Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Students: Examining the Effect of Self-Efficacy, Self-Perceived Proficiency and Sociobiographical Variables

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Abstract
The present study aims to explore the link between foreign language anxiety (FLA) and self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, and three sociobiographical variables (gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) among 261 Arabic university students learning English. Data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and an Arabic version of the Foreign Language Self-Efficacy Scale (Torres & Turner, 2016). The findings revealed that this sample of Arab English as a foreign language (EFL) students experienced an average level of anxiety with female learners suffering more from anxiety than their male counterparts. Regression analyses revealed that self-efficacy, self-perceived proficiency in English, and gender were predictors of FLA. The results suggest that participants who were self-efficacious and felt more proficient in English were significantly less likely to suffer from FLA. However, even though knowledge of a third language and experience abroad were correlated with FLA, they had no effect on participants’ anxiety.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, experience abroad, foreign language anxiety, self-efficacy, self-perceived proficiency, sociobiographical variables