motivation framework and Horwitz et al.’s (1986) model of foreign language anxiety, this study examined the link between motivation and fear of learning a foreign language across three dimensions: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. A 5-point Likert scale survey with 207 participants included sections on demographics, motivation, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Findings revealed a weak positive relationship between motivation and fear, suggesting that high motivation does not always reduce anxiety; highly motivated learners may experience more fear due to higher performance expectations. Teaching strategies should therefore balance motivation and anxiety management in foreign language learning.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Anxiety, fear, Foreign Language learning

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Study

This study investigates the connection between students' motivation to learn, and their fear or anxiety associated with learning a foreign language. Motivation and fear are closely linked in learning a foreign language, as motivation acts as a driving force, whereas fear can hinder progress. Research consistently shows that these two factors influence each other. For instance, Horwitz et al. (1986) demonstrated that high levels of foreign language classroom anxiety are linked to lower performance and reduced motivation, whereas motivated learners are more enduring in the face of anxiety. Dörnyei (2005) explained motivation as a driving force that can reduce negative emotions in language learning.

The recent study by Husin et al. (2025) examined the significance of motivation and fear in translation learning. This study investigated students' perceptions of their motivation and fear in learning translation. The students demonstrated high motivation through their strong commitment to attendance, preparedness, and active engagement in class activities. At the same time, they also showed a high level of fear, which was associated with peer comparison and fear of failure. These findings indicate that the interplay between motivation and fear remains a critical issue, which needs further study.

### Statement of Problem

Imai (2010) examined the role and meaning of emotions in the second language learning process, focusing on how learners' emotions emerged in verbal communication over the course of a semester-long joint task. Recognizing interpersonal, functional, and developmental aspects of emotions, the researcher illustrated how a

group of English-as-a foreign-language learners discursively constructed and shared their emotional attitudes toward their group work and how such emotional intersubjectivity pushed the group, in their knowledge co-construction, to challenge assigned tasks and material. Imai argued that emotions do not merely facilitate, filter, or hinder an individual's inner cognitive functioning; rather, they can in any forms mediate development, especially when learning is embedded in an interpersonal transaction.

Garret and Young (2009) explored a student's affective responses to classroom foreign language learning in an eight-week beginner's Portuguese course. Meeting twice weekly, the first author described her learning experiences to the second author, with sessions transcribed, coded, and analysed. A theoretical model grounded in the learner's experiences was developed to understand the learner's affective responses to the language learning process, the events from which her affect sprang, and her affective trajectory over the 8 weeks. The study highlighted the importance of understanding learners' emotional experiences in shaping their engagement with the language learning process.

Dong et al. (2022) explored the relationships among foreign language classroom anxiety, enjoyment, expectancy-value motivation, and their predictive effects on Chinese high school students' self-rated foreign language proficiency. Findings showed that students were more value-motivated than expectancy-motivated toward foreign language learning, and most rated their proficiency as unsatisfactory. The students' foreign language enjoyment was significantly and positively correlated with all dimensions of expectancy-value motivation, whereas foreign language classroom anxiety and expectancy-value motivation demonstrated a more complex correlation pattern. Higher anxiety levels were associated with lower expectancy beliefs, intrinsic value, attainment value, and utility value, but with higher cost value. In contrast, greater enjoyment was linked to higher expectancy beliefs, intrinsic value, attainment value, and utility value, while cost value initially rose and then slightly decreased. In addition, expectancy beliefs, intrinsic value, private enjoyment, and anxiety related to fear of negative evaluation jointly predicted students' self-rated foreign language proficiency.

Azmi et al. (2025) investigated the interplay between students' learning motivation and anxiety in foreign language acquisition. It examines how motivation affects engagement and persistence, while anxiety, including communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, can hinder language learning progress. Using a quantitative survey, the study assessed motivation and language learning fear among 77 participants, predominantly from Indonesia, China, and Thailand. Results indicated strong intrinsic motivation driven by personal interests and career aspirations. Participants reported moderate communication apprehension, showing more confidence in classroom settings but self-consciousness when speaking publicly. Test anxiety persisted even among well-prepared learners, while fear of negative evaluation was moderate, with less concern about teacher corrections but stress from unexpected questions. The findings emphasize the need for supportive learning environments that promote risk-taking and personal growth.

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature by examining the relationship between motivation and fear in learning a foreign language among students in a higher education environment. Although the previous studies have explored these factors separately or in varied educational settings, limited attention has been given to their interplay within university-level contexts. Focusing on this specific group of respondents, the study aims to identify ways to enhance motivation while reducing fear in foreign language learning.

### **Objective of the Study and Research Questions**

This study is done to explore motivation and fear to learn a foreign language. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions:

- How do learners perceive motivation to learn a foreign language?
- How do learners perceive their fear to learn a foreign language?
- Is there a relationship between motivation and fear to learn a foreign language?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework of the Study

#### Motives for Learning a Foreign Language

Motivation stands as a critical factor in the successful acquisition of a foreign language, encompassing a multifaceted interplay of cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Gardner, 2005). It is not merely a singular construct but rather a complex psychological process driven by individuals' needs and their interactions with their environment (Fandiño et al., 2019). This review synthesizes current understandings of various motivational drives and their implications for foreign language learning.

#### Types of Motivation

Several types of motivation that propel individuals in language learning:

**Intrinsic Motivation:** This arises from an inherent interest in learning, where the activity itself is stimulating and enjoyable (Seven, 2020). Intrinsic motivation is enhanced by the need to interact, be competent, and achieve autonomy (Fandiño et al., 2019).

**Extrinsic Motivation:** This form of motivation is influenced by external stimuli and regulations from the environment (Fandiño et al., 2019). Factors such as curriculum, resources, teacher influence, cultural capital, and socioeconomic status significantly shape the quality of extrinsic motivation (Fandiño et al., 2019). Many learners' behaviours, particularly in e-learning contexts, are driven by external reinforcements, even if they recognize potential long-term benefits (Fandiño et al., 2019). The desire for better job opportunities is a notable example of an extrinsic, social/contextual need that drives language learning (Fandiño et al., 2019).

**Integrative Motivation:** Defined as a constellation of attributes, integrative motivation involves an open and accepting approach to other cultural groups, a strong emotional interest in the target language group, and a positive evaluation of the learning situation (Gardner, 2005). Learners with a higher integrative orientation are more likely to achieve greater proficiency (Seven, 2020). This motivation stems from a desire to psychologically integrate with the target language community (Gardner, 2005).

**Instrumental Motivation:** This refers to more pragmatic reasons for learning a language, such as career advancement, passing examinations, or fulfilling academic requirements (Seven, 2020). While instrumental motivation can drive success, it may lead to a decline in motivation once specific goals are achieved (Gardner, 2005). Both integrative and instrumental motivations are recognized as significant, and it is common for learners to be driven by a mixture of both (Seven, 2020).

Motivation in foreign language learning is shaped by personal, contextual, and goal-oriented factors. Personal factors include psychological needs such as interaction, competence, and autonomy, as well as learning strategies and affective variables like attitudes, self-esteem, and anxiety (Fandiño et al., 2019). Contextual influences encompass curriculum design, resource availability, teacher quality, cultural capital, socioeconomic status, and, in online settings, technological access and digital literacy (Fandiño et al., 2019). Goals and perceived benefits, including career advancement, cultural enrichment, and personal development, further enhance motivation by framing language learning as a tool for empowerment and communication (Fandiño et al., 2019).

Motivation is a multifaceted construct integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, and it cannot be fully explained by a single dimension (Gardner, 2005). While stated reasons for learning may signal motivation, sustained engagement requires goal-directed effort, persistence, enjoyment, and a strong desire to achieve proficiency (Gardner, 2005). Understanding the interplay of these factors is essential for designing effective pedagogy and fostering long-term commitment to foreign language acquisition.

## Fear of Learning a Foreign Language

Fear or anxiety is a common and significant emotional barrier in the process of learning a foreign language, which affects learners' motivation and their language acquisition outcomes (Liu, 2023). Horwitz and Cope (1986) conceptualized Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) as a multidimensional construct that encompasses communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication apprehension reflects learners' reluctance to speak due to concerns about making mistakes or being misunderstood, thereby limiting participation and oral practice opportunities. Fear of negative evaluation involves apprehension over unfavorable judgments from peers or instructors, which can erode confidence and discourage engagement. Test anxiety, characterized by nervousness before or during assessments, often impairs performance despite adequate preparation.

Hanib et al. (2024) indicate that students feel most anxious when they do not understand every word their teacher says, highlighting a significant source of foreign language learning anxiety. Furthermore, their findings reveal a significant correlation between students' motivation levels and their fear of learning foreign languages, suggesting that anxiety often impedes language acquisition.

In the study of Razman et al (2024), the results revealed that students' motivation, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety ranged from moderate to high. Moreover, significant associations were identified between communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation, as well as between fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, highlighting the interconnected nature of anxiety-related constructs in foreign language learning.

Overall, these findings underscore that foreign language anxiety is a multifaceted construct shaped by interrelated emotional and motivational factors, which has important implications for understanding learners' engagement and academic outcomes.

## Past Studies

### Past Studies on Motives for Learning A foreign Language

Many Studies have been done to investigate the motives for learning a foreign language. Learning a foreign language is a challenging task. Martin et al (2022) proposed three strategies for successful learning: grit, motivational beliefs, and self-regulated learning. The quantitative study by Mok et al. (2024) was to explore learners' perceptions of these three strategies and to find out whether they contribute to academic success. A purposive sample of 30 undergraduate students from a public university responded to this survey. The instrument used was a 5 Likert scale survey derived from (Martin et al., 2022). The survey was divided into 4 parts. Part one has items about demographic information. Part two has 12 items on Grit. Part three has 22 items on motivational beliefs and part four has 22 items on self-regulated learning strategies. The findings indicated that students had positive perceptions of grit in learning. Findings also suggested that students needed motivational beliefs, including self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety to be successful in learning. Students very often used cognitive strategies in foreign language learning by self-regulating their learning of the foreign language. Another study by Siok et al. (2023) examined learners' online motivation (Fowler, 2018) from the point of view of McClelland's (1965) theory. McClelland's theory suggested three basic needs that people derive from their life experiences: Need for Achievement, Need for Affiliation and Need for Power. This study used a 5-point Likert Scale instrument consisting of 4 sections. Section A has 3 items on demographic profile. Section B has 12 items on Power, section C has 14 items on Achievements and section D has 12 items on Affiliation. A purposive sample of 156 participants from a public university in Malaysia responded to the survey. The major findings reveal the positive impact of McClelland's Needs Theory on online language learning. Most students believed in their online learning abilities in terms of self-efficacy and desired motivation, control belief factors also led them to achieve desired outcomes. Students were also influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to perform better in online language learning. Students felt engaged and can interact freely in the language classroom. A strong positive correlation was found between all the variables to motivate online language learning.

## Past Studies on Fear of Learning A foreign Language

In the realm of education, particularly within second language acquisition, understanding the complex relationship between emotions and learning processes remains challenging. Manchado-Nieto and Fielden-Burns (2024) examined the role of anxiety-related emotions in learning and teaching English as a foreign language through a quantitative study. A 33-item instrument was given to a total of 231 (n=231) university students who learn and use English in class in diverse degrees in the social and health sciences program. The results obtained shed light on the negative emotions that students report during their English classes, such as fear, shame, nervousness, or feelings of judgement. However, students also reported positive emotions, including relaxation and interest. This study offers a new perspective since it compares different disciplines, underscoring the need to detect trends in different areas and therefore tailor pedagogy to different student profiles and degree programs. Similarly, Jamshed et al. (2024) investigated English language anxiety among Mewat female ESL learners and the causes and sources of anxiety. It also seeks to investigate if the differences in their demographic profiles shape their anxiety levels differently. As the study deals with how certain independent variables (e.g. level/year of study, parents' educational level, and their employment profile) shape the dependent variable (English language anxiety), a descriptive quantitative approach was adopted, and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) was utilized to collect the data from respondents. 214 study participants were selected through a simple random sampling method from the population of undergraduate ESL learners studying at different levels of the graduate program at Government Women's College, Nuh, Mewat, Haryana, India. Findings indicated that learners generally experienced moderate levels of anxiety, with communicative anxiety being the highest, followed by classroom anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. One-way ANOVA results revealed statistically significant differences in the means of the responses of study participants based on year of study and parents' educational level. However, no difference of any statistical significance was found in the means of the response of the respondents based on their parents' professional profiles. The study offers valuable insights for addressing anxiety, understanding its causes and consequences, and uncovering ways to help students overcome anxiety and learn English properly.

## Conceptual Framework of the Study

Embarking on a journey to learn a foreign language is a big step for many. Learners begin the journey with strong motivation. Gardner (2001) states that motivation is a combination of desire and effort by the learner. Nevertheless, motivation may not last. Some factors of the learning may hinder further learning. Fear is one factor. According to Rahmat (2019), fear is a cycle. A learner may begin with a negative belief about the learning and this belief is manifested in the learning behaviour and in the end can affect the learning journey. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. Using Gardner's (2001) motivation factors and replicating the factors in fear of learning a foreign language by Horwitz, et.al. (1986), this study explores the relationship of motivation and fear.

According to Horwitz, et.al. (1986), fear of learning a foreign language can be categorised into three factors and they are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. Firstly, communication apprehension refers to the fear that learners get when they have to communicate. Next, fear of negative evaluation refers to the kind of fear learners get when they worry about the negative evaluation others will give them. Finally, test anxiety is a feeling learners have before or even during a test.



Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

## Relationship between Motivation and Fear of Learning a Foreign Language

### METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore learners motivation and fear of learning a foreign language. A convenient sample of 207 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey. Table 1 below shows the categories used for the Likert scale; 1 is for Never, 2 is for Rarely, 3 is for Sometimes 4 is for Very Often and 5 is for Always.

Table 1- Likert Scale Use

1	Never
2	Rarely
3	Sometimes
4	Very Often
5	Always

Table 2 shows the distribution of items in the survey. This study is adopted from Gardner's (2001) motivational constructs and Horwitz, et.al. (1986) instrument of fear of learning a foreign language to reveal the variables in table below. Section B has 8 items on motivation and section C has 24 items on fear of learning a foreign language.

Table 2- Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	VARIABLE	SUB-CATEGORY	NO OF ITEMS	TOT ITEMS	
B	MOTIVATION TO LEARN			8	.879
C	FEAR OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION	10	24	.859
		FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION	6		
		TEST ANXIETY	8		
				32	.870

Table 2 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .879 for motivation and .859 for fear of learning a foreign language. The overall Cronbach alpha for all 32 items is .870; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Demographic Analysis

Table 3- Percentage for Demographic Profile

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	22%
		Female	78%

2	Mandarin Level	Level 1	41%
		Level 2	55%
		Level 3	4%
3	Cluster	Science & Technology	15%
		Social Sciences & Humanities	10%
		Business Management	75%
4	Do you like learning Mandarin?	Yes	98%
		No	2%

Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. Among them, 22% are male and 78% are female. Regarding the Mandarin course levels, 41% of the respondents are enrolled in Level 1, 55% in Level 2, and 4% in Level 3. In terms of academic discipline, 15% of the respondents are studying Science & Technology, 10% are in Social Sciences & Humanities, and 75% are pursuing Business Management. Regarding their interest in learning Mandarin, 98% reported that they like learning it, while 2% indicated they do not.

## Descriptive Statistics

### Findings for Motivation

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive motivation to learn a foreign language?

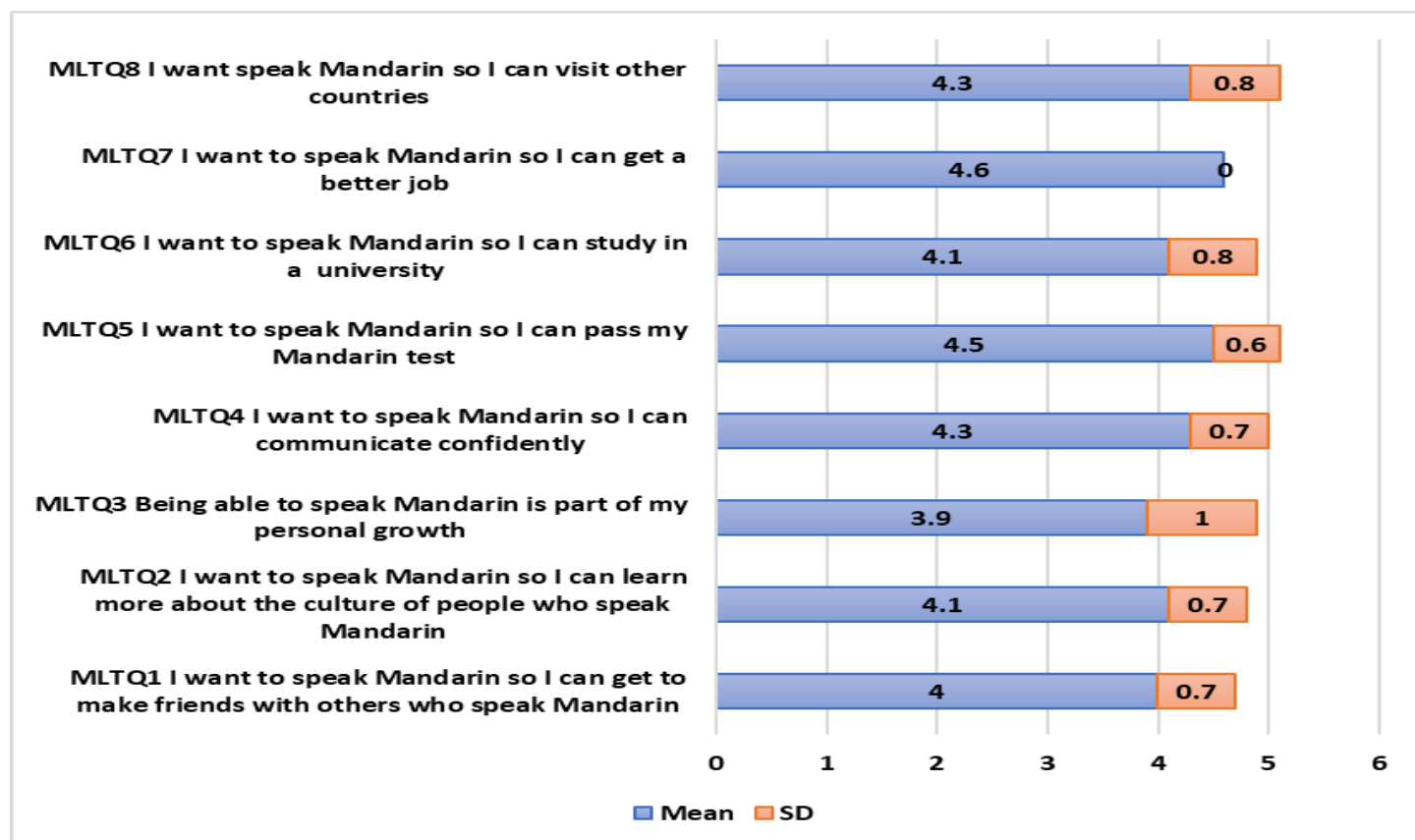


Figure 2- Mean for Motivation

Figure 2 shows the mean scores for motivation. The highest mean score, 4.6 (SD = 0.6), was for the statement “I want to speak Mandarin so I can get a better job” (MLTQ7), indicating that learners are strongly motivated

by career opportunities. Learners were also highly motivated by the desire to pass their Mandarin test (MLTQ5), which had a mean score of 4.5 (SD = 0.6). The lowest mean score was found for the statement “Being able to speak Mandarin is part of my personal growth” (MLTQ3), with a mean of 3.9 (SD = 1.0). Students are mainly motivated to learn Mandarin for career opportunities and to pass exams, while using Mandarin for personal growth is less of a driving factor.

### Findings for Fear of Learning a Foreign Language

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive their fear to learn a foreign language? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) communication apprehension, (ii) fear of negative evaluation and (iii) test anxiety.

#### Communication Apprehension

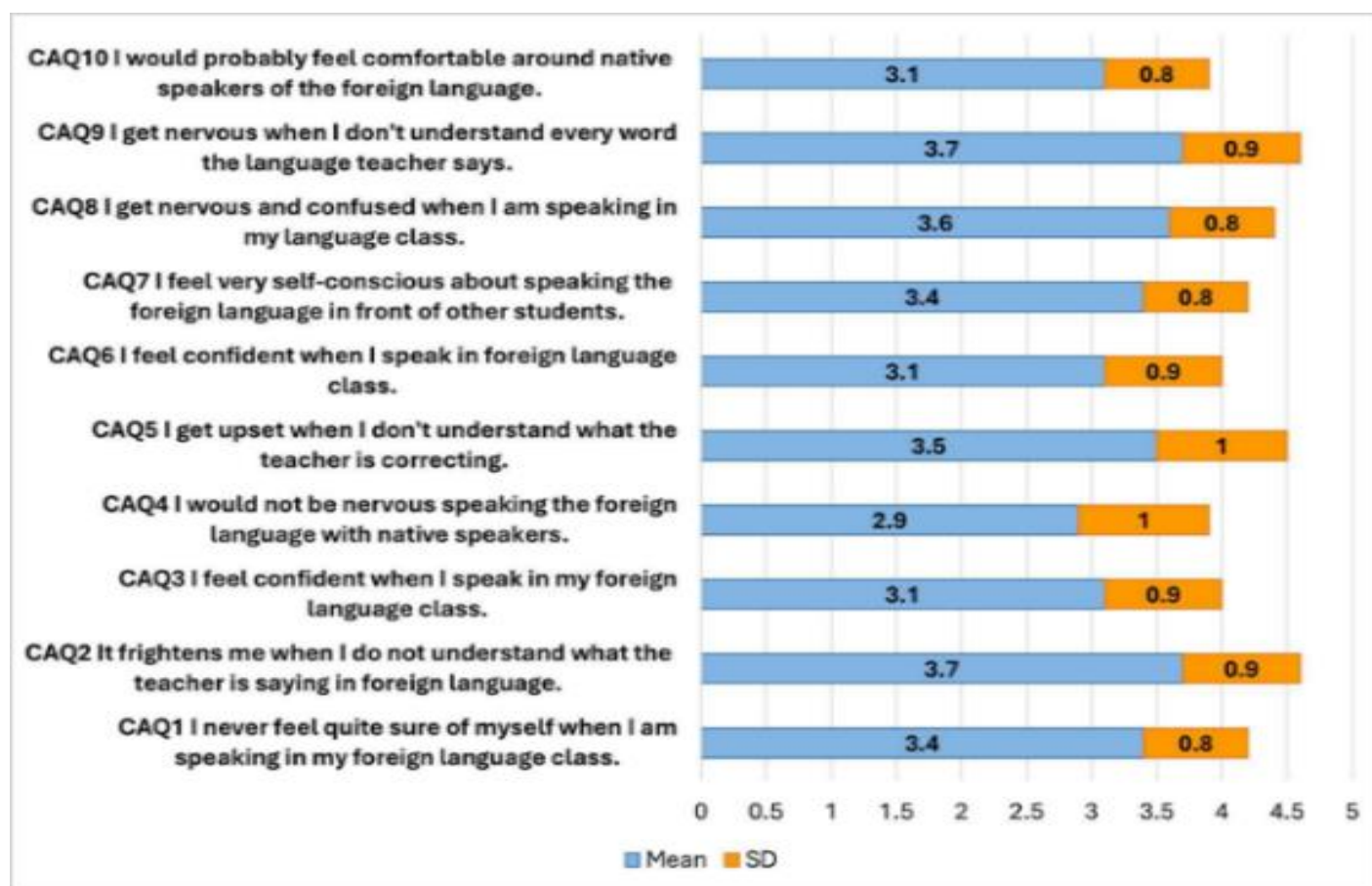


Figure 3- Mean for Communication Apprehension

Figure 3 indicated moderate to high levels of communication apprehension among participants in the foreign language classroom. The highest mean scores were observed for CAQ2 (M = 3.70, SD = 0.90) and CAQ9 (M = 3.70, SD = 0.90), both reflecting anxiety when learners did not fully comprehend the teacher's speech. Elevated scores were also reported for CAQ8 (M = 3.60, SD = 0.80) and CAQ5 (M = 3.50, SD = 1.00), suggesting that misunderstanding instructions or corrective feedback contributes to heightened nervousness. Confidence-related items, such as CAQ3 (M = 3.10, SD = 0.90) and CAQ6 (M = 3.10, SD = 0.90), demonstrated only moderate self-assurance, while comfort in interactions with native speakers was comparatively lower (CAQ4, M = 2.90, SD = 1.00; CAQ10, M = 3.10, SD = 0.80). Self-consciousness in peer settings was also notable (CAQ7, M = 3.40, SD = 0.80). Overall, the findings suggest that comprehension difficulties and social-evaluative concerns are key components of language anxiety.

## Fear of Negative Evaluation

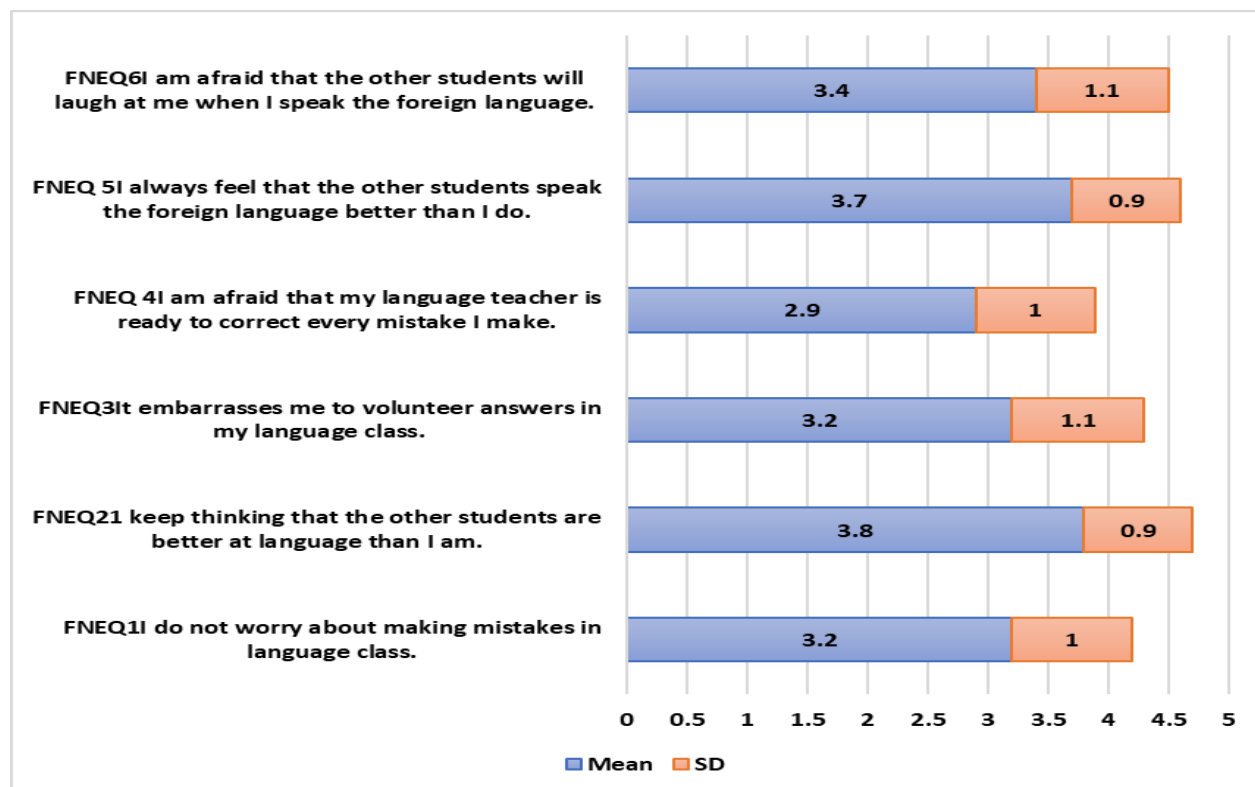


Figure 4- Mean for Fear of Negative Evaluation

Figure 4 shows the mean for fear of negative evaluation. The highest mean is 3.8 for item 2 (SD=0.9) which states that the learners kept thinking that other students were better than them. Item 5 (mean=3.7, SD=0.9) states that they always felt other students spoke better than them. The lowest mean is 2.9 for item 4 (SD=1.0) which states that the students were afraid that the language teacher corrects their mistakes.

## Test Anxiety

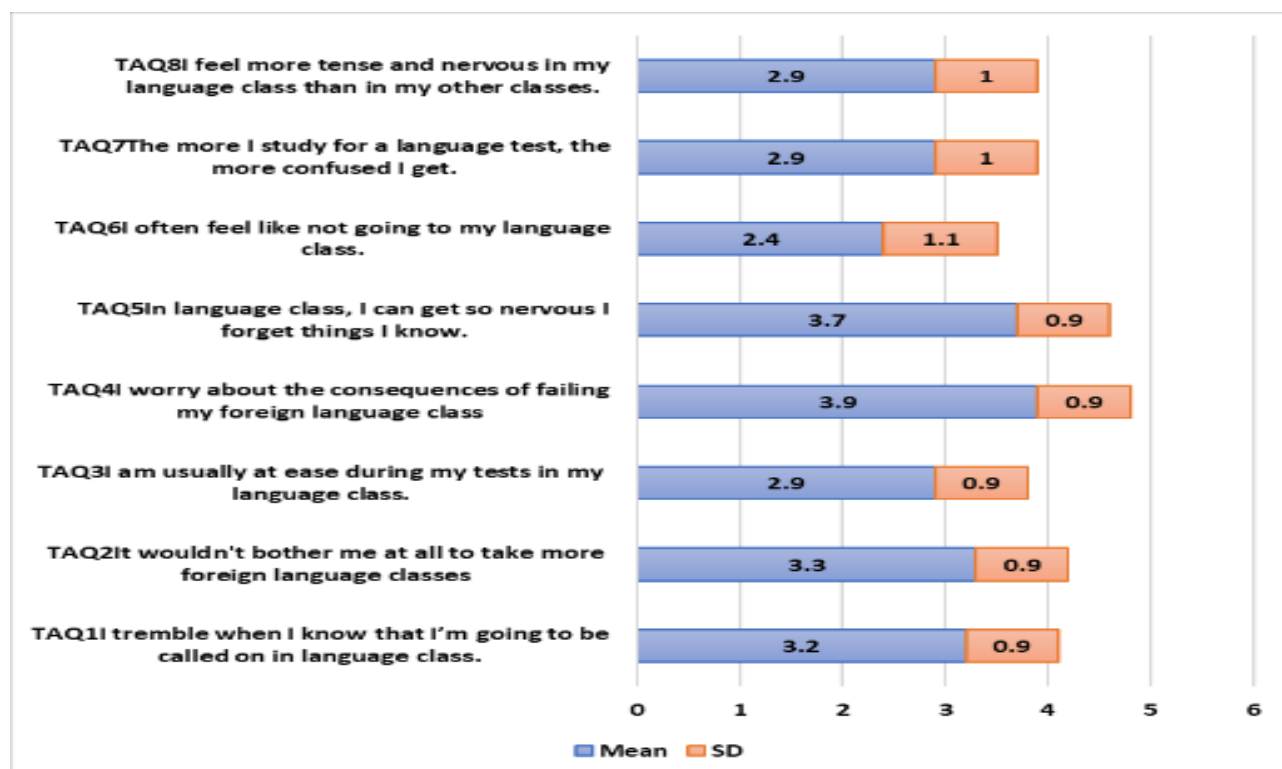


Figure 5- Mean for Fear of Test Anxiety

Figure 5 presents the mean scores for test anxiety among language learners. Item 4 has the highest mean score, 3.9 (SD=0.9), indicates that learners are particularly concerned about the consequences of failing their foreign language class. Item 5 follows with a mean score of 3.7 (SD = 0.9) showing that learners often get so nervous in class that they forget things they already know - highlighting anxiety's impact on memory and performance. Item 6 has the lowest mean score of 2.4 (SD = 1.1), indicating that most students do not frequently feel like skipping class, though the relatively higher standard deviation suggests varied responses.

## Exploratory Statistics

Findings for Relationship between motivation and fear to learn a foreign language.

This section presents data to answer research question 3- Is there a relationship between motivation and fear to learn a foreign language?

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between motivation and fear to learn a foreign language, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 4 below.

Table 4- Correlation between Motivation and Fear to learn a foreign language

		MOTIVATION	FEAR
MOTIVATION	Pearson (Correlation)	1	.256**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	207	207
FEAR	Pearson (Correlation)	.256**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	207	207

\*\*Correlation is significant at the level 0.01(2-tailed)

Table 4 shows there is an association between motivation and fear of learning a foreign language. Correlation analysis shows that there is a low significant association between motivation and fear of learning a foreign language ( $r=.256^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a weak positive relationship between motivation and fear of learning a foreign language.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary of Findings and Discussions

The study shows that learners experience different types of anxiety in foreign language learning. Many learners felt anxious when they could not fully understand their teacher, which made classroom communication stressful. This finding aligns with the outcomes reported in the studies conducted by Hanib (2024) and Jamshed (2024). At the same time, learners often compared themselves to others and felt that their peers were more competent, which reflects a strong fear of negative evaluation. In addition, concerns about test performance were also evident, as many students worried about failing and sometimes became so nervous that they forgot what they had already learned. On the motivational side, learners were strongly driven by instrumental goals, particularly the desire to secure good employment opportunities and to pass examinations.



Overall, while motivation and anxiety were found to have a weak positive relationship, the results suggest that motivation and anxiety remain connected yet distinct factors in foreign language learning, aligning with the findings of Horwitz et al. (1986).

These findings further imply that the relationship between motivation and anxiety should not be seen as a simple cause-and-effect pattern. In fact, learners with stronger motivation may also experience higher anxiety, as suggested by Husin et al. (2025), especially when their motivation is driven by instrumental goals such as achieving better grades, passing examinations, or improving career prospects. The greater the personal importance attached to success, the greater the pressure learners may feel to perform well, which can heighten anxiety.

At the same time, the study reinforces that anxiety is not always detrimental. A moderate level can motivate preparation and focus, whereas excessive anxiety disrupts cognitive processing and reduces participation. Consistent with Azmi et al. (2025), moderate anxiety may foster engagement, but high test-related and evaluative fear tends to hinder performance. Thus, maintaining a balanced level of motivation and anxiety is vital for effective language learning.

Overall, these findings reveal the intricate emotional interplay in foreign language learning, indicating that effective teaching should foster motivation and support learners in coping with anxiety constructively.

## **Implications and Suggestions for Future Research**

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Implications**

This study provides valuable insights into how motivation and fear interact in foreign language learning. Drawing on Gardner's (2001) socio-educational model, the findings show that students' motivation is goal-driven and shaped by social and emotional contexts. The weak positive link between motivation and fear indicates that even motivated learners may experience anxiety, revealing the complex coexistence of drive and apprehension. Consistent with Lu et al. (2024), the study highlights that emotional engagement is essential—motivation alone cannot ensure good performance. Supportive peers, teachers, and classroom environments can reduce anxiety and sustain motivation, underscoring the need for language learning theories to consider both motivation and emotion.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings underscore that enhancing learners' motivation and reducing anxiety should be central to effective foreign language instruction. Teachers can integrate authentic communicative tasks, intercultural exchanges, and clear goal setting to sustain motivation. In addition, establishing a supportive classroom climate, scaffolded speaking activities, and formative assessments with constructive feedback can help reduce anxiety—such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety—fostering emotional safety and confidence. Moreover, pedagogical strategies should balance motivation enhancement and anxiety reduction. Peer collaboration, low-stakes assessments, and positive teacher–student interactions can cultivate belonging and competence. By combining motivational supports with anxiety-alleviating techniques, teachers can create an emotionally safe and cognitively stimulating environment that promotes sustained engagement and achievement in language learning.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study offers a stage-based understanding of emotional factors in language learning, though its short time span limits interpretation of long-term emotional dynamics. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track motivation and anxiety over time for deeper insights into their regulation mechanisms. Further studies could examine how different motivational orientations interact with various types of anxiety across cultural and disciplinary contexts. As this study relied on self-reported data, future work should use mixed methods—such as combining surveys with observations or interviews—to improve validity and reduce subjectivity.

Finally, empirical research on pedagogical strategies like motivational scaffolding, peer collaboration, and supportive feedback could provide practical evidence for balancing motivation and anxiety in language learning.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are sincerely grateful to Prof. Dr. Noor Hanim Rahmat for her patient guidance and kind encouragement throughout this study. Our warm thanks also go to our teammates for their cooperation and support, and to the students who generously shared their time to complete the survey. Lastly, we truly appreciate everyone who, in different ways, lent a helping hand and made it possible to complete this paper.

## REFERENCES

1. Azmi, A. S., Rosly, R., & Lai, S. M. (2025). The Correlation between Motivational Factors and Foreign Language Acquisition Anxiety. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(4), 6936-6949. DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS
2. Dong, L. Q., Liu, M. H., & Yang, F. (2022). The Relationship Between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment, and Expectancy-Value Motivation and Their Predictive Effects on Chinese High School Students' Self-Rated Foreign Language Proficiency. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.860603>
3. Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
4. Fandino, F. G. E., Muñoz, L. D., & Velandia, A. J. S. (2019). Motivation and E-Learning English as a foreign language: A qualitative study. *Heliyon*, 5(9).
5. Gardner, R. C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. In Z. Dörnyei, & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 1-19). Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
6. Gardner Robert, C. (2005). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. *Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics/Canadian Linguistics Association Joint Plenary Talk-May*, 30, 2005.
7. Garrett, P., & Young, R. F. (2009). Theorizing Affect in Foreign Language Learning: An Analysis of One Learner's Responses to a Communicative Portuguese Course. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(2), 209-226. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00857.x
8. Hanib, N. H., Yusof, N. F. M., Abdullah, S. N., & Fadhillah, W. B. (2024). A study of motivation and fear of learning a language. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(3), 2239–2252. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/21975>
9. Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope J. A. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
10. Husin, N., Rahmat, N. H., Ismail, S., & Thasrabiab, T. (2025). Motivation vs fear: How students perceive learning translation, *Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(3), 12-23. <https://doi.org/10.55197/qjssh.v6i3.636>
11. Imai, Y. (2010). Emotions in SLA: New insights from collaborative learning for an EFL Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94 (2), 278-292. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01021.x
12. Jackson, S.L. (2015). *Research methods and Statistics-A Critical Thinking Approach* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) Boston, USA: Cengage Learning.
13. Jamshed, M., Fatma, G., Hussain, N., & Banu, S. (2024). Exploring English Language Anxiety Among Undergraduate Female ESL Learners in Mewat Region of Haryana, India. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(3), 874-882, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1403.30>
14. Liu, J. (2023). Foreign language learning anxiety and foreign language teaching. *Advances in Education*, 13(12), 9490–9493. <https://doi.org/10.12677/ae.2023.13121466>
15. Lu, K., Zhu, J., Pang, F., & Liu, Z. (2024). Understanding college students' test anxiety in asynchronous online courses: The mediating role of emotional engagement. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-024-00482-1>
16. Manchado-Nieto, C., & Fielden-Burns, L. V. (2024). Emotions in second language acquisition: Current perspectives and future directions. *Language Teaching Research*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688241234567>

17. Gardner Robert, C. (2005). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics/Canadian Linguistics Association Joint Plenary Talk-May, 30, 2005.
18. Martin,H., Craigwell,R. & Ramjarrie,K. (2022) Grit, motivational belief, self-regulated learning (SRL), and academic achievement of civil engineering students. European Journal of Engineering Education, 47(4), 535-557, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2021.2021861>
19. Mok, S. S., Rahmat, N. H., & Liang, Y. F. (2024). Exploring The Drive to Learn A Foreign Language among Undergraduates. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 14(5), 787-799. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21521>
20. Rahmat, N. H. (2019). Cycle of Fear in Learning: The Case for Three Language Skills. American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 4(1), 151-162. <https://doi.org/10.20448/801.41.151.162>
21. Razman, N. I. H., Ahmad, N. R. A., Hatta, F. F., & Roslan, N. (2024). The cycle of fear in learning a foreign language that leads to motivation. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 8(3), 6138–6149. <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.803458S>
22. Seven, M. A. (2020). Motivation in Language Learning and Teaching. African Educational Research Journal, 8, 62-71.
23. Siok, T. H., Sim, M. S., & Rahmat, N. H. (2023). Motivation to Learn Online: An Analysis From McClelland's Theory of Needs. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 13(3), 215 – 234. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i3/16471>