

# **The English Speaking Anxiety of Non-native High School Speakers: Coping Strategies**

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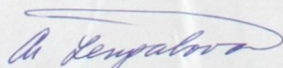
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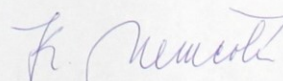
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo nabídnout co největší množství informací o úzkosti z mluvení anglickým jazykem. Tato úzkost se vyskytuje mezi studenty velmi hojně a díky tomu bylo třeba v bakalářské práci navrhnout strategie, jak se s takovou úzkostí vyrovnat. Teoretická část obsahuje vymezení pojmu úzkost v souvislosti se studiem anglického jazyka. Praktická část je věnována popisu a výsledkům akademického výzkumu úzkosti mezi českými středoškolskými studenty. Tato bakalářská práce může posloužit jak studentům, kteří mají zájem se úzkosti zbavit, tak učitelům, kteří chtějí vytvořit příjemné prostředí pro své studenty a tím co nejvíce zmírnit úzkost v hodinách mezi žáky.

**Klíčová slova:** Úzkost z mluvení anglickým jazykem, jazyková úzkost, úzkost z mluvení cizím jazykem, copingové strategie, zvládací strategie.

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to provide as much information as possible about the English speaking anxiety. The English speaking anxiety is considered to be spread among the students of English and according to that, suggestion how to overcome anxiety are provided in the thesis. Basic information, characteristics and identifying the English speaking anxiety can be found in the theoretical part. The practical part consists description of the research of the English speaking anxiety among Czech high-school students and the detailed description of the questionnaire and analysis is also provided. The bachelor thesis can help students realize if they are anxious or not, it also provides suggestions and strategies how to get rid of the English speaking anxiety and due to that fact learn English language as much efficiently as possible.

**Keywords:** English speaking anxiety, language anxiety, foreign language anxiety, coping strategies.

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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## INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon called anxiety is nowadays all around us, for better understanding it is efficient to identify various types of anxiety, moreover the one anxiety which is closely connected to the second language learning. When it comes to learning English and anxiety together, the phenomenon is called English Speaking Anxiety. English Speaking Anxiety can be considered as the big obstacle for those who have inclination to experience anxiety and this can lead to the negative attitude towards the English language acquisition. Consequently, the level of English skills can be very low due to avoidance of English classes or reluctance to do the required tasks especially activities such as speaking in front of classmates.

Several researchers suggested how to prevent experiencing English Speaking Anxiety, however it is important to state and identify strategies how to act when English Speaking Anxiety becomes real battle for the learner. These strategies can be categorized into several types depending on the perspective from which are going to be used. Teacher or instructor can endorse an initiative by creating friendly and positive environment but on the other hand students or learners must put the effort in the learning and dealing with anxiety to make English language acquisition as much successful as possible.

According to my experiences which I gained during attending English classes in high-school, I decided to focus the research on identifying the English Speaking Anxiety among Czech high-school students, exploring the level of English Speaking Anxiety and finally recommend several coping strategies.

The aim of the theoretical part is to define English Speaking Anxiety, suggest which factors contribute to English Speaking Anxiety and finally the description how to identify and measure English Speaking Anxiety among the students and learners.

The practical part will provide the process of researching English Speaking Anxiety among czech students through the questionnaire and according to statistical methods will be provided detailed interpretation of the resulted data.

## **I. THEORY**

## **1 FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY**

When it comes to the words anxiety and second language learning, they have definitely something in common. Many learners claim to have mental block against learning a foreign language. Even though, they are good learners in different situations.

According to that fact, researchers are focused on anxiety, which can be a major obstacle in second language learning. Anxiety can hamper their ability to speak and learn successfully. This is the specific type of anxiety defined by researchers (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 125).

### **1.1 Definition of Anxiety**

Anxiety itself is described by Spielberger as “an unpleasant emotional state or condition, which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry.” (Spielberger 1972, 482)

Several studies concluded that foreign language anxiety (FLA) can influence the performance and communication strategies in target language. Stating that more anxious students try as much as they can to evade situations in which they are forced to communicate in the language they are learning. As for any other specific anxiety psychophysiological symptoms are the same. Anxious learners feel the apprehension, fear and they even feel to be frightened. These symptoms can lead to loss of concentration, sweat and learners often become forgetful. According to these feelings learners try to miss English classes and avoid doing their homework. Anxiety tends to show up in situations in which learners are forced to react to the questions they do not know answers for. On the other hand learners claimed that they are not under stress when they react on the repeated situations or when delivering prepared speech (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, 126).

### **1.2 Factors Contributing Foreign Language Anxiety**

Foreign language anxiety is being considered as a performance anxiety Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 126) considered it very useful to divide FLA into three main performance related anxieties:

- 1. Communication apprehension**
- 2. Test-anxiety**
- 3. Fear of the negative evaluation**

### 1.2.1 Communication Apprehension

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 127) stated that communication apprehension is defined as a type of shyness. Typical for the communication apprehension is fear and worry when it comes to communicating with other people. Oral communication anxiety is based on difficulty in speaking in pairs or in the bigger groups of people.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 127) also reported that communication apprehension can be visible also on individuals delivering a speech in front of an audience called “stage fright”. This type of anxiety can be found also in receiving activities such as listening or learning a spoken message. Communication apprehension and all reactions correspondent with it have big impact on foreign language anxiety. Individuals with fear to speak in groups tend to have a bigger troubles speaking in foreign language class. These difficulties make them feel uncomfortable and they experience loss of control over a communicative situation. Communication apprehension also affects second language learning by personal knowledge of the speaker that receiver of his message will not understand what is the speaker talking about.

### 1.2.2 Test-anxiety

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 127) also considered test-anxiety as a performance anxiety, based on being afraid of failure. Students with test anxiety have high expectations and everything not perfect they consider to be a big failure for them.

Oral testing is also closely connected to second language anxiety, in addition to that, Renée von Würde (2003, 5) in his research (focused on factors provoking anxiety from the point of student’s views) mentioned one student, who in interview admitted, that when he had to give a presentation, the fear was so big that he was shaking, sweating and felt almost anger.

### 1.2.3 Fear of Negative Evaluation

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 128) claimed that the fear of negative evaluation can be characterized as a fear of opinions of others, their evaluations about speakers, which expect mainly negative feedbacks. The scope of the fear of negative evaluation is much wider than in the test-anxiety because fear of negative evaluation can be found in many situations, from asking for directions or speaking in English class to job interview.

Furthermore Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 128) reported that, second language learning requires evaluation from a teacher leading an English class. But how much a teacher should correct errors might be very arguable. Würde (2003, 6) suggested that the

error correction is one of the specific factors contributing anxiety, mainly because participants claimed that frequent corrections caused loss of their focus during the English classes.

Many learners in Wörde's research (2003, 7) stated that also speaking activities in an English class tend to arise and provoke anxiety. In his research, Wörde showed that participants agreed on feeling sensitive to teacher's evaluation of their oral performance and also to gazing of their classmates.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 128) reported that these three types can be used for description of FLA, but it should not be only the combination of these three types. Consequently they conceive foreign language 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". Young (1991, 427) stated that Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope were the first, who defined foreign language anxiety as distinct phenomenon related to language acquisition.

### **1.3 Identifying and Measurement of Foreign Language Anxiety**

It is important to identify anxious learners, because FLA and learning second language are interconnected and learning can be extensively affected by the specific anxiety. Identifying anxious students can be done by the best known Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope claimed (1986, 128) that development of FLCAS has started at the University of Texas throughout the summer of 1883. Students of beginning language classes were encouraged to join a "Support Group of Foreign Language Learning". Surprisingly over one-third of 225, total number of students, considered themselves to be the right candidates for the group, because they were ready to discuss the negative feelings experienced during language classes. Few of them also reported that they experienced such a high anxiety leading to "freezing, trembling, nervousness, uneasiness". The research has looked at common characteristics of the anxious participants. Consequently, the study discovered that almost half of students agreed with the feeling being nervous, when they must speak without any further preparation.

Wörde (2003, 2) in his research considered FLCAS as a self-report tool to measure anxiety in the language classes. FLCAS use five-point Likert Scale. Likert Scale ranges from strongly agree opinion to strongly disagreement. FLCAS primarily helps scholars to capture anxiety in language classes by the standard measure. FLCAS investigates mainly

three sources, three anxieties mentioned above (communication apprehension, test-anxiety, fear of negative evaluation). FLCAS has been used in many surveys because is considered to be completely reliable tool.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, 125) came with the following types of questions in their research focused on FLA. They tested students of the University of Texas. Students chose one alternative (from strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree) which was the closest to the statement.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language class.
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the foreign language.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

From the research made by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, 126) emerged following facts about the foreign language anxiety. Students are afraid of being less competent than other students or being evaluated negatively by them. Students also felt that every mistake and following correction is taken as a failure consequently they feel they are constantly tested. The results stated that students consider themselves being unable to deal with the tasks. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, 126) claimed that students with foreign language anxiety appear more often in the beginning classes on the university level.

## **1.4 Perspectives of Anxiety**

The foreign language anxiety has been studied from many perspectives. Several researchers believe that anxiety is connected with the trait of student's personality or that anxiety is the reaction caused by the specific situation. Spielberger (1983, in Pappamihiel 2002, 330) developed the following differentiation:

### **1.4.1 Trait Anxiety**

Pappamihiel (2002, 330) reported that concerning the trait anxiety, individuals are believed to be anxious thanks to their personality or some serious disorder. Students with trait anxiety have inclinations to be anxious in diverse types of situations.

### **1.4.2 State Anxiety**

Pappamihiel (2002, 330) claimed that with regard to state anxiety the important fact is that this type of anxiety appears under certain conditions or in the specific situations. For instance, the normally non-anxious individual who is supposed to deliver a speech in front

of the wide audience get anxious easily, because delivering a speech is the exact condition under which anxiety appears.



## 2 SOURCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

To identify foreign language anxiety, it is important to specify the sources, which contributes to foreign language anxiety. Young (1991, 427) identified six sources of foreign language anxiety, some of them are connected with the learners, some with the teachers and several are related to the instructional practices. Following sources can be identified:

- Personal and interpersonal anxieties
- Learner beliefs about language learning
- Instructor beliefs about language teaching
- Instructor-learner interactions
- Classroom procedures
- Language testing

Young (1991, 427) reported that personal and interpersonal sources are the most relevant and discussed sources by researchers and scholars. Concerning personal and interpersonal anxieties, low self-esteem and competitiveness are the most important sources, because they are closely connected to the personality of the learner. According to Young, learner's attitudes and beliefs toward language learning are major contributors to language anxiety.

### 3 FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY COPING STRATEGIES

A lot of attention has been paid to strategies that help students to overcome the anxiety. Since 1980's scholars gathered the information about the coping strategies, which can be implemented.

Young (1990, 540) suggested that foreign language anxiety could not be viewed without considering the conditions, which can vary from one individual to another. The array of variables includes: "language setting, anxiety definitions, anxiety measures, age of subjects, language skill and research design".

Kráľová (2016, 43) reported that coping strategies can be divided based on referring to internal or external parts of education process. Dealing with the internal type of education process, two main types of foreign language anxiety can be defined, teaching strategies and learning strategies.

#### 3.1 Teaching Strategies

From the point of view of teachers and instructors, several researchers provided suggestions for them to help students avoid anxiety.

Foss and Reitzel (1991, 132) reported that levels of learning second language, such as motivation, knowledge, skills, outcomes and context are important starting points for inventing exercises which will help students diminish their anxiety.

Foss and Reitzel (1991, 134) claimed that motivation plays role in second language learning, because students with the lack of motivation will avoid particular situations, which requires communication. Consequently, the opportunity to talk and communicate will not be obtainable. Knowledge is the second level of the language learning process. Foss and Reitzel (1991, 134) defined it as a "process of intuitively acquiring and consciously learning the language". They also reported that this stage of the learning process is the most anxiety provoking one. Symptoms such as fear and uneasiness appear in this level of acquiring knowledges and this can lead to the situation when learning is ineffective. Skills are considered to be the third component of the relational competence model which is also related to the second language acquisition. Foss and Reitzel (1991, 134) mentioned the fact that the person willing and motivated to interact in non-native language must know the fundamentals of the target language and has certain skills which lead to a successful communication. As far as outcome is concerned as the fourth model of the relational competence model, teachers and instructors are considered to be the most competent in a classroom. They should know, how evaluate their students, and do

satisfactory outcomes. These outcomes help students to develop realistic perceptions about themselves. Context is the last component of the relational competence model. Each student perceives reality differently, perception is subjective and this could hinder language learning. The self-perceptions of the context are considered to be more important than the context itself, because perceptions of the second language culture can be various as well as feelings and attitudes toward the target language. Foss and Reitzel (1991, 134) argue that it is the same with specific situations, like dating for instance. Mood, place and experiences are factors which influence individual's attitude and behavior.

### 3.1.1 Classroom Implications

Young (1990, 550) in her research on student's perspectives on anxiety and speaking ascertained the facts, the first and foremost, students are afraid of speaking on their own in front of their peers. Students feel better when communication is provided in pairs or small-group work. Fear of negative evaluation mentioned above, plays a huge role in the second language learning classroom. Research proved that if the instructor or teacher creates friendly environment and have a good sense of humor, students reported that they feel less nervous and more relaxed. To alleviate all these situations in which students feel anxious, Young suggested several advices for teachers to decrease foreign language anxiety of their students:

- Providing supplemental instruction or a support group
- Using more pair and group work
- Playing language games with an emphasis on problem-solving
- Using role-playing
- Using an anxiety graph to pinpoint the highest level of anxiety of a given interaction

Also Hashemi and Abbasi (2013, 644) suggested several steps for teachers to help their students to overcome anxiety and collected several recommendations about how to create friendly atmosphere in the foreign language class:

- Teachers should notice the existence of the anxiety among their students and apply coping strategies quickly to alleviate the destructive feelings rooted in the anxiety.
- Practicing speaking skills with those students who have limited exposure to English language to fully practice their communication skills.
- Creating supportive and friendly environment, trying to set informal atmosphere to make students feel comfortable to speak in front of the others.

- Choosing the right strategy for correcting students' mistakes. Encouraging anxiety students to feel free to make mistakes, because it is the significant part in acquiring skills, required for the proper conversation.
- Recommendations aimed at initiating the discussion with the students about their feelings of anxiety.
- From the very beginning of the course, teachers should make students feel satisfied with the tasks and give them the feeling of success. It is recommended to avoid the activities provoking anxiety, using the slow and step by step lessons is efficient.
- Anxious student is recommended to direct his or her self-centred worries away by the teacher, and feel free when it comes to speaking.
- Reducing students' fear about the impact of their answers on the final grade at the end of the course.
- Teachers should be aware of general psychology including anxiety. This may help them to learn how to deal with stress and anxiety in their classes.
- Creation of friendship and cooperation among the students. Teachers should be aware of ethnic background of the students to decode anxious behavior.

The role of teachers and instructors is significant, if their attitude to students is strict with high expectations, frequent language corrections, anxiety is expected to flourish.

## **3.2 Learning Strategies**

Helping strategies are not considered effective only for the teachers and instructors but there are also several strategies dedicated to students. Teachers should create comfortable environment in the classes, but also students have to participate in the effort to alleviate anxiety.

Warr, Allan, and Birdi (1999, 371) suggested three types of learning activities: cognitive learning strategies, behavioral learning strategies, self-regulatory strategies that can help students overcome anxiety.

### **3.2.1 Cognitive learning strategies**

Warr and Downing (2000, 312) suggested that cognitive learning strategies consist following activities. Rehearsal consist repetition of the gained knowledge, mainly aimed in mental repetition of how it was presented. Organization activities suggest finding key issues and developing mental structures. Organization resides in writing the summary of

the discussed topics. The next activity is Elaboration which examines implications and suggests connection of the new material and existing and gained knowledge.

### **3.2.2 Behavioral learning strategies**

Warr and Downing (2000, 312) suggested that the first behavioral learning strategy is called Interpersonal help-keeping, this method is aimed at seeking the assistance of others. Asking for aid results in better understanding of the material. Seeking help from written material is next behavioral method. It is aimed at seeking information in written texts, documents and other non-social opportunities. Rather than routine studying activities it is better to make an effort to obtain information in written sources to make connections with the contexts. Practical applications is the last behavioral strategy, the goal is to learn by the most practical way as possible.

### **3.2.3 Self-regulatory Strategies**

Warr and Downing (2000, 313) claimed that emotion control is the first element of self-regulatory strategies, to prevent anxiety it is necessary to control the anxiety-linked thoughts, which would influence the concentration in the class. Maintaining the motivation and interest in learning is called motivation control, this strategy tries to keep the attention even though a low interest in tasks. Comprehension monitoring is the last component of self-regulatory strategies, this strategy treats procedures which evaluate the degree of gained knowledge of the foreign language and if it is necessary next step is to modify learning behavior. Hauck and Hurd (2005) collected several following strategies how to overcome foreign language anxiety.

1. Using positive self-evaluation (e.g. I can do it, others make errors so can I).
2. Even though student make mistakes, they should actively encourage themselves to take risks and guess the meanings and answers.
3. Students should imagine that conversation is just an informal chat with friends.
4. Students should try to think that when they speak it will not be long monologue.
5. It is efficient to reward or treat when students do the tasks properly.
6. Students should notice their physical signs of stress which could influence their language learning.
7. Each individual should write down feelings.
8. Sharing worries with others.
9. Students should tell the teacher or lector that they feel anxious.
10. Using relaxation strategies (e.g. deep breathing, slow speaking).

Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004, 258) has developed typology of strategies for anxious learners. Their findings suggested 70 basic tactics which can help learners to overcome language anxiety. Kondo and Ying-Ling reported five strategy categories: preparation (e.g. dutiful preparation for the foreign language classes, attending lectures), relaxation (e.g. breathing exercises), positive thinking (e.g. making effort to develop positive attitude toward speaking performances), peer seeking (e.g. asking other students if they understand the tasks and topics, finding students who also have problems to cope with anxiety), resignation (e.g. no concentration in classes, sleeping).

The interesting fact to note is that Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004, 263) found out that the preparation strategy is used more often than the others. Preparation is considered to be task-relevant in nature and preparation is used by students with high level of anxiety as well as by those with no significant level of anxiety.

### **3.3 Intervention Strategies**

Intervention strategies are closely connected to the current trend of positive psychology. Positive psychology can help students overcome anxiety. It is aimed to engage learner's strengths and well-being. Martin Seligman in his research, focused on positive psychology and classroom interventions, stated that: "the positive psychology program increased students' reports of enjoyment and engagement in school. According to teacher reports, the positive psychology program improved strengths related to learning and engagement in school (e.g., curiosity, love of learning, creativity)." Consequently, positive psychology is recommended to use, because of the huge impact on the students (Seligman et al. 2009, 300).

Rebecca L. Oxford (2015, 12) made research about improving learner's emotional functioning and reported number of theories of emotion connected to the second language learning. The first two are: theory of resilience and emotional intelligence theory. These are closely connected to two associated theories: the theory of well-being in positive psychology and the theory of flow. All the mentioned theories are followed by the theory of emotion in existential psychotherapy and finally psycho-spiritual theories of emotion. The important fact to note is that all these theories have impact on anxious learners by working on their emotion-related processes.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 4 METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of the analytic part is to examine foreign language anxiety among Czech high-school students, which study English language. Moreover the research is focused on their perceptions and suggestions how to cope with anxiety according to their experiences. At the beginning of the study, three research questions were determined.

Firstly, it can be expected that the higher number of years dedicated to learning English the lower anxiety can be predicted, because student is supposed to be used to learning English on a daily basis. Is the number of years connected to the level of anxiety?

Secondly, visiting English speaking countries is generally believed to be efficient due to communication with native speakers and consequently gaining language skills. The more language skills individual have, it should be easier for him or her to cope with anxiety, is there any significant relationship between visiting English speaking country, experiencing language course, or working like an au-pair and the level of anxiety?

According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, 128) adulthood is connected to the second language acquisition. They reported that “adults typically perceive themselves as reasonably intelligent, socially-adept individuals, sensitive to different socio-cultural mores.” These assumptions cannot be questioned when it comes to their native language, but when it comes to learning foreign language it is different. According to that, is there influential relationship between the age of the student and anxiety? Moreover, is also gender of the speaker connected with the level of anxiety?

### 4.2 Instruments

The research is mixed-method research. Two main methods were used. Qualitative method, which required the questionnaire and according to that, content analysis was made. The second used method was quantitative and related to that, evaluation scale was used and after that it was statistically analyzed by statistical instrument called correlation.

### 4.3 Participants

The research included 55 Czech high-school students (18 males and 36 females). All of them were non-native speakers, attending the compulsory English classes in Business Academy in Uherské Hradiště. The English classes during the studies in Business



Academy are held four times a week (45-minute class). One participant must have been excluded from the research because of the irrelevant answers.

The age of students spanned from 15 years to 20 years old. The highest number of age of examined student was 17 years old (33,3 percent). The rest was 22,2 percent of 16 years old, 20,4 percent of 19 years old, 18,5 percent of 18 years old, 3,7 percent of 15 years old and finally 1,8 percent of 20 years old.

#### 4.4 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was inspired by the one developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope and used for their research about Foreign language classroom anxiety. Their questionnaire consists one section including Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), however this questionnaire was made of three sections (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, 129). MacIntyre (1995, 93) stated that FLCAS and similar scales are the best for identifying students who have experienced anxiety and those ones with inclination to experience anxiety in the future.

The first section includes background information about the student (gender, age and years of learning English), in this section there are also three questions identifying if the student has ever experienced language course or work in English speaking country and if the student watch movies or TV series in English. These questions are supposed to show the relationships between the experiences and anxiety by using correlation. One or zero points were assigned to the yes or no answers.

The second part consist a five-point Likert scale by which students indicated if they agree or not with the declarative sentences. They were supposed to mark one from five items (strongly agree, rather agree, neutral, rather disagree, strongly disagree). This part examines level of English speaking anxiety of each individual. The using of FLCAS offers examining the scope and severity of foreign language anxiety. Each item was assigned specific related points (5 points representing strongly agree, 4 points rather agree, 3 points neutral, 2 points rather disagree, 1 point represented strongly disagree) to indicate anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, 129).

The third part includes three open questions examining strategies that have helped the student, the ones that help currently and recommendations for the future how to cope with anxiety according to their own experiences.

The anxiety score ranged from 7–35 points, the relationship between the number and anxiety was high scores reflect intensity of the anxiety. To classify the level of anxiety, the following intervals were demarcated:

- 7–13 is the minimum level of anxiety
- 14–20 is mild level anxiety
- 21–27 is moderate anxiety
- 28–35 is high level of anxiety (Beck et al. 1988, 894).

The questionnaire was in Czech language in order to students' reading comprehension. The questionnaires can be found in Appendices.

#### **4.5 Data Collection and Procedures**

The questionnaire was distributed to students during their English classes in the beginning of the March. Students were given as much time as possible to not feel under the pressure when they were answering the questionnaire. All parts of the questionnaire were explained in detail to provide complete comprehension of the questions.

#### **4.6 Study Limitations**

The group of examined students included 55 participants, this number does not permit generalization of the results. Teacher's role is huge according to the level of anxiety, students were from different classes of different teachers. Consequently, their answers could be influenced by the atmosphere created by the specific teacher. These facts have to be taken into account and interpreted with cautions.

Moreover, it was said to students that the questionnaire is anonymous and due to this fact it can be tough to know whether they answered precisely and according to their opinions, attitudes and experiences. Investigation of the answers in the questionnaires will be explained and described in the following chapter.

## 5 RESULTS

The following chapter will be focused on the processes of the analyzing collected data.

### 5.1 Questionnaire Results

As was already mentioned above, the questionnaire was divided into three main parts, each analyzing different aspects of foreign language anxiety.

#### 5.1.1 Background information

The first part of the questionnaire was focused on investigating personal and basic information about the examining each individual. Firstly, questions on gender, age and years of studying English was asked.

Secondly, three questions were asked. The answers are expected to correlate with the following part of the questionnaire. The first item was: *“Have you ever visited English speaking country, or experienced language course there or have you ever work like an au-pair?”* And answer was yes or not, in addition to that, if they have answered the first question as yes, the second question was: *“If you have answered yes in the previous question, did it help you to deal with anxiety better?”* Fourteen students reported yes in the first question, that they have visited English speaking country. It can be assumed that this experience generally helps to overcome anxiety, but five students claimed that it did not help them to eliminate anxiety. In addition to this, still more than half (nine students, sixty-five percent of all with experience with visiting English speaking country) claimed that it help them to get rid of anxiety and stress when speaking English language.

The third question ran: *“Do you watch movies, TV or TV series in original English in which it is spoken?”* Here can be suggested that watching original English speaking movies helps students to gain language skills. Number of students watching English spoken movies etc. is forty-two (79 percent), this can be considered a significant number and correlation between this number and scores gained from scale will be reported lately in the chapter.

#### 5.1.2 English Speaking Anxiety

First and foremost it is important to classify the total number of participants into the specific levels of anxiety. The biggest number of participants (35 percent) can be classified to the interval of mild anxiety, the second highest number of participants (28 percent) can be classified into mild anxiety interval, the third number (24 percent) of participants were classified into the minimum level of anxiety, and the last and the lowest number (13

percent) was classified as the high level of Anxiety. Data can be found in the following table.

Intervals of anxiety	Minimum Anxiety	Mild Anxiety	Moderate Anxiety	High Level of Anxiety
Percentage of participants	24 %	28 %	35 %	13 %
Number of participants	13	15	19	7

Table 1: Representation of Intervals and their number of participants

As it was mentioned above, the second part of the questionnaire was identifying anxiety among examined students. To achieve the level of anxiety, FLCAS was used. This part of the questionnaire consist seven declarative statements. Each item required marking corresponding answer, students could choose from the following possibilities, whether they strongly agree, rather agree, neutral, rather disagree, strongly disagree. As it was described above, each item has representing score from 1 to 5 points, to identify the level of anxiety, because, the more higher number is, the bigger anxiety can be predicted. Three of the following items were reversed in order to keep students' attention while fulfilling the questionnaire. See following table with scores of each declarative item.

Item number	Item	Total Score
4	"I got nervous when I speak English language."	169
5	"I am afraid to speak with native speaker."	170
6	"I feel comfortable to speak in front of my classmates or another big audience."	161
7	"Even though I am well prepared for the English class I worry to speak."	155
8	"I feel calmed when I am called on the English class."	152
9	"Even though I know the right answer I tremble to speak."	112
10	"I am not nervous to speak even though I make mistakes."	149

Table 2: Items of FLCAS and their total scores

The highest score each item could get was 270 and the lowest was 54. It is visible that the highest score of all items got the item number five, this identifies that the most anxiety evoking situation from all is the one when it comes to speaking with a native speaker. Only six students reported that they strongly disagree with the statement. Five students reported that they strongly agree, twenty-three claimed that they rather agree and seven students had neutral attitude toward the statement. Thirteen marked option to rather disagree.

The item with the second highest number is the item number four. When it comes to speaking English in general, students reported that they feel nervous. Six students reported, that they strongly agree, sixteen students claimed that they rather agree with the statement, thirteen students feel neutral about the item, seventeen students rather disagree and finally only two students strongly disagree. Here English speaking anxiety is proved to be real in order to speaking in English.

The third item with the highest score is very close to the previous one and it is item number six, only five students reported that they strongly disagree with the statement claiming that they feel comfortable to speak in front of the class or wider audience. Seven students reported that they strongly agree, twelve rather agreed and thirteen felt neutral about the item, seventeen rather disagree. To conclude that, students do not feel calmed when they speak in the English class.

The item number seven has the fourth highest number in order to its score. Seven students strongly agree, thirteen students rather agree, nine of them were neutral, sixteen rather disagree and only nine students strongly disagreed. It can be seen that students worry to answer even though they know the right answer.

The fifth item with the highest score is item number eight, which studies if students feel good when they are called on by teacher to speak, read or answer the question. Five of them strongly agreed, seventeen rather agree, eight feel neutral about the sentence and eleven rather disagree and thirteen strongly disagree. Here can be determined that students do not like to be called on during the English class.

The sixth item with the highest score was item number ten. This item examined if students are not afraid to speak even though they are aware of making mistakes. Four of them strongly agreed, seventeen rather agree, five feel neutral and eighteen rather disagree and ten strongly disagree.

The item with the least score is item number nine. Only two students strongly agreed that they are afraid to answer the questions even though they know the right answer. Seven students rather agree with the sentence, eight feel neutral and thirteen rather disagreed and

finally twenty-four strongly disagree. It is clearly visible that students do not feel nervous to answer if they know the right answer, here can be suggested that they feel and consequently they are not afraid to speak.

Order of Items	Number of Item	Total Score
1	5	170
2	4	169
3	6	161
4	7	155
5	8	152
6	10	149
7	9	112

Table 3: Table with order of items and its scores

### 5.1.3 English Speaking Anxiety - Reducing Strategies

The third part of the questionnaire was dedicated to ESA, coping strategies in order to get rid of anxiety. In this part of the questionnaire, three Open-Ended questions were asked. The aim of this part was to identify coping strategies from the students' own perspectives, because each individual is different and requires various types of coping strategies. Despite this fact, content analysis of the questions showed similar features and characteristics according to students' suggestions.

To identify as much information as possible, each questions were directed differently from each other, moreover one of them to the past, one of them was putted in the present and the third one to the future. Content analysis of each question will be provided below.

The first question from the last part of the questionnaire was focused on individual's experiences from the past. Question was following "*According to your opinion, what help you to deal with English speaking anxiety in the past?*" Here can be observed similarities in the questionnaires and the most frequent answers can be considered to be the most efficient and useful. In the following table the most frequent answers can be seen.

The Most Frequent Answers	Number of Similar Answers
Watching movies, TV and TV series	27
Visiting Anglophone countries	16
Conversation in English	13
PC games	6
Conversation with native speaker	4

Table 4: The most frequent answers on the first question

According to the table with the most frequent answers, it is obvious that more than half of students reported that watching movies, TV and TV series has helped them decrease English language anxiety. Sixteen students claimed that also visiting Anglophone countries has helped them to eliminate ESA, thirteen claimed only the conversation in English but they did not specify whether with the native speaker or not. It can be assumed that their intention meaning was conversation with native speaker, but it is only assumption. Four students specifically reported that conversation with native speaker helped them. The answers including PC games were surprising, because it was not expected that playing PC games can offer students gaining vocabulary. Other answers, which are subsequent to the ones from the table above, included: extra classes, reading, listening to music and learning in school. One student reported that nothing helped to deal with anxiety according to him or her.

The Most Frequent Answers	Number of Similar Answers
Watching movies, TV and TV series	23
English conversation	12
Nothing	11
English songs and their translation	6
Teacher	4

Table 5: The most frequent answers on the second question

The second question from the third part of the questionnaire was focused on present strategies that help students to deal with anxiety. Subjective opinions were required according to their relevant experiences. The question was: “*According to your opinion, what helps you the most to deal with anxiety?*” In the answers for the question nine similar answers repeated. The most frequent strategy which helps students was watching movies and TV series on a regular basis. They claimed that this type of learning English is the

most entertaining one and the number of students who reported this type of answer was twenty-three. From the table below is clear that the second most frequent strategy was English conversation. Almost half of them specified the type of conversation, for instance conversation with classmates and teacher during the English class on the specific topic, or conversation with the relatives living in abroad, conversation classes with a native speaker, chatting with friends. Surprisingly, eleven students did not answer this question, some of them stated only *“nothing helps me now”*. Six students reported that listening English songs and their translation helps them to eliminate anxiety, because in order to translate the song, they have to find the meanings of the words they did not know yet. Four students suggested that interaction with the teacher helps them the most. Here it is clear again that teacher’s role in the class is very important and if teacher has the right attitude and if teacher can motivate students, they do not have inclination to be worried or will not try to avoid the classes. Other suggestions were for instance extending vocabulary and learning new words on cards, students believed that gaining vocabulary makes them more confident in speaking. Three students reported that trips to abroad helped them to cope with anxiety, also google translator has appeared in one answer. One student reported that calm having a positive and calmed approach also helped. In this section wide range of answers appeared because of the differences between all individuals.

The very last question of the questionnaire was *“According to you, what is the most effective strategy, how to get rid of the English speaking anxiety?”* General suggestions for coping with ESA were expected here. It can be found in the table that the most repeated answer was that living in abroad is the most effective strategy how to eliminate ESA. Eleven students reported that daily conversation with a native speaker is the most efficient. Five students claimed that they do not have any ideas or suggestions. Three students agreed on that building self-esteem and confidence are crucial for coping with the situations evoking ESA. The same number of students (three) described the strategy aiming at preparation for the classes and training of speaking in front of the mirror. Some students suggested not do not be worried about making mistakes, they recommended precise and slow thinking about what the individual wants to say.



The Most Frequent Answers	Number of Similar Answers
Living in abroad	14
English conversation	11
No ideas	5
Building self-esteem	3
Preparation for the English class	3

Table 6: The most frequent answers on the third question

To sum the identified facts, students agreed on watching movies, TV and TV series as the most effective strategy how to cope with ESA, then conversation in English and visiting English speaking countries.

#### 5.1.4 Comparison of Two Extremes

During the analyzing of the questionnaires, two individuals have extreme high or low score in the section with the FCLAS researching the level of anxiety. With the lowest score (nine points) was found one questionnaire on the other hand there was one participant with the highest score of all (thirty-four points). These questionnaires were total opposites, the one with the highest score was answered by male and the one with the lowest was answered by female. The first part of both questionnaires was completed in the same way but the biggest difference was found in the number of learning years and age, the questionnaire with the lowest score showed that student has learned English for eleven years and his age was nineteen. The questionnaire with the highest score reported that student is sixteen years old and number of years studying English is nine.

The second part of the questionnaire focusing on the foreign language anxiety scale was completely opposite in order to the gained score of this section.

The most interesting part was comparing the last sections of the questionnaires focusing on student's suggestions on how to deal with FLA. In the questionnaire with the lowest score was visible the positive attitude towards learning English language and student provided many suggestions for efficient learning of English. The student reported on the first question of the last part that movies, TV series, visiting social networks, online games, communication with native speakers, reading articles and books in English, also writing and school has helped him to deal with anxiety in the past. Here is visible that if the student has enough knowledge and language skills gained by entertaining strategies of learning, anxiety is easy to overcome according to feeling confident about English. On the

other hand, opposite questionnaire was fulfilled considerably less. The answer of the first question of the last section consists only watching movies, TV series and watching videos on YouTube. The second question analyzing what has helped students to overcome FLA was also answered in the completely different ways by the two mentioned students. Considering the one with the lowest score (lowest anxiety) the answer was interesting and contains two main suggestions the first was again movies and TV series and online games. The students also claimed that from movies and TV series it is possible to learn daily spoken English and also Old English, moreover also slang terms and idioms. In order to playing online games, the student reported that it is the virtual place where people from all around the world are gathered. Chatting with foreigners is on the daily basis here, according to that the very new and special terms and vocabulary is provided in order to fully understand the game. In defiance of what was reported the student with low anxiety, the second one with high level of anxiety claimed that just Google translator is the thing which helps student to deal with anxiety. The last question was focused on suggestions according to the individual's personal experiences. The one with the lowest level anxiety suggested signing in the website, which provides meeting new people with whom student can talk, chat and due to that learn language mutually. Student with the highest score in FLCAS answered the last question very briefly: *"Don't speak English at all."* It can be assumed that the student answered like this because of the feeling anxious and because of the fact that she does not want to speak English. Speaking itself is for this student the most evoking activity which leads to high level of anxiety.

To sum it up, significant differences in the fulfilling questionnaires were found mainly in the third part analyzing students own suggestions. Their attitudes toward learning of English were pretty visible, and can be assumed that if student is not motivated to study and learn English, anxiety is likely to appear. When the learner is highly motivated and uses various types of instruments how to help learn English, low level of anxiety can be predicted because student does not take it as something they have to learn but in order to know the terms for instance in computer games, student would like to know the terms to play the game efficiently.

## 5.2 Correlation

Correlation analysis using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients was used during the analytic process of the questionnaires. The data collected by the FLCAS served to find out

whether three hypotheses which were stated at the beginning of the analytic part of this work can be considered relevant or not. Collected data can be seen in the following table.

Many correlation relationships were suggested: relationship between age and the scores from FCLAS, number of years studying English and the scores from FCLAS or relationship between experiences with visiting Anglophone countries and the level of anxiety expressed in the scores and relationship between watching movies and the level of anxiety expressed in the scores.

Analyzing the third column representing correlation according to the question analyzing the experiences in abroad weak correlation has appeared. Weak correlation is considered to be statistically irrelevant. Negative correlation means the higher anxiety is the lower score is found in the third column and vice versa.

The same case can be found in the fourth column showing collected scores of the third question (finding correlation between watching English TV, TV series and English movies). Unfortunately, here also the correlation relationship was not found. Only very weak again and according to this fact the correlation is considered to be statistically irrelevant. Contrary to the previous correlation, this one has appeared to be positive. Positive correlation means that, the higher anxiety is, the higher score is visible.

Following numbers are the values of each correlation relationship among two features:

- Correlation relationship between age and the level of ESA: -0,03042
- Correlation relationship between the number of years spent with studying English and the level of ESA: -0,065682237
- Correlation relationship between visiting English speaking country and the level of ESA: -0,113797402
- Correlation relationship between watching English TV, TV series or movies and the level of ESA: 0,122077252

Even though correlation did not show some significant relationships between the predicted scale items and questions, weak correlations have appeared but they are considered to be statistically irrelevant.

The FLCAS itself did not show that everybody is highly anxious but the most provoking questions were found due to their score.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to identify the English speaking anxiety, which appears to be wide spread among students and learners of English language. The two main aspects can be found in order to overcome the English speaking anxiety, the first is preventing English speaking anxiety and the second one is connected with the strategies how to cope, deal and get rid of the English speaking anxiety and this second one was the main goal of the thesis. Offering suggestions how to cope with English speaking anxiety were hopefully provided in the thesis by using the ideas of several researchers.

The thesis was divided into the theoretical and the practical part. The theoretical part was focused on the detailed characteristics of English speaking anxiety, identifying and measurement, sources and also factors contributing English speaking anxiety. The practical part of the thesis was focused on the analysis of the statistical data and description of the each part of the questionnaire.

Even though the correlations did not show any significant relationship between age, number of years and visiting English speaking country and the score from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the most provoking activities and situations were explored thanks to the number of answers on each items in the scale. Also the third part of the questionnaire consisting open question showed the most used strategies among the students, the ones which help students the most and the ones recommended by the students. Their attitudes towards the learning of English, was clearly visible.

The thesis can help anxious students to find out how to cope with English speaking anxiety efficiently and also can be used by teachers because also suggestions for them are in the thesis available.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ESA English Speaking Anxiety

FLA Foreign Language Anxiety

FLCAS Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix PI: Questionnaire in Czech

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## APPENDIX P I: QUESTIONNAIRE IN CZECH

### Úzkost z mluvení anglickým jazykem u českých středoškolských studentů: Copingové strategie.

#### Dotazník

Tento dotazník byl vytvořený pro účely akademického výzkumu k bakalářské práci. Vaše odpovědi jsou důvěrné a slouží pouze pro potřeb výzkumu. Mockrát děkuji za vaši ochotu a čas.

Základní informace:

Pohlaví:

Věk:

Jak dlouho se učíte anglický jazyk?

1. Strávil/a jste někdy delší dobu v anglicky mluvící zemi (studijní pobyt, au-pair, apod.)?

ano

ne

2. Pokud jste v předchozí otázce odpověděl/a ano, pomohla vám tato zkušenost odbourat nervozitu z mluvení anglickým jazykem?

ano

ne

3. Sledujete filmy, TV, nebo seriály v originálním anglickém znění?

ano

ne

Nyní prosím označte tvrzení, které odpovídá vašemu názoru.

4. Jsem nervózní, když mám mluvit anglicky.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím

nesouhlasím

5. Když se setkám s rodilým mluvčím, stydím se s ním promluvit.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím

nesouhlasím

6. Když mám mluvit před třídou či jinde, kde je větší počet lidí, cítím se klidně.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím  
 nesouhlasím

7. I přesto, že se na hodinu připravím, cítím se nervózně, když mám promluvit.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím  
 nesouhlasím

8. Když mě učitel/ka vyvolá abych mluvil/a, cítím se naprosto v klidu.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím  
 nesouhlasím

9. V hodině angličtiny se často stydím odpovídat na dobrovolné otázky, i když vím správnou odpověď.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím  
 nesouhlasím

10. Nestydím se hovořit anglickým jazykem, I přestože dělám často chyby.

zcela souhlasím  spíše souhlasím  nemám vyhraněný názor  spíše nesouhlasím  
 nesouhlasím

Nyní prosím odpovězte na otevřené otázky:

12. Co je podle Vás nejefektivnější způsob, jak se zbavit nervozity z mluvení?

13. Co Vám osobně nejvíce pomáhá?

14. Co Vám v minulosti zaručeně pomohlo?

## APPENDIX P II: QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

The following questionnaire was designed for the purpose of academic research. Your responses will not be shared with anyone but the researchers who are conducting this study and will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time and participation.

### Questionnaire

Basic information:

Gender:

Age:

How long have you study English language?

1. Have you ever experienced living in English speaking country (language course, au-pair, etc.) ?

yes

no

2. If you chose yes in the previous question, did it help you to cope with anxiety?

yes

no

3. Do you watch English movies, TV, or TV series in English language?

yes

no

Now please mark the item which corresponds with your opinion the most.

4. I am nervous, when I am about to speak English.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

5. When I meet a native speaker, I am shy to speak.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

6. When I am about to speak in front of the classmates or somewhere where the wide audience is, I don't feel nervous.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

7. Even though I am well prepared for the class, I feel nervous when I am about to speak.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

8. When I am about to be called on during the class, I don't feel nervous.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

9. During the English class I often don't want to answer the question even though I know the right answer.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

10. Even though I am aware of my mistakes I don't worry to speak.

strongly agree  rather agree  neutral  rather disagree  strongly disagree

Now please answer the following questions:

12. According to your opinion, what has helped you to deal with anxiety the most?

13. According to your opinion, what helps you now?

14. According to your opinion, what is the most effective strategy how to prevent speaking anxiety?

