Foreign Language Learning Anxiety: The Case of Trilinguals

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Abstract
The current study is motivated by the dearth of research regarding trilingualism and its relationship with foreign language anxiety (FLA) especially in a bilingual and diglossic context. The present study reports on the FLA level in an underexplored context of seventy-three male and female Arabic-and French-speaking university trilingual students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Tunisia. It also examines the main sources of the participants' anxiety. Using data from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), analyses revealed that the English learners experienced low to average amounts of FLA. Worry about failing English class, apprehension about speaking in English, and anxiety related to the classroom were identified as major sources of FLA. No association was found between gender and FLA. This study found a significant negative relationship between students' level of FLA and their exam scores. Implications for language teaching are offered.
Keywords: EFL, language anxiety, trilinguals, Tunisia

Introduction
Considerable research explores the main causes of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and their effects on language learners (Bailey, 1983;Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre& Gardner, 1994; Ohata, 2005; Pappamihiel, 2002; Williams& Andrade, 2008; Young, 1991) with the hope of aiding students with this problem and to improve their language acquisition (Hewitt &Stephenson, 2012). FLA may significantly hinder second language (L2) acquisition (Dewaele, Petrides, &Furham, 2008; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Williams & Andrade, 2008).Arnold and Brown (1999) maintain that FLA may be the most pervasive obstacle to language learning. To date, as Arnaiz and Guillén(2012) indicate, FLA continues to exist in the classroom despite advances in methodology and teaching techniques likely due to its complexity. FLA's complexity stems from the fact that it involves several variables, which can result in anxiety-inducing situations. Williams and Andrade (2008) argue that there are two major groups of variables: situational variables such as course level, and learner variables such as age and gender. Other researchers argue that FLA is a "situation-specific" anxiety, which occurs in a particular type of situation (Hewitt &Stephenson, 2012, p.171). Santos, Cenoz, and Gorter (2015) assert that anxiety is a complex phenomenon that is connected to a specific language learning context. Research about FLA in different language learning contexts should therefore continue as long as its characteristics and features remain sketchy (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015).

The bulk of research conducted on FLAhas involved predominantly monolingual learners of English, Japanese, and Spanish (Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012). Research about FLA involving bilingual speakers learning a third language has been scant. Horwitz (2001) believes that FLA may vary in different cultural groups. Her position is supported by Liu and Huang (2011), who consider the variation as a situation-specific construct; one which differs in different learning environments. Learners from different contexts have differing levels of anxiety (Thompson& Lee, 2014).

Tunisia presents an interesting linguistic context since it is both diglossic and bilingual (Bouzemni, 2005). Diglossia refers to the existence of two varieties of the same language: standard and colloquial Arabic (Versteegh, 2001). The two varieties are different at the levels of "vocabulary, phonology, syntax, and grammar" (Abu-Rabia, 2000, p. 147). Children often perceive standard Arabic as a foreign language (Abu-Rabia, 2000) because it is linguistically distant from the variety of Arabic they speak outside class. Bilingualism in Tunisia involves the use of both Arabic and French. Tunisian students learn standard Arabic and simultaneously learn and use French (Bouzemni, 2005). To the best of the author's knowledge, no research has been conducted concerning FLA in Tunisia. Thus, the present study fills this gap in research by exploring the FLA level among Tunisian trilingual students learning EFL. It also examines the relationship between FLA and gender, and language performance.

Literature review
Foreign language anxiety
MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) define FLA as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with L2 contexts including speaking, listening, and learning." (p.284). Horwitz et al. (1986) define the phenomenon of FLA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).Horwitz et al. (1986) suggest three types

of anxiety proven to be major sources of FLA: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is "a type of shyness characterized as fear of, or anxiety about communicating with people" (p. 127). It refers to an individual's level of anxiety when interacting with other speakers. A number of studies suggest that communication apprehension is a major source of anxiety(Al-Saraj, 2014;Arnaiz&Guillén, 2012; Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu &Jackson, 2008; Young, 1990).Test anxiety is defined by Horwitz et al. (1986) as "the type of performance anxiety resulting from a fear of failure in an academic evaluation setting" (p. 127). It refers to anxiety that learners may experience in an exam situation. Several researchers report that tests are anxiety provoking (Koch &Terrell, 1991; Ohata, 2005; Young, 1991). Fear of negative evaluation refers to the "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128).Negative evaluation involves fear from being evaluated in any setting, not just the classroom. It also involves the fear of being evaluated by the instructor as well as by peers, as reported by previous research (Aida, 1994; Horwitz,1986; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Kao & Craigie, 2010; Lu &Liu, 2011).Young (1991) contends that learners tend to experience classroom anxiety caused by different factors including learner and teacher beliefs about language learning, teacher-learner nature of interactions, and classroom management. The emphasis on the role of teacher as either a facilitator or a major source of anxiety is also supported in the conclusions reached by other researchers (Abu-Rabia, 2004; Al-Saraj, 2014; Brantmeier, 2005; Yan &Horwitz, 2008). There is growing evidence in the literature that a correlation exists between FLA and language performance.

The next section discusses the relationship between FLA and language performance followed by a brief review of selected variables related to FLA.

FLA and Language Performance
The different types of language anxiety are found to have a negative impact on language achievement. Many of the studies exploring the relationship between FLAand language performance reveal a negative correlation between FLA and language performance (Aida, 1994;Horwitz, 2001; Kao & Craigie, 2010; Lu &Liu, 2011). In other words, language performance tends to decline as learners' anxiety level increases.

A study involving ESL students in China has found that those who exhibit high anxiety levels achieve low scores in English achievement tests (Shao, Yu,&Ji, 2013). Other studies report a negative correlation between FLA and specific language skills such as speaking (Park &Lee, 2005), and reading (Zhang &Kim, 2014).

Variables Associated with FLA
Although it is empirically hard to prove a cause/effect relationship between FLA and specific causes, many researchers believe that variables such as gender and multilingualism can have an effect on FLA.

FL Aand gender
The role of gender in FLA has also been the topic of many studies; these studies yield mixed results. Campbell and Shaw's (1994) investigation have as its subjects, adult students learning Spanish, German, Russian, and Korean at the Defense Language Institute in California. Their

survey reveals that female students have lower levels of anxiety than males. MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002) also report lower levels of FLA among female university students. Their survey shows that male students experience a higher degree of English reading anxiety than females. Other studies offer opposite results. Parkand French (2013) describe higher levels of FLA among female students learning English in South Korea than their male counterparts. The authors cite sociocultural factors as the chief reason for higher levels of FLA among females. They argue that in a male-dominated society where females are expected to take a submissive role, females tend to be stressed out when asked to express their personal thoughts. Some researchers do not report any significant difference between the level of FLA among male and female learners. In a study involving English-major students in Japan, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) report that both males and females experience similar levels of FLA. The same results are corroborated by other studies (Aida, 1994; Dewaele et al., 2008, Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kao & Craigie, 2010).While gender has been the subject of many studies, the role of multilingualism in FLA has not received enough attention from researchers.

Anxiety and multilingualism
Some of the few studies that examine FLA in a bilingual and/ormultilingual context cite the number of languages as a contributing factor for differences. In a study of 600 FL students and 163 foreign language (FL) instructors, Levine (2003) has found that students from bilingual or multilingual backgrounds experience less anxiety than students from monolingual backgrounds. Dewaele (2007) asserts that trilinguals and quadrilinguals have lower levels of FLA in their L2 when compared to bilinguals. More recent research has provided evidence for the positive effect of multilingualism on reducing anxiety. Korean university students learning English demonstrate a higher level of proficiency in French or Chinese with lower levels of anxiety in English than students with lower levels of proficiency in the same languages, as demonstrated by Thompson and Lee (2013). Their experiment is replicated by Thompson and Khawaja (2015) who, in their study of Turkish university students, report that multilingual learners of English have lower levels of anxiety than their bilingual peers. Other researchers argue that a logical assumption would be that bilingual learners who know more than one language may be less anxious than monolinguals because they have already gone through the experience of learning a new language, and therefore, have become better at learning additional languages (Dewaele, 2007). The acquisition of additional languages gives multilinguals a broader linguistic repertoire and more experience as language learners (Cenoz, 2013). Dewaele (2007) reports that quadrilinguals and trilinguals experience lower levels of FLA in their L2 when compared to bilinguals. Dewaele (2010) attributes this to the fact that trilinguals and quadrilinguals have acquired better communication skills due to their multilingualism. However, Santos et al. (2015),believe the evidence is still limited. Obviously, there is a need to further explore the relationship between FLA and multilingualism in different contexts.

Purpose of the Study
The present study examines levels of FLA among male and female Tunisian trilinguals, and the main sources of their anxiety. It also explores the relationship between FLA and language performance. The following research questions were addressed:
1. What is the level of FLA among Tunisian trilinguals?
2. Do male and female trilinguals experience similar anxiety levels?

3. What are the major sources of foreign language anxiety among bilingual English language learners?
4. Is there a relationship between FLA as measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) and the participants' language performance?

Method

Participants

Participants in the present study were seventy-three Tunisian students, 52 females and 21 males. Their ages ranged from 19 to 23. Of the seventy-six participants, 24 were enrolled in lower intermediate, 37 in intermediate, and 12 in upper intermediate courses of English as a foreign language (EFL) at a public university in Tunisia. Participants were trilinguals, speaking Arabic and French as well as English. Both Arabic and French are used as a medium of instruction. Most Tunisian students begin learning French at age seven. Participants of this study began learning French at the age of seven. It is commonly mixed with colloquial Arabic in everyday conversation. The students typically engage in code mixing and switching. Because of the strong presence of French in government institutions due to historical reasons (Tunisia was a former French colony), there are very few opportunities for Tunisian students to practice English outside of class.

Instruments

Two separate questionnaires were used in the study. The first one is a background questionnaire that was designed to elicit participant information about age, gender, course level, and year in college. The second questionnaire is an adaptation of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The phrase *foreign language* was replaced with English language because participants in the current study were learning EFL. FLCAS is a self-reported measure of students' anxiety in the foreign language classroom designed byHorwitz et al.(1986). It is the most commonly used scale to measure language anxiety in the classroom. It consists of 33 statements. Each item on the scale is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The mean scores in the FLCAS range from 33 to 165,with lower scores indicating lower anxiety while higher scores indicate higher anxiety. Twenty-four of the items are positively worded; nine are negatively worded. The scale has been shown to be reliable with an alpha coefficient of .90 and above, even in recent studies (Sevinç & Dewaele, 2016; Thompson &Khawaja, 2015). In the present investigation, the FLACS had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability index of .91, which makes its use very reliable. The survey measure was pilot-tested with 23 students prior to the onset of this study experiment.

Procedure

The participants completed both the FLCAS as well as the background questionnaire. The instruments were constructed online using Google documents. However, about a quarter of the participants who had no access to the internet were handed hard copies. All participants' names and exam scores were kept confidential. To measure language performance, the final course grade was collected at the end of the semester to examine possible significant correlation between language anxiety and language performance. All students received a score between 0 and 100. Previous studies (Aida, 1994; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Marcos-Llinas & Garau, 2009) have used final course grades as global measures of foreign language performance.

Data analysis
In order to analyze the data, descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) were used to summarize participants' responses. Eight items (2, 5, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28 and 32), which were negatively worded, were reverse-coded so that a high score represented high anxiety. An independent t-test was performed to examine the difference between the FLCAS scores of male and female students. The Pearson correlation analysis was performed to test the relationships between the FLACS and language performance. Pearson correlation was also computed between the total FLACS score and English language performance to determine the relationship between them. Statistical significance for all analyses was set at an alpha level of .05.

Results
This section presents the findings for each research question.
*Research Question 1***:** *What is the level of FLA among Tunisian trilinguals?*
To measure the level of FLA among the participants of this study, means and deviations for participants' responses to each FLACS item were calculated(see Table 1). The mean language anxiety score for the seventy-three participants was 90.49 (*SD* = 20.84). As displayed in Table 2, the range of scores in the present study was 37-134. Following Arnaiz and Guillén's (2012) scale, participants had three levels of anxiety. The overwhelming majority of students (87%) experienced low to average levels of FLA. About 30% had low levels of anxiety and about 60% experienced medium levels of anxiety. Less than 10% of students suffered from a high level of anxiety (see Table 2). An independent *t*-test showed that there were no gender differences for FLACS (*t*(71) = 1.378, *p* = ns).

Table 1*FLA scores on FLCAS*

Statement	Mean	SD
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	2.58	1.15
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.*	2.92	1.246
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	2.63	1.204
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	2.78	1.266
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.*	3.46	1.469
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the English course.	3.08	1.228
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	2.72	1.211
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	3.23	1.107
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	2.91	1.288
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.72	1.198

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.*	2.99	1.211
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.16	1.259
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	2.38	1.151
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.*	3.12	1.318
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.62	1.062
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	2.89	1.249
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.	2.43	1.086
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.*	3.14	1.255
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.65	1.246
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	2.94	1.207
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	2.54	1.222
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.*	3.08	1.22
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	2.57	1.192
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.46	1.018
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	2.79	1.197
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	2.17	1.006
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	2.44	1.044
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.*	3.14	1.224
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	2.99	1.185
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	3.13	1.082
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	2.23	1.202
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.*	3.15	1.288

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.   3.10   1.206

*Items are reverse-coded

Table 2*Anxiety levels for participants*

Scores	Level of FLA	Frequency	Percentage
33-79	Low	22	30.13
80-117	Moderate	44	60.28
118-134	High	7	9.59

Research Question 2: Do male and female trilinguals experience similar anxiety levels?

The descriptive statistics associated with male and female participants' FLCAS scores are reported in Table 3. The male group (N =21) was associated with a smaller mean (M = 85.24). The female group (N =52) group was associated with the higher mean (M = 92.62).   Multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants' FLA (dependent variable) based upon their gender (independent variable). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure there was no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity and multicollinearity. No significant regression was found β = .161, $t(71)$ = 0.138, p> 0.05, with R² of .026, $R^2_{Adjusted}$ = .012). Based on these results, gender was not a significant predictor of FLA among participants.

Table 3*Descriptive statistics of FLCAS scores for males and females*

	N	*Mean*	*SD*
Male	21	85.24	18.70
Female	55	92.62	21.45
Total	76	90.49	20.84

Research Question 3: *What are the major sources of foreign language anxiety among bilingual English language learners?*

Analysis of individual items revealed that 10 out of the 33 items were found to have a mean score larger than 3.0, which is the cut off score for high anxiety level. Three major sources of anxiety for both male and female participants emerged from the FLACS items analysis.
First, worry about failing their English language class was a primary source of FL anxiety (M=3.77, SD= 1.27) as indicated by item 10, which was highest among all items. Results show that 75.3 % of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this item. Worrying about grades may explain why participants felt anxious about their English class even if they were well prepared (item 16, M = 3.22, SD= 1.39).

A second source of anxiety is related to 'oral communication anxiety' as indicated by three items (20, 24, and 33). Participants reported apprehension about communicating in English in class as a result of their fears of being negatively evaluated by their teacher and peers. Speaking in front of the English instructor (Item 24) is perceived to be one of the biggest source of anxiety (M =3.36, SD = 1.23). Results show that 47.9% of participants agreed, and 15.1% strongly disagreed with this item.

Finally, anxiety related to the English classroom has also emerged as a source of anxiety as indicated by four items (6, 12, 15, 29, and 30). These items reflect learners' concern of not being able to fully understand what the teacher was saying or correcting, and their concern about forgetting things *(item 12, M =3.41, SD =1.40)*. They were also nervous about answering the instructor's questions (M = 3.21, SD = 1.34).

Research Question 4: *Is there a relationship between FLA as measured by the FLACS and the participants' language performance?*

In order to examine the relationship between FLA (M = 90.49, SD = 20.84) and participants' English language performance (M = 62.74, SD = 13.89), Pearson correlation was calculated and reported in Table 4. Results of the analysis showed that there was a weak negative correlation between FLA and English language performance, r = -0.270, n = 73, p = 0.021. Students who experienced lower levels of foreign language anxiety tended to have higher language performance scores across the three course levels. The strength of this relationship, as indexed by eta², was found to be .63.

Table 4*Correlation between language anxiety and language performance*

		Anxiety	Grade
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.270[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
	N	73	73
Grade	Pearson Correlation	-.270[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
	N	73	73

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

This section is devoted to the discussion of each of the research questions in light of the results obtained.

The first research question measured the level of FLA among trilinguals. It also examined any potential difference between the anxiety levels experienced by male and female participants. Participants were found to have an average level of anxiety overall (M=91.47, SD=21.13). Their level of FLA was similar to the level reported in previous research that involved monolingual learners of English (Arnaiz & Guillén 2012; Liu, 2006; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004) but used FLACS. Results corroborate the findings of other studies in the context of Japanese (Aida, 1994) and Spanish (Marcos-Llinás& Juan-Garau, 2009), even though the educational and demographic contexts are different. One potential explanation for the similarity of results may be that the

instrument used (FLACS) measures mainly anxiety linked to speaking situations, which arouse more anxiety among language learners than other situations (Aida, 1994). The anxiety level of the participants of the present investigation is lower than the one reported by Thompson and Khawaja (2015). Their study involved Turkish learners who experienced high levels of FLA in the four categories of FLCAS: English class performance anxiety; confidence with English; negative feelings towards English, and fear of ambiguity, whereas this experiment reports low to moderate levels of FLA.

Regarding the second research question related to anxiety levels and gender, the study found that male and female participants experienced similar levels of FLA. This outcome corroborates other findings in the literature (e.g., Aida, 1994; Dewaele& Al-Saraj, 2015; Dewaele et al., 2008; MacIntyre et al., 2002; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Thus, it refutes the stereotypes of males being self-confident and experiencing less anxiety compared to their female peers (Sylvén& Thompson, 2015). One way to explain this finding may be by referring to the special status that females enjoy in Tunisia. Some researchers argue that FLA is related to socio-educational and political factors (Dörnyei, 2005; Young, 1991).In a survey of Arab countries in 2009, Freedom House ranked Tunisia first in terms of women's rights, freedom of person and political voice (Kerry &Breslin2010), thanks to the historic promulgation of its progressive family law in 1956 (Charrad 2007). This law made it possible for Tunisian women to make life choices and pursue educational and professional opportunities not found in neighboring countries (Charrad & Zarrugh, 2013). According to estimates in 2010, more university students are female, and women constituted about 30% of the labor force. They hold positions in diverse sectors including judiciary, the army, engineering, and medicine (Ben Salem, 2010). These facts have empowered women in Tunisia and put them on a par with Western women. Their self-confidence is reflected in not experiencing higher levels of FLA than their male peers.

The third research question explored the major sources of FL anxiety among participants. The situation that made students feel most anxious was worry about failing their English class. Students were concerned about classroom performance. The results corroborate the findings of Santoset al.(2015)who reported that one of the primary factors of FL anxiety experienced by bilingual students (Spanish and Basque) was fear of failure. One possible explanation for this fear is that anxiety stems from the pressure that Tunisian families place on their children to do well in college. For many Tunisians, success at college brings a sense of pride to the family, and is also the only way to climb the socio-economic ladder. Another source of anxiety reported by the participants of this study is related to apprehension about speaking in English during class. This finding is similar to results reported by other studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu & Jackson, 2008;Mak, 2011; Thompson & Lee, 2013). It is important to mention that participants of this study did not experience anxiety outside class. In fact, they showed confidence in their abilities to communicate with native speakers of English, as shown by item 32 (M = 2.21). This may explain why they rated item 5 (It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes) the lowest in terms of anxiety provoking situations. The results contradict the claim made by Thompson and Lee (2013)who suggest that "anxiety that results from interactions of native speakers is perhaps a universal phenomenon" (p. 744). The authors based their claim on two studies they had conducted, which indicate the existence of similar levels of anxiety with regards to interactions with native speakers regardless of the language being learned, or the cultural background of the student. A third source of anxiety that emerged

from this study is anxiety related to the English classroom. Students were concerned about not being able to understand their instructor. They were anxious about interacting with the instructor when answering questions. Students' negative experience in the classroom was also reported as one of the underlying factors of FL anxiety by two studies of multilinguals (Thompson & Lee, 2013; Sylvén& Thompson,2015).

The fourth research question explored the relationship between FLA and participants' language performance. Results of the analysis demonstrated a significant small negative relationship between students' level of anxiety and their exam scores. The relationship is the same across the three course levels. Students who experienced lower levels of foreign language anxiety tended to be high achievers while those who experienced higher levels of FLA tended to be low achievers. The finding is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 1986; Gardner et al., 1997; Kao & Craigie, 2010; Lu & Liu, 2011).Whileno cause/effect relationship can be attributed between foreign language anxiety and language performance, the findings of her study suggest that FLA may be a salient problem and can impair language performance (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Conclusion
This study examined the phenomenon of FLA among Tunisian trilinguals, which is an unexplored area of research. It is the first of its kind that dealt with the phenomenon of FLA among Tunisian learners of English in general and Tunisian trilinguals in particular. The findings showed that participants experienced average levels of FLA. Both males and females exhibited similar levels of anxiety. Worry about failing English class, apprehension about speaking in English, and anxiety related to the classroom were identified as major sources of FLA. Finally, this study found a significant correlation between FLA and language performance.
The findings of this study lend additional support to earlier evidence regarding the persistent presence of in-classroom anxiety. FLA is part and parcel of the academic environment; no student is immune from experiencing a certain level of anxiety so long as there is an evaluation system. Students will experience some form of language learning anxiety at one point or another in their language-learning process(Thompson & Lee, 2014). Sometimes anxiety can lead to positive outcomes (Dörnyei, 2005). The concern is that having too much anxiety certainly impedes academic success. The results of the present study demonstrate that anxiety may have negatively impacted students' learning even though they reported being comfortable taking a foreign language and speaking to native speakers of English.

Implications
In the light of the findings set out in this study, some pedagogical implications are suggested. The data provided in this study show that one of the major sources of anxiety is related to the classroom. Thus, it becomes important tofind ways to turn the classroom into a supportive learning environment where students feel safe to participate without the fear of making mistakes or the worry of being evaluated either by their teachers or their peers (Arnaiz&Guillén, 2012). Educators have recognized the important role played by the teacher in this regard (e.g., Horwitz et al. 1986; Price, 1991; Young, 1990) especially that teachers' beliefs are linked to students' fears. Horwitz et al. (1986) summarize the role of language educators when dealing with students who are anxious: "1) they can help them learn to cope with the existing anxiety-provoking situations, and 2) they can make the learning context less stressful" (p.131). The teacher plays a

major role in this regard. Teachers should be trained to detect sources of anxiety and to raise their awareness about the challenges that students face because of anxiety. As mentioned earlier, FLA is a complex phenomenon that involves many affective factors. Some teachers may not be able to play the role of a counselor. However, their awareness of sources of FLA related to teaching practices may prompt them to reconsider their way of interacting with students, and adopt appropriate instructional techniques to help create alow-anxiety classroom atmosphere(Vogely, 1998; Young, 1991). While the teacher's responsibility is to devise appropriate teaching techniques to help reduce anxiety in the classroom, the students also have to find ways to reduce their anxiety. In fact, students should not hesitate to talk openly with their teachers and their peers about their feelings of anxiety as that can alleviate these feelings as suggested by Campbell and Ortiz (1991). Seeking help to better manage their anxiety is important.

Limitations and recommendations
The study has some limitations. First, it did not use a large sample size. A larger pool of participants may have yielded more information. Secondly, the study depended on quantitative analysis as the only method of data collection. Qualitative data, such as interviews or focus group discussions may have provided deeper insights about participants' anxiety.
Future research should involve students from different universities with different majors. The examination of other background variables such as: age, level of language proficiency, study abroad experience, and socio-economic status FLA could be the focus of future research. Furthermore, it would be interesting to examine students' level of self-concept and its correlation with FLA. Many Tunisian students are learning a fourth language beside Arabic, French, and English. Research comparing the level of FLA between trilinguals and quadrilinguals, which is still an under-researched area in L2 acquisition, could yield interesting results. Given the special status of women in Tunisia, gender should continue to be the subject of research related to anxiety.

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Dr. Elias Bensalem is currently a visiting assistant professor of at NBU. He is teaching English courses at the languages and translation department. His research interests include second language learning, educational technology, methodologies and practices in the teaching of foreign languages. He is the author of several articles related to language teaching and learning.

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