

***Silence is what causes me anxiety* – the experience of language anxiety
among translation and interpretation students**

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1. Introduction

In the academic year of 2021-2022 as a bachelor student I conducted research about language anxiety among bilinguals in Romania (Marton, 2023). I focused mainly on Hungarian speakers' difficulties of understanding or producing Romanian language during spoken interactions. The study aimed to discover the presence of language anxiety (LA) within the target group and its manifestations. It also explored the above-mentioned group's personal experience with LA. The findings proved that LA is widely present in the participants' daily lives regardless of their age, language proficiency, education or profession. From students to business owners all claimed the very presence of LA in their lives. Some differences that were found within the group lie in the situations in which LA appears and the way people handle it. In case of subjects with a higher language proficiency level, LA presents itself in communicative situations which require a higher language level, while participants who claim to have a low level of Romanian language, LA already appears at a stage where only basic language knowledge is required. Therefore, participants' self-perceived level of the target language and their self-confidence play an important role in experiencing language anxiety.

Later on, as a Translation and Interpretation master's student I noticed that LA is also present among interpreting students in the class, especially when it comes to interpreting tasks, so I decided to perform a pilot study (2022-2023) in order to find out the reason(s) why high language proficiency students specializing in translation and interpretation might experience LA. The subjects were students of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Miercurea Ciuc and Târgu Mureș. Data was collected from both bachelor and master students. This study was based on a questionnaire which, apart from some demographic questions, included a language proficiency test and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The results showed negative correlation between LA and communication apprehension and no fear of judgement. However, positive correlation was found between participants' general LA and their test anxiety.

Since the above mentioned pilot study proved the presence of LA among Translation and Interpretation students the present research aimed to gain a deeper insight into the topic. The present study aimed at increasing the number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire and it focused on individual differences by exploring the dynamics of interpreter students' anxiety during a simultaneous interpretation task.

2. Language anxiety

Anxiety is a well-known emotion which can occur in different forms and degrees such as communication apprehension, language anxiety, foreign language anxiety or foreign language anxiety in a classroom context. At this point, the latter one is the most studied form of anxiety (Dewaele, 2017). The current paper aims to explore a form of foreign language anxiety which has not been given much attention in the field of academic research, namely foreign language anxiety occurring while carrying out interpreting tasks.

Language anxiety (LA) is a form of anxiety related to language production, mainly to verbal communication (McCroskey and Beatty, 1986). Spielberg (1983) characterized the “feeling of anxiety” as a transient emotional state with immediate cognitive impacts, typically marked by sensations of worry, nervousness, and tension in reaction to a particular situation, such as teaching and learning contexts (Spielberg, 1983, cited in Javanbakht and Hadian, 2014: 776).

Therefore, language anxiety can lead to breakdowns in communication. Such breakdowns instil fear as people worry about being negatively judged and believe that performance setbacks distort their ability to express themselves, present themselves, and maintain their self-image (Horwitz et al., 1986). The connection between language and identity is profound, and in instances of language-related failure, both aspects are affected simultaneously (Norst, 1989, as cited in Tóth, 2015: 19).

It is essential not only to analyse the external and internal signs of anxiety but also to delve into the process leading to its development. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) outlined the three stages of cognitive processing in foreign language learning. The initial stage involves language input, followed by language processing and interpretation, and finally, language output, where proficiency is demonstrated. The research underscores the importance of not exclusively concentrating on the final stage, output failure, without taking into account the preceding stages where anxiety could have originated due to various factors (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994, as cited in Dewaele, 2017: 435).

According to the literature there are two general types of anxiety: *trait anxiety* defined as “a relatively stable tendency to exhibit anxiety in a large variety of circumstances” (Phillips, 1992, cited in Salehi and Marefat, 2014: 776) and *state anxiety*, which is defined as “a situation-specific trait anxiety; that is, an individual suffering from state anxiety will manifest a stable tendency to exhibit anxiety but only in certain situations” (Phillips, 1992, cited in Salehi and

Marefat, 2014: 776). Trait anxiety, due to its broad and somewhat indistinct definition, has not been found to be helpful in predicting second language achievement (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991, cited in Salehi and Marefat, 2014: 776). Brown (2000) suggests that language anxiety falls under the category of state anxiety, while Phillips (1992) asserts that a prominent form of state anxiety is test anxiety (Brown, 2000, Phillips, 1992, cited in Salehi and Marefat, 2014: 776).

Horwitz et al. 1986 differentiated language anxiety from general anxiety and identified three components of foreign language anxiety: *test anxiety*, *communication apprehension* and *fear of negative evaluation* (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Test anxiety can negatively contribute to language acquisition and production. It is a variable associated with test-takers' attributes and has become increasingly prevalent due to the widespread use of tests and their significance for students. While some individuals may perceive test anxiety as a minor issue, it can have serious impact when it leads to heightened levels of anxiety and academic underachievement among students. It varies based on students' perceptions of test difficulty affecting their performance (Rubin, 1999, cited in Javanbakht and Hadian, 2014: 776).

Communication apprehension is the inability of a speaker to express his/her thoughts (Salehi and Marefat, 2014: 776). It is characterized by shyness and fear or anxiety which causes difficulty in communication. It can affect the individual in group talks because of the need for oral communication. It can also affect individuals when speaking in public, also called as *stage fright*. These individuals have difficulties with simple communicative tasks and these cause them anxiety, thus they have greater foreign language anxiety in general (Horwitz et al., 1986).

The last component of foreign language anxiety according to Horwitz et al. (1986) is fear of negative evaluation. It is defined as "apprehension about other's evaluation, avoidance of evaluating situations and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Watson and Friend, 1969, cited in Horwitz et. al., 1986: 128). It is an individual's fear of other's judgment in case of their poor performance and the need to make a positive impression on others (Salehi and Marefat, 2014: 776).

Motivation is also frequently mentioned together with LA and second language learning since motivation is a key factor in the learning process. Csizér conducted two studies both highlighting that anxiety and motivation have an interrelation and that anxiety can have a negative effect on motivation and it can greatly reduce it (Csizér, 2012; Csizér and Piniel, 2016). Tódor also states that anxiety can be positively motivating but most of the times LA has

a negative impact on learners' willingness of language learning and self-expression (Tódor, 2020: 28).

Research into foreign language anxiety suggests that it can present a significant challenge for language learners by impeding both their understanding and ability to produce language (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991: 86, as cited in Grasso, 2016). While the phenomenon of language anxiety has been extensively examined in the fields of second or foreign language learning and teaching, its exploration among practicing interpreters and students studying translation and interpreting has been comparatively limited. Just as anxiety within a foreign language classroom can influence learning and language production in the target language (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015, as cited in Dewaele, 2017: 433), anxiety experienced during interpreting can affect the quality of oral language mediation (Besznyák, 2019).

3. Language anxiety among Translation and Interpretation students

Interpreting, like other professional activities involving multiple languages, comes with a certain level of stress or anxiety. This arises from the nature of the tasks performed by interpreters. Even the most dedicated interpreter students often feel overwhelmed by the seemingly complex demands placed on their cognitive and attentional abilities (Hansen and Shlesinger, 2007).

There are different types of interpreting modes. The two major interpreting modes are the consecutive and simultaneous ones but there are other modes as well, such as the chuchotage (whispering interpretation) or liaison (dialogue) interpreting. Out of these, simultaneous interpreting is probably the one which challenges the most the interpreter's abilities because it requires the interpreter to understand the source language speech, usually in a foreign language, and immediately produce an equivalent speech in another language while coping with numerous uncontrollable factors affecting performance, such as the speaker's expertise, the speed of the original speech, and external factors like noise or heat (Gerver, 1974; Riccardi et al., 1998; Shlesinger, 2000, cited in Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzardo 2016).

Skrylnyk (2016) argues that there will never be an ideal condition for interpreting. He names the factors that affect the interpretation process *stumbling stones* (Skrylnyk, 2016: 148) and he states that the more stumbling stones, the more mental effort is needed from the interpreter's part. He divides these factors into two categories: circumstantial and professional. Circumstantial are unpredictable and unexpected, thus it is difficult to overcome them and train

students to deal with them as well. These can be, for example, a faulty microphone or headphones. Both are forcing the speakers to lose energy while trying to speak up or speak in a low voice. He also adds to this category noise, fatigue, malaise and tense working schedule. The professional stumbling stones are predictable and thus trainable. This category consists of affecting factors such as “the speaker’s accent”, “fast utterance speed”, “complicated speaker’s syntax”, “unknown terminology”, “too much precise information”, “necessity to use notes” (Skrylnyk, 2016: 149). The above mentioned factors, no matter of category, take away in one way or another the interpreters’ attention thus they affect their concentration skills (Skrylnyk, 2016).

In the early stages of interpreter training, most interpreter students were typically balanced bilinguals, whose language proficiency was considered natural. Interpreter training primarily focused on developing technical and task-specific skills necessary for professional interpreting. However, in recent times, many interpreter trainees are still learning one or more languages they intend to work with. This raises questions about what qualities make certain students more suitable for interpreter training. While the importance of language skills is unquestionable for both translators and interpreters, proficiency in working languages alone does not guarantee high-quality translation or interpreting. Thus, beside linguistic skills such as optimal use of working languages, efficient utilization of language skills, etc. there are numerous non-linguistic competences which can influence one’s quality in interpretation.

Concentration and memory are also key factors for success in this profession. An interpreter needs to be able to focus for a long period of time very intensively. Particularly for this reason students should be trained to be able to focus, or in case they do lose it, to regain the concentration. Skrylnyk (2016) offers an experimental concentration training to translation and interpretation master students. The author insists that there are four stages of concentration: *concentration gain*, *concentration loss*, *concentration shift* and *concentration regain*. He describes these as the process how humans react to different stressful situations, tasks and the above already mentioned stumbling stones in the interpretation process. Concentration gain is a period of any interpreting process when interpreters are trying to get used to the given circumstances. Concentration loss happens when the speaker starts lagging and loses control. The authors mentions that this usually happens when speakers hear “an irrelevant word or numeral” (Skrylnyk, 2016: 152). He describes concentration shift as “the moment when interpreters switch to different circumstances” (Skrylnyk, 2016: 152). This shift should be as smooth as possible. Last but not least, concentration regain is “the concentration period in interpreting after concentration loss” (Skrylnyk, 2016: 153). This period can last up to 15-20

minutes, so it is not something that happens in seconds but it can be trained to last shorter. He believes that “the shorter the concentration gain period is the smoother concentration regain moment happens” (Skrylnyk, 2016: 152).

All the above factors are common skills and traits which interpreters can share but there are *individual differences* due to different personality types. Linguistic competence and general cultural knowledge are indeed important in order to be an interpreter but personality also plays an important role, therefore it should be taken into account as well (Gile 2001, cited in Rosiers et al., 2011: 55). In case of a Translation and Interpretation course or degree candidates come from different background, with different life experiences and personality traits. Professional interpreters and translators themselves claim that interpreters are more likely to be articulate and they have more developed oral skills compared to translators (Seleskovitch, 1978; Henderson, 1980, cited in Rosiers et al., 2011:54). Teachers also argue that interpreter students are more confident. Although some schools mention the importance of non-linguistic skills in the form of analytical ability, clarity and precision or delivery style, so far little research has been carried out on interpreter students’ personality traits. The number of studies on personality traits of translators and interpreters is not high contrary to the field of social psychology and foreign language acquisition where this phenomenon is widely studied. Researchers mention individual difference variables such as “intelligence, aptitude, attitudes, motivation, anxiety, risk taking, cognitive style, introversion/extraversion and ego permeability (openness)” (Rosiers et al., 2011: 55). In the above cited study (Rosiers et al., 2011) the authors tried to compare individual differences of translators and interpreters and check whether their performance, motivation and anxiety level is different since they have different personality traits. The research consisted of 2 questionnaires which led to the conclusions that translator and interpreter students have different profiles but they do have traits in common. The results have shown negative relationship with performance and personality traits. The interpreters did not outperform the translators in oral tasks, although translators reported to experience higher anxiety level and less self-confidence than their interpreter peers. What was common in both groups is that even though translators experience anxiety their motivation to keep learning foreign language and finish their training was as high as of the interpreters (Rosiers et al., 2011).

Interpreters may experience not only classroom anxiety but also performance anxiety during their practice and exams. They might face the fear of judgment or stage fright, accompanied by language anxiety. Besznyák (2019) describes this highly stressful situation for interpreters, emphasizing that interpreters often have to perform at a high level under variable

and unpredictable conditions. The success of communication depends on them, which poses a significant burden on interpreters, undoubtedly influencing the quality of language mediation. Interpreters simultaneously try to balance their internal efforts and find equilibrium between the goals and expectations of various parties involved in a given interpreting situation (Besznyák, 2019).

Jimenez Ivars and Pinazo (2001) explain the stressful nature of interpreting by the requirement to perform a series of complex cognitive tasks, involving psychomotor operations in public or at least in front of an audience. Their study involved 197 final-year translation and interpreting students at a university in Spain. The researchers examined how factors such as fear of judgment, lack of self-confidence, uncertainty, and fear of others' judgment influenced students' performance in various interpreting tasks, which had to be carried out in public. Interestingly, contrary to the hypotheses of many studies on this subject, the results reported only positive anxiety, which the subjects deemed necessary for success. The researchers attribute this to the learned coping strategies (Jimenez Ivars and Pinazo, 2001).

A study explored (Chiang, 2010) the relationship between foreign language anxiety among Taiwanese interpreter trainees and their learning outcomes in Chinese-English interpreting courses. The research analysed the exam results and semester performance of 213 Chinese-English interpreter trainees, measuring anxiety using Spielberger's Trait Anxiety Inventory and Horwitz et al.'s Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The results indicated a significant negative correlation between students' foreign language anxiety and both midterm and final performance in interpreting courses. Moreover, these correlations were independent of personal anxiety effects, which were significantly related to foreign language anxiety but not to the performance indicators. The study suggests that existing anxiety measurement tools might not have been sensitive enough to the anxiety-inducing interpreting situations, treating anxiety caused by interpreting as a mere manifestation of more general types of anxiety (Chiang, 2010). This study also proves that individual differences should be taken into account in case of translators and interpreters in order to find out more about the triggers of anxiety and how their anxiety level fluctuates during a specific task.

Rajabi and Yousefi (2022) aimed to explore the relationship between anxiety levels, emotional intelligence, and the quality of interpreting performance during consecutive interpreting among Iranian university students majoring in translation and interpreting. The study involved 30 Iranian university students learning to interpret into English. Given the psychological factors' influencing role in cognitive and communication activities, such as interpreting, the study confirmed a connection between psychological factors like anxiety and

the quality of English interpreting performance. The results showed that negative emotions and thoughts, particularly anxiety, had a direct relationship with the quality of interpreting performance. In contrast, emotional intelligence acted as a mediator in this relationship, reducing the negative impact of anxiety on interpreting performance. The study highlights the importance of addressing psychological factors in interpreter training programs to enhance interpreting performance and reduce anxiety-related issues (Rajabi and Yousefi, 2022). The current research aims to explore the phenomenon of language anxiety among translation and interpreting students. It acknowledges the potential impact of anxiety on the cognitive and emotional aspects of language mediation and emphasizes the need for further research in this area. The inclusion of relevant studies and previous research contributes to the contextualization of the current study within the broader academic discourse on language anxiety and interpreting. The interpreting process, as it could be seen from the literature review above, is an emotionally and psychologically dynamic process that is influenced by several different internal and external factors that might cause changing emotions, anxiety and the different coping or adapting mechanism of the person carrying out the interpreting task. Therefore, besides the general group patterns offered by questionnaire data and anxiety scales, it is important to get a deeper insight into the dynamics of foreign language anxiety and explore the reasons for these fluctuating emotions.

3. Research aim and research questions

The aim of the present exploratory research was to investigate language anxiety and its manifestation among Translation and Interpretation students. The target group consisted of MA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Miercurea Ciuc and BA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Târgu Mureș. 19 graduate students are currently enrolled in the above-mentioned MA program, contrasted with approximately 60 undergraduate students in the BA program. However, only second and third-year BA students engage in interpreting practice, narrowing this group down to roughly 40 students.

The research questions were the following:

- a) Do the interpreting students experience language anxiety during their interpreting practice and, if so, how is it manifested?

- b) What methods do the participating students use to deal with language anxiety?
- c) What types of anxiety can be traced among these students: communication anxiety, test anxiety or fear of negative judgements?
- d) How does qualitative data obtained using the idiodynamic method contribute to the general picture provided by the questionnaire results?

4. Research methodology

To address the research questions outlined earlier, quantitative and qualitative data was gathered. The quantitative data was collected by administering an online questionnaire through Google Forms, utilizing convenience sampling criteria to reach the targeted student population efficiently. Data collection took place between February and March 2024. The qualitative part followed the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022) and consisted of a simultaneous interpreting task, participants self-rating of the interpretation, followed by a face-to-face interview afterwards.

There is a newly developed method called the *idiodynamic method* (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022) which was created to explore individual differences in language anxiety which is currently under-represented in the field of language anxiety research. This dynamic method “has been developed to capture changes among individual second language (L2) learners as they communicate; emphasis is placed on describing the complex intraindividual emotional reactions and changes in self-perception, not group averages” (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022: 1). It tracks both dynamic and static individual states which shows how each interpreter uniquely reacts to certain factors and what triggers them (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022).

The aforementioned questionnaire was completed by 57 respondents. It started with 3 demographic questions gathering information about sex, age and residence. 33 of the participants were female and 24 were male. 50 respondents fell in the age group of 18-25 (87.7%), 5 people were between 26-30 and 2 people were between 31-40. Furthermore, 22 participants came from Mureş county, while 19 came from Harghita county. The rest of the participants were from Covasna county (N=12), Braşov (N=2) and Satu Mare (N=2) counties.

After collecting demographic information, the subsequent six questions focused on respondents’ interpreting experiences. These inquiries aimed to find out whether students had encountered anxiety during interpreting tasks, and if so, what specific symptoms they experienced. Furthermore, the next aim was to determine if they had engaged in interpreting

outside university settings, and if yes, the nature of those events. Lastly, respondents were asked about the strategies they employed to manage language anxiety during interpreting practices.

Following this section, the questionnaire proceeded to include a foreign language assessment test. Utilizing the Cambridge Placement Test¹, comprising 25 multiple-choice items, we aimed to evaluate students' proficiency level in English. According to the scoring system, obtaining 17-19 points indicates a B1 level, 20-21 points denote a B2 level, 22-23 a C1 level, and achieving 24-25 points indicates a C2 level.

Following the placement test, the questionnaire included the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale², which was originally developed by Horwitz and her colleagues (Horwitz et. al., 1986). This scale was modified to suit situations encountered during interpreting activities within university classes. Comprising 33 statements, respondents were required to use a 5-point Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement with each statement or how true or typical it was of them. These statements corresponded to the types of anxiety categorized by Horwitz et al. (1986), falling into three main categories: statements related to communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

In the next stage of the study only 12 out of 57 students participated. These 12 students volunteered to continue the qualitative part of the research and find out more about their language anxiety in the process of simultaneous interpreting. 6 of these students were BA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Târgu Mureş and 6 were MA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Miercurea Ciuc. This part of the research was carried out using the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022) which consisted of 3 main steps. The first step was the *interpretation task*. Students were required to interpret an exactly 8 minutes and 17-second-long text from which the active interpretation part lasted for 7 minutes and 53 seconds. The speech participants had to interpret comes from the Speech Repository of the European Commission's official site³. These texts are designed for future interpreters to practice. The speech was in Hungarian language, entitled "Cenzúrázott egészség", *Censored health* in English. Hence, the domain of the interpretation task was health, consumers, food. The text was stated to be on Intermediate level and it was designed for simultaneous interpretation. The simultaneous interpreting task was managed

¹ <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/test-your-english/general-english/>

² <https://dept.english.wisc.edu/rfyoung/333/FLCAS.pdf>

³ <https://speech-repository.webcloud.ec.europa.eu/speech/cenz%C3%BAr%C3%A1zott-eg%C3%A9szs%C3%A9g>

online through the Zoom application since it was much easier and less stressful to record the participants. This part was done individually and the recording was downloaded immediately.

The interpretation task had to be recorded as the next step of the research involved participants re-watching and rating their own interpretation. For the rating purposes, a psychometric study interface has to be downloaded and installed on a computer (see Figure 1).

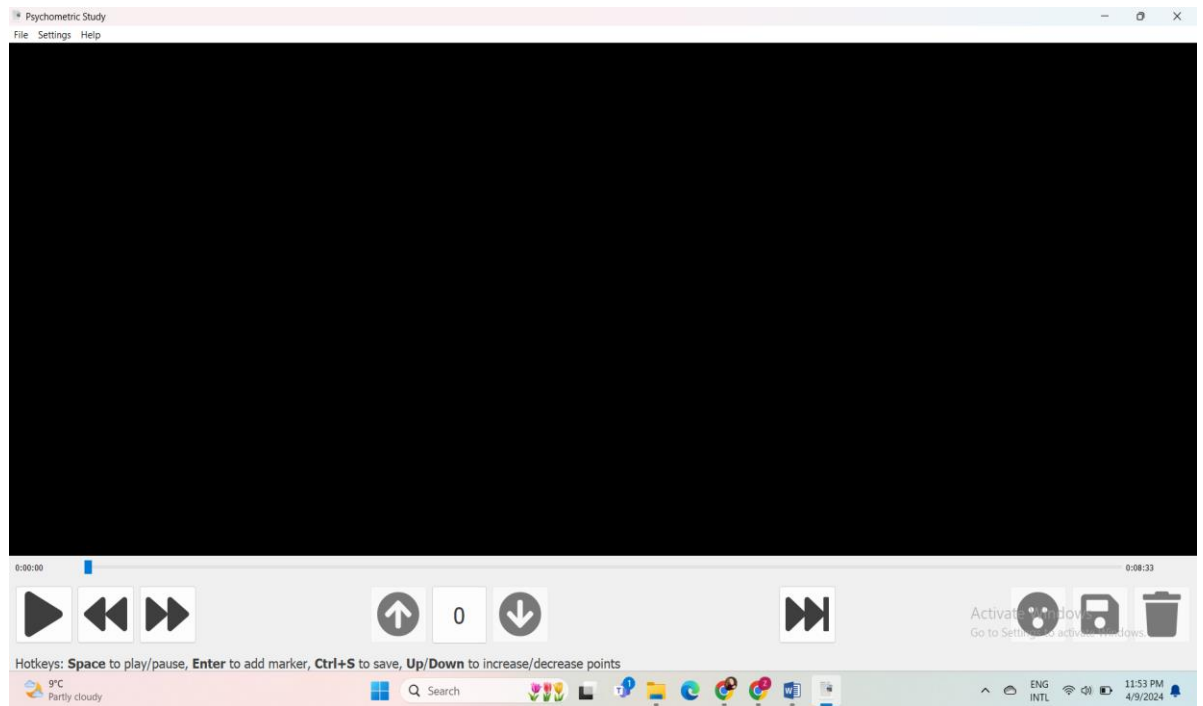


Figure 1: *Psychometric study interface*

After this the above-mentioned recording needs to be uploaded into the program and the video needs to be replayed and self-rated by the subject. At the setting the desired rating scale needs to be set: the present study used a scale from 0 to 3, where 0 meant no anxiety and 3 was the peak of anxiety. Participants were instructed on how exactly the rating process works: the respondents needed to press the up or down button on the keyboard in order to set their level of anxiety. They could see the number chosen at that moment on the screen in between the up and down arrows. There is another function integrated which can be used by the participants: an emoji which, if pressed, marks a thought which later the individual can share during the interview. At the end of the rating part, after saving, the system automatically generates an Excel sheet in which there is a personalized graph with the results of the participants. This graph shows the participant's perceived anxiety fluctuations on a second by second timescale.

The rating numbers can be seen on the vertical axis of the graph while the time on horizontal axis. The red dot shows any markings on the graph (there is no mark on this particular graph). On the very right side of the Excel sheet there can be seen a more detailed display of the results (see Figure 2).

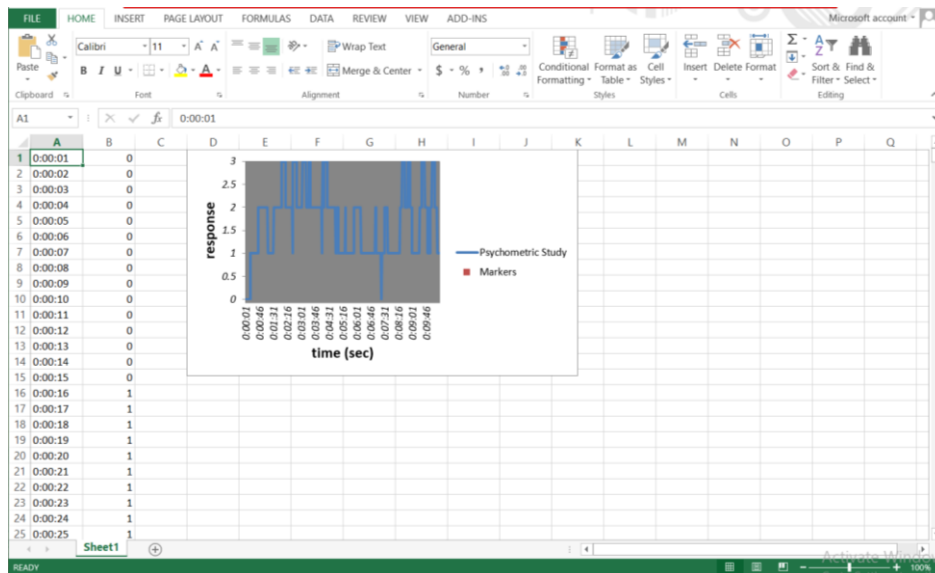


Figure 2: *Graph of the self-rating*

Lastly, the graph was used as a prompt for the interview. Participants were shown the graph created by the program and together with the researcher they discussed about the meanings attributed to each number of the scale and the situations which might have triggered anxiety. This semi-structured interview was also recorded and later transcribed. There were some guiding questions (see Appendix 2) prepared for the interviewees which structured the interview but they were allowed and encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions.

After collecting quantitative data from 57 participants and qualitative data from 12 participants the next stage was the analysis of the results. Afterwards, the last step was an in-depth analysis of 4 participants out of the 12 who participated in all stages of the data collection process. For the in-depth analysis the least and the most anxious participants from both BA and MA groups were selected and all of their results and responses were analysed in detail. This last step was meant to track the individual level anxiety fluctuations in the course of a simultaneous interpreting task.

5. Questionnaire results and discussion

The first step of the research, as mentioned above, involved distributing an online questionnaire designed in Google Forms. There were in total 57 interpreter students who completed the questionnaire. From this 57, 38 were BA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Târgu Mureş and 19 were MA students of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Miercurea Ciuc. 11 students claimed that they have already interpreted in a real-life situation, at an event (e.g. for family, intercultural events, library, crafting activities for German children), the rest of them only experienced interpretation in academic setting during classes. The next question asked participants whether they had ever felt language anxiety or not. 91.2% of the subjects (N=52) has experienced language anxiety even if they are majoring in translation and interpretation and are supposed to have a high language proficiency level and be comfortable talking other languages. Using a multiple choice item, participants were also asked about the symptoms of language anxiety. Mental block was chosen by 36, memory problems by 21, stuttering was chosen by 14 and sweating was opted by 12 students. These 4 symptoms were the given ones but students also added *butterflies in one's stomach* (N=2), *anger* (N=1), *blushing*, *sensation of hotness*, *slight leg and stomach shaking and sometimes speech error* (N=1) and *increased heart rate* (N=1). Lastly in this section about interpreting, they were asked about the methods they use to deal with these stressful situations. The most commonly mentioned technique was breathing control, taking a deep breath (N=25): *"I try to take a deep breath, focus on a single point or close my eyes and just concentrate on the text"*. Focusing on one point was also mentioned besides fidgeting: *"if I'm in a situation where the "audience" can't see me, I usually pick something, very often an object I can reach at the time (ring, pen, etc.)"*. Some rather passive, less engaging answers were also given, such as: *"my anxiety goes away by itself after I start"* or *"I am hoping that it ends soon"*, and there was a subject who wrote about losing control and crying. Some other participants wrote about trying to calm themselves by saying *"what is the worst that can happen?"*.

5.1. English language proficiency level of participants

The next part of the questionnaire was the English language proficiency test, the Cambridge Placement Test. The role of this test was to have an insight into interpreters' English language level and to see if that affects their language production and if so in what ways. As mentioned

earlier this test has 25 items and students had to solve multiple-choice tasks. 16 points or below mean A1-A2 level, between 17 and 19 points is the B1 level, points between 20-21 mark a B2 level, 22 and 23 points mean C1 level and the highest level can be obtained with 24 or 25 points. According to this test 8 students are at A2 level or below, 9 are at B1 level, 12 students are at B2 level, 16 of the respondents are at C1 level and 12 are on C2 level. This means that from our participants 17 students are on B1 level or below and 40 are on B2 level or above (see Figure 3).

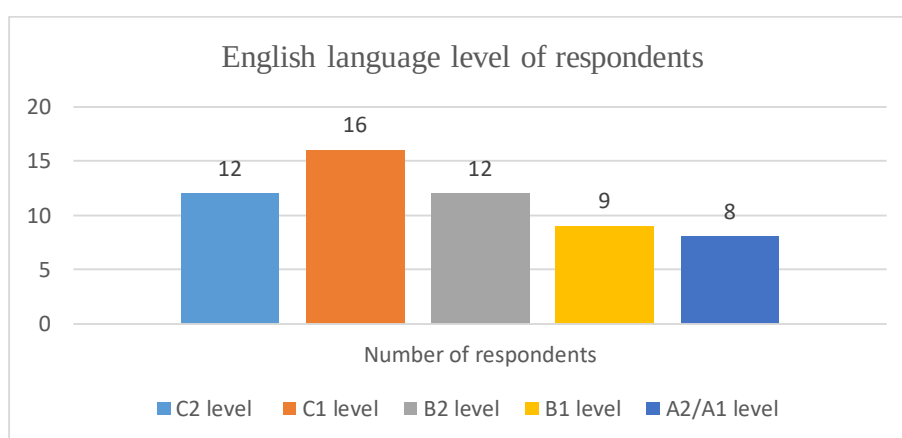


Figure 3: Cambridge Placement Test results

Since there were participants from both BA and MA classes, the results were analysed by dividing them into these two different groups depending on their study level (see Table 1).

Language level	BA	MA
C2	6	6
C1	12	4
B2	8	4
B1	8	1
A2/A1	4	4

Table 1: Participants' test results depending on their study level

The results showed that 68.4% (N=26) of BA students and 73.6% (N=14) of MA students are on B2 level or above. There is not a huge difference but MA students have somewhat higher percentage in English language level. Besides, the number of students on B1 level or below are higher at BA (N=12) students than at MA students (N=5). Overall it can be stated that MA students had better results at this English language test, thus proved to have a higher language proficiency.

5.2. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety level

The next task within the questionnaire was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) adapted to interpreting classes. The scale consists of 33 statements which are built around Horwitz et al.'s (1986) three dimensions of anxiety types: test anxiety, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. The participants needed to rate these statements on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 meant strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree.

The responses collected through the Google Form were exported to an Excel spreadsheet and general descriptive statistical analyses were performed, finding out the subjects' anxiety level from the mean value of the responses given, and exploring how the group rated the different statements (calculating the mean value of each statement). Averages ranging from 1 to 1.8 indicated complete disagreement among respondents. Responses falling between 1.81 and 2.60 signified disagreement, while neutral stances were observed within the range of 2.61 to 3.40. Agreement was reflected in responses ranging from 3.41 to 4.20. Lastly, answers scoring between 4.21 and 5 indicated strong agreement among respondents. Colours were used to differentiate the categories for a better overlook where orange means disagreement, blue means neutral answer and green means agreement (see Table 2). The mean value of most statements falls within the score range representing neither agree nor disagree, marked with blue colour. These are not assessed within this paper due to length and space limitations.

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale statements **Mean value**

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in English.	2.77		
2. I don't worry about making mistakes during interpreting practices.	2.59		
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on during an interpreting class or practice.	2.98		
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher or my colleague is saying in English.	2.89		
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to do more interpreting practice.	3.43		
6. During interpreting class or practice, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course/practice.	3.12		
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at interpreting than I am.	3.22		
8. I am usually at ease during interpreting tests or exams.	2.82		
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation.	3.38		
10. I worry about the consequences of failing during interpreting.	3.40		
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over interpreting practice.	2.54		
12. When I need to interpret, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.77		
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers during my interpreting class.	2.75		
14. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	3.63		
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.87		
16. Even if I am well prepared for the interpreting class/practice, I feel anxious about it.	3.19		
17. I often feel like not going to my interpreting class.	2.70		
18. I feel confident when I need to interpret during classes.	2.61		
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.56		
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on during interpreting class.	3.26		
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	2.31		
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for an interpreting class/test.	2.91		
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.87		
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.91		
25. Interpreting classes/practices move so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	2.38		
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my interpreting class than in my other classes.	3.15		
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in front of my colleagues.	2.82		
28. When I'm on my way to interpreting class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	2.82		
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	2.92		
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	2.98		
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.28		
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	3.59		
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.91		

Table 2: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale statement mean values

Statements with a mean value showing agreement are marked with green in the table (5, 12, 14 and 32). Participants agreed with statement number 5 (*It wouldn't bother me at all to do more interpreting practice*), which means that they know that the key of success is to exercise. Exercising interpreting more could help them with their anxiety because the more you use a language and the more you put yourself out of your comfort zone, the more relaxed you become

and you can get used to the situation. Horwitz et al. (1986) said that there are two ways to remedy the situation, namely to reduce anxiety-provoking situations or, on the contrary, to create more verbal interaction, thus giving students a boost (Horwitz et al., 1986). Statement number 12 (*When I need to interpret, I can get so nervous I forget things I know*) refers to participants' test anxiety, when they get nervous from an evaluative situation (Horwitz et al., 1986). Mental block is a negatively affecting factor mentioned also by most of them (N=22) in the questionnaire as the most frequent manifestation of anxiety. Agreement with statements number 14 and 32 (*I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers; I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language*) suggests that respondents do not have fear of negative judgement. They are not scared of native speakers' judgements, which suggests confidence in foreign language knowledge and usage. It also shows that they have no communication apprehension, they are not scared to talk to people.

The next category is comprised of the statements that participants disagreed with (2, 11, 19, 21, 25 and 31) marked with orange colour in Table 2. Respondents disagreed with statement number 2 (*I don't worry about making mistakes during interpreting practices*) meaning that they do have a fear of making mistakes while interpreting. They disagreed with the statement *I don't understand why some people get so upset over interpreting practice*, which means that they show empathy towards their classmates and recognize their struggle. Furthermore, they disagreed with the statements *I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make* and *I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English*, which proves once again that they don't have fear of negative judgement. They are not scared that the teacher would correct them or the students would make fun of them.

Overall, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale showed that participants have no communication apprehension so they are not scared to talk to other people, even if that is a native English speaker and they would feel totally comfortable in their company. They don't seem to have fear of negative judgement. Although, in evaluative situations they do have test anxiety and they worry about making mistakes. It is a positive factor that they know they should exercise more in order to be more confident and comfortable in interpreting situations.

There were however 23 neutral answers which might suggest that either participants chose the safe, middle answer, or that this scale might not be sensitive enough, as Chiang (2010) put it, to measure individual anxiety differences. That is why the next part of the research, focusing on individual differences among participants, is indispensable.

Besides showing mean values of answers to different statements and providing a general overview based on which it can be deduced the type of anxiety participants have, this

scale can also show the mean value of anxiety for each participant depending on the scores given to the statements. In order to achieve this mean value, there are certain statements which needed to be reverse coded. There were 9 statements which needed to be reverse coded (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28 and 31). For example, statement number 18, which sounds like *I feel confident when I speak in my English classes*, needed to be reverse coded because if someone answered *agree* to this then the high score does not reflect high anxiety level. This was needed so that the high score will always mean high anxiety level, in all the cases (see Tóth, 2019). Thus, all the answers given to the above-mentioned 9 statements were reverse coded in an Excel sheet where all data was already introduced and coded. This calculation was also needed in the later analysis of individual anxiety levels for the 12 volunteers. From the 12 volunteers, the most and the least anxious students were selected, based on their anxiety level mean scores, for a more detailed, in-depth individual level analysis. The results have shown that the least anxious student from the MA group had a mean value of 2.45, while the most anxious student from the MA group had a mean value of 4.18. The least anxious student from BA group had mean value of 1.63 and the most anxious student from the BA group had a mean value of 2.84 (see Table 3).

MA students																																		
Candidate 1	4	2	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	2	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	2	3	3	4	2	2	4	3.39
Candidate 2	4	5	5	4	4	1	5	5	4	4	5	5	3	4	3	5	5	5	4	4	1	5	3	4	3	3	3	5	4	3	2	4	3	3.84
Candidate 3	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	3	3	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	2	2	5	5	5	5	3	4	3	5	4.18
Candidate 4	2	4	4	3	4	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	1	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	1	3	4	3.51
Candidate 5	4	5	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	4	2	3	2	2	1	2	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	1	2	2	2	4	1	2	2	2.45
Candidate 6	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	2	5	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	5	3	4	3	4	3	5	4	3	4	3	3	3.75
BA students																																		
Candidate 7	1	3	4	2	1	3	3	4	4	2	4	4	2	1	3	4	1	4	4	4	1	4	2	1	1	4	2	4	3	3	1	2	3	2.69
Candidate 8	3	2	1	1	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	5	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2.06
Candidate 9	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	4	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	5	2	4	1	4	1	1	3	4	2	3	3	4	1	2	3	2.45
Candidate 10	3	4	2	3	2	1	2	4	4	4	5	5	2	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	3	4	2	4	4	4	2	3	1	3	2	2.84
Candidate 11	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	5	3	5	2	4	1	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	4	2.78
Candidate 12	2	4	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	1	5	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1.63

Table 3: Mean value of the 12 volunteering students' anxiety level

In Table 3 above the first 6 candidates represent the MA group and the following 6 candidates were from the BA group. The lowest and highest scores from each group can be seen in bold.

6. Qualitative research results and discussion

6.1. Interpretation stage

After collecting information about participants' English language level and their foreign language anxiety during interpreting classes, participants were asked to volunteer for the next steps of the research. 12 students volunteered to proceed and help us with the qualitative part of the research. This part was divided into 3 stages according to the idiodynamic method (see MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022): the interpretation phase, anxiety self-rating and the personal interview. The text which respondents had to interpret was, as before mentioned, an 8-minute-long Hungarian text about Gábor Lenkei's *Censored health* book and it needed to be interpreted simultaneously into English language. This was a Speech Repository text designed for practicing simultaneous interpreting. This interpretation was carried out individually and Zoom platform was used for an easier and less stressful video recording of the interpreting task. This task was performed by the 12 volunteering students, out of which 6 were BA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Târgu Mureş and 6 were MA students from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Miercurea Ciuc. The participants were asked to have headphones and smartphones with them. They were sent two links on their e-mail addresses: one of the speech repository material, and one of the Zoom link. After they connected to Zoom they needed to open the link of the interpreting material on their phones, connect their headphones to their phones and listen to the text from there. Therefore, on the recorded video only the participants' voices can be heard. This method was effective and simple.

6.2. Anxiety self-rating

The recordings done in the previous step were saved and then uploaded into the psychometric study software provided by the developers of the method (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022). The next step was to set the desired range for the anxiety self-rating scale, which in this research was from 0 to 3. This rating part was done face-to-face with assistance, using the researcher's computer on which the software was downloaded and installed. The participants were explained that they needed to choose 0 zero where they felt no anxiety and 3 was the maximum anxiety level they could opt for. It was explained to them that they needed to increase or decrease these numbers simultaneously to their speech production, in order to be able to see the moment-by-moment changes in their emotional state during this interpretation situation. They were also told that they can use the emoji button on the down right side of the player which would mark any thoughts or emotions they would want to share later. After everything was explained and set, the participants needed to press play and rate their own anxiety levels during their interpreting performance. When they finished, the software automatically generated a graph in an Excel sheet. The graph obtained was then used as a prompt for further discussion during a personal interview.

6.3. Interview results

The aforementioned graph and its analysis was then a starting point for the next and last step of the whole research: the interview. This part was also carried out in person right after the anxiety self-rating. The interviews were recorded on the researcher's phone and later were transcribed. This semi-structured interview was based on some pre-set guiding questions however, participants were allowed to express their emotions, ideas and thoughts regarding their emotional states, the fluctuations of their anxiety level and the triggers that might have caused increase in their anxiety.

The first question addressed participants' experience, where most participants started to list their mistakes and then try to find an excuse for them, for example: *"Sometimes I might have said silly things but just because of the tiredness"*. In this case the participant put the blame on tiredness as an affecting factor. The mental block also appeared as a sign and result of anxiety which was mentioned by most of the participants in the questionnaire (N=22) *"First it was not so bad but after few minutes I started to feel like my mind is empty and I cannot*

recall words". Some participants were calm, showing no sign of anxiety: *"Honestly, I have no problem with interpretation and I almost never feel anxious. I haven't felt anxiety now either (...)"* while some were positively surprised by their performance: *"I was extremely surprised that I was able to interpret as I did. A lot of times I froze but it was much better than what I expected to turn out"*. There was one person out of 12 who did not mention any negative factors at this question stating that: *"I absolutely enjoyed the whole process and also watching it back was amazing. This task really suits me. I don't worry about making mistakes, I always find a way. I didn't even have to choose 3 at all. Why would I be scared? After all I am just a voice inside of someone's ears"*.

Interview results show that half (N=6) of the participants barely chose 0 because they constantly have a basic level of anxiety. Constant presence of anxiety shows that in their case anxiety is not necessarily triggered by the task itself, but rather it refers to having trait anxiety (Salehi and Marefat, 2014). Few examples for this: *"I have never had a 0 state, it's the same in life. With family, relationship, university, friends...anxiety is always present"*. Here they also mentioned social anxiety: *"I think it's also connected to my social anxiety. The more I grow the more anxiety I have. From the thought that I will need to speak I already start to be anxious"*. This last sentence resonates with Horwitz and her colleagues' idea about being anxious just by the thought of speaking (Horwitz et al., 1986). The rest of the participants (N=6) claimed that they chose 0 at points where there was a flow in their interpreting performance and it was easy: *"These were parts where I solved the situation beautifully and the sentences were as they supposed to be. I chose 0 at obvious and basic parts of the text."*; *"I chose 0 when everything went well and there was a flow in my interpretation. There were no hard words"*.

The scale of 1 during self-rating had different meanings for the participants. While, as shown above, some participants chose 0 when the interpretation task went well and smooth, those who constantly have some level of anxiety, stated that scale 1 was the point when they felt the interpretation went well: *"I chose one when it was going kind of good the interpretation"*; *"Only at very few parts I chose 1, especially when I knew the interpretation is not perfect but it is fluent"*. Moreover, scale 1 also meant stability for most participants, when their speech production was fluent and they could carry on with the task: *"At the beginning I had a lot of 1s but then it started to be unstable and I was jumping up and down"*.

Interview data revealed that number 2 on the anxiety self-rating scale was chosen when participants felt an imbalance in their speech production triggered by loss of track and thread (*"In cases when I felt that it really bothers me something, like when I was behind and I started to feel more and more anxious"*), loss of control over the situation (*"I chose 2 when I started*

to feel that I'm losing control"). Respondents also chose scale 2 when they had longer pauses: *"I chose 2 because of the pauses...because of the silence which needed to be filled in"* or when the source text started to be complicated: *"I chose when we started to talk about longer, compound sentences and it started to be difficult to follow, to listen and interpret in the same time"*.

Number 3 on the anxiety self-rating scale meant the peak of anxiety and the highest rate which participants could choose. From 12 students 3 did not choose 3 at all. They claimed that they just didn't feel so anxious to need the 3. The rest of the subjects also mentioned long pauses and silence as triggers of high-level anxiety: *"3 were the pauses when I knew that I should talk and the presenter is already saying the next sentence and I'm quiet. This caused me the most stress"*. They also chose scale 3 when they experienced mental block *"I chose 3 when I missed one sentence totally or I froze...totally."* Scale 3 was selected when participants faced a specific topic which caused them flashbacks and state anxiety: *"I chose when I lost track totally, or once when something popped up about the EU and as soon as I heard it, I got scared that this will continue with EU terms"*. Overall, 3 was the level where candidates totally lost control and had longer silence.

Interviewees were also asked whether they experienced situations during the interpreting process where they would have scored higher than level 3 on the scale. 5 participants out of the total 12, stated that there was one part where they would have chosen higher and that part was the same for everyone. In the source material there was a part full of scientific, specialized words, numbers and percentages all related to health. These represent professional stumbling stones which can be worked on and if known in advance interpreters can prepare for such specialized vocabulary expected during interpretation.

One participant claimed that due to these factors she would have even given a 7: *"The part with the specific and even unknown words was the peak of the speech. There I left out some information and I tried to sum it up. At some point I was so anxious I would give much more, even 7"*. Another participant would have given higher points because of her reaction to these factors: *"I made some comments while I was frozen because I was angry about myself. In that situation I would have given higher than 3. At this point I have bad facial mimicry and I try to give it up. But I'm the same in my everyday life"*.

Regarding the factors triggering anxiety the scientific literature in the field shows there are two types of factors, circumstantial stumbling stones which refer to something unexpected to which you cannot prepare, and professional stumbling stones, which are trainable during the interpreting training. Circumstantial factors mentioned by the participants were the speaker's

accent (*"It bothered me the presenter's accent, her Hungarian accent. She was twisting the words"*), the speaker's speed (*"The presenter was talking too fast"*), or headphone issues (*"Sometimes I couldn't hear the speaker because of my own voice and that bothered me because I couldn't catch an essential word without which I couldn't translate the whole sentence"*).

Being tired, sitting in the wrong position or feeling like the room is cold were also mentioned as annoying factors: *"It is also important to me the way I sit. I need to be comfortable. Also, the temperature of the room: in case it's too cold that is a negative factor to me"*. All these factors cause concentration loss for the interpreters and cause them to lose energy.

Professional stumbling stones mentioned by almost all participants were domain specific words (*"I liked the topic, it was interesting. But the specific terminology bothered me"*), the fact that they were recorded (*"It bothered me that I knew that we record my interpretation"*), difficulties in translating book titles (*"Although the name of the book was the same as the title, I always got shocked when it popped up because I could never find a good translation for it"*) or just the fact that they messed something up and they could not get over it (*"When I mess up something I feel so bad, I feel very unsuccessful. Even when I already moved on these the mistakes bother me during the process"*). However, there were candidates who stated that they had no factors that would have negatively affected them: *"I'm already used to the circumstances and the technological part of interpretation as well. Nothing bothered me"*.

After talking about the triggers and stress factors they were asked to list the methods they use to deal with stressful situations and their ways of coping with anxiety. Participants mentioned trying to focus on the speaker's talk and ignoring all other circumstantial factors around them (*"I try to forget about everything what happened before and just focus on what the presenter is saying"*), playing with something, fidgeting (*"I like to play with stuff like my necklace... my necklace is very important to me so this helps me"*), focusing on a point (*"Or I focus on a certain dot"*), avoiding eye contact (*"I avoid eye contact and like that I can focus only on the voice in my ears"*), drawing (*"The teachers taught me to draw something in the process"*), or just simply taking a deep breath (*"I need to stop and take a deep breath and wait until the end of the sentence and continue from there"*). Moreover, regarding circumstantial factors, participants mentioned that a comfortable setting is important (*"I need to be comfortable. Also the temperature of the room: in case it's too cold that is a negative factor to me"*). Subjects also said that sometimes they close their eyes to avoid getting distracted (*"The*

closed eyes I learnt in school and that we shouldn't look at the screen"), gaining back the rhythm ("If I gain back the rhythm it gives me peace"), and the flow ("It gives me peace when I say a whole, nice sentence in the target language and I feel that I am interpreting in a proper way. Like a professional"); ("It gives me peace when I can reconnect to the flow after a pause. It gives me some sort of comfort that not everything is lost").

Long pauses were found to cause the highest level of anxiety. These pauses are often caused by lack of vocabulary knowledge in order to translate domain-specific terminology. Therefore, the following coping situations refer to dealing with such situations, to be able to convey meaning even if the required terminology does not come to the interpreter's mind: finding a synonym (*"In case I succeed I try to find a synonym, which might not be the most suitable one but it gives me peace that I at least did something with a hard situation"*), trying to make it sound English (*"I tried to make them sound English for example: karotin is in Hungarian and I said carotene although I wasn't sure this was for real the right translation"*), omitting, replacing or rephrasing (*"I try to leave out a word I cannot recall. Or I replace or rephrase"*), skipping (*"If a word does not come in my mind or I skip, or I sum it up or I try to find something else, a synonym"*), explaining or describing (*"I explain or describe things which at that moment I cannot interpret or I don't know at all"*), repeating or adding something (*"Sometimes I repeat things or I add something to that pause so I win some time"*), finding a creative alternative (*"In case of a specific word I try to find a creative alternative"*).

7. In-depth analysis of the most and least anxious participants

There were 12 students who volunteered to do the second, qualitative part of the research which focused on individual level anxiety measurement. MA students were from Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Miercurea Ciuc and they were mostly my classmates and BA students randomly volunteered on the spot, the day the research was carried out at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania from Târgu Mureş. Although these people volunteered, this does not mean that they are the least anxious people of all 57 participants who completed the questionnaire, but they were rather interested in finding out more about themselves and they also wanted to help and be part of the research. In the following, the results will prove that there were significant differences among them when it comes to language anxiety during simultaneous interpretation practice. The least and most anxious participants were chosen out of these 12 students from which 6 were MA and 6 BA students. They were chosen based on the mean value of their answers given for the FLCAS, which showed the general interpreting class anxiety level of each participant (see Table 3).

7.1. The least anxious MA student

The least anxious MA level participant after the FLCAS results was Candidate 5 (see Appendix 3), a male, aged between 31-40 years, from Braşov county. He claimed to have experience in interpreting beside the university courses. He had experienced language anxiety in the process of interpreting which manifested in mental block. He deals with anxiety with breathing techniques.

On the Cambridge English Placement Test he received 24 out of 25 points which means he is on C2 proficiency level in English language according to the present test. His anxiety level based on the FLCAS mean value was 2.45 which is the lowest in the MA group. Looking closely into his answers given to different statements, it can be seen that he strongly agreed with *I don't worry about making mistakes during interpreting practices*. This sentence belongs to fear of negative judgment and it means that he is not afraid of negative judgements. After analysing the sentences agreed with it seems like this person has communication apprehension when speaking in English (e.g. *I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in English*). He is not scared of interpreting but he might have test anxiety before the process (*I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on during interpreting class*). Statements he disagreed with prove the previous point according to which he is not relaxed before interpreting or totally

confident in the process of interpreting (*I feel confident when I need to interpret during classes; I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for an interpreting class/test; When I'm on my way to interpreting class, I feel very sure and relaxed*). He strongly disagrees with statements regarding to avoiding the interpreting class (*I often feel like not going to my interpreting class*) or to the fact that interpreting classes are more stressful than other ones (*I feel more tense and nervous in my interpreting class than in my other classes*). He also strongly disagrees with the sentence *I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English*. Overall, it can be said that this participant is not scared of being negatively judged by his peers or teachers, however he seems to be anxious about speaking in English and he is not relaxed either before or in the process of interpreting.

The next step was to analyse his results of the qualitative part of the research. Of what could be observed during the recording was that at the beginning there were noticeable physical symptoms of anxiety, for example, he scratched his head, closed his eyes at parts which he wasn't sure about and when couldn't translate something he shook his head and moved on. He got into the flow after approximately 30-40 seconds and he stopped doing the above-mentioned activities, just looked down and did the interpreting task. It was also noticeable that he corrected himself immediately after making grammar mistakes. Therefore, based on observation it can be said that his interpreting started with some lack of confidence and anxiety but continued with confidence, calmness and flow. This reflects the data collected by the FLCAS, he was not confident before the process of interpretation, possibly because of the situation or the fact that he was being recorded. His personal graph also reflects the anxiety noticed at the beginning where he jumped up to 1 straight away and then 2 which for him was the peak of anxiety. He had movements between 0 and 2 but most movements were marked between 0 and 1. This proves that he felt that his anxiety is under control, however at some points certain factors raised his anxiety level (see Figure 4).

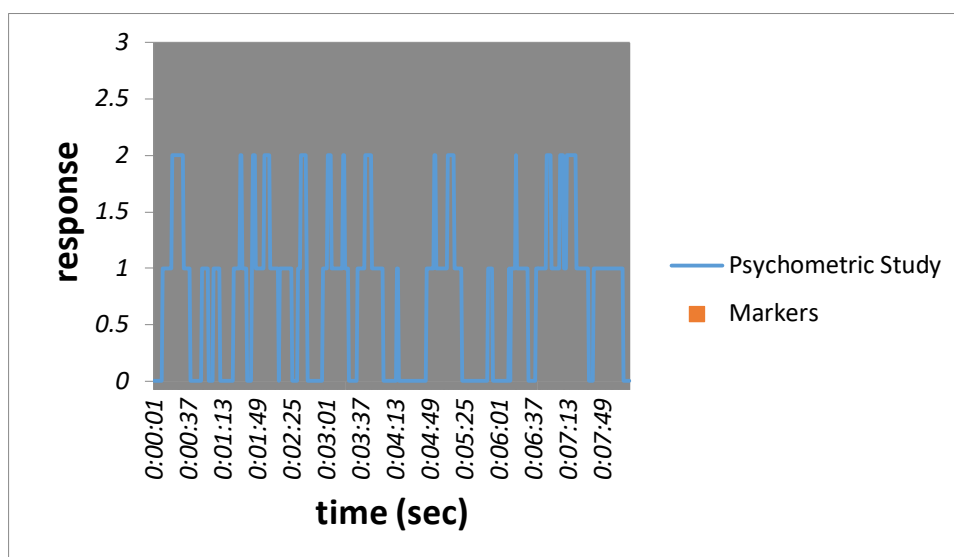


Figure 4: Graph of the least anxious MA student

During the personal interview he was asked when he chose 0 and he claimed: *“These were parts where I resolved the situation beautifully and the sentences were as they supposed to be. I chose 3 at obvious and basic parts of the text”*. He chose 1 when he blocked (*“I chose 1 when I blocked a bit and needed to think”*), and he chose 2, which for him was the highest anxiety level, when lost for specific words (*“I chose 2 because of the pause...because of the silence which needed to be filled in. There were some parts, of course, when I couldn’t find the suitable expressions because there were some specific words, where there were some stops but I resolved it. I found a way”*). He did not choose 3 whatsoever which proves that he was not that anxious during this simultaneous interpreting task.

In his case the triggers of anxiety were specific words he could not retrieve, so he solved the situation by replacing or describing them (*“I replace, I explain or describe things which at that moment I cannot interpret or I don’t know at all. Maybe it’s a shame not to know certain things but it is how it is”*).

Even though he has experienced anxiety before and even during the interpreting process, he enjoys interpreting and it seems he has developed some coping strategies in order to find his way out of difficult situations. The positive attitude towards interpreting might be also connected to the fact that he has experience in interpreting beside the interpreting classes or just that he does not worry about making mistakes as it came out from the FLCAS scores as well. He does not seem to have trait anxiety, but some professional triggering factors, such as retrieving specific words, caused him state anxiety and therefore concentration loss which he regained very quickly.

7.2. The most anxious MA student

Similarly to the procedure of selecting the least anxious MA student, based on the FLCAS scores of the 12 volunteering participants, Candidate 3 turned out to be the most anxious subject (see Appendix 3), a female aged between 18-25, who comes from Harghita county and she has never had interpreting practice beside the university classes. She has experienced anxiety during classroom interpretation and in the questionnaire she marked all of the given answers regarding the different types of manifestation of anxiety: sweating, stuttering, mental block, memory problems. The fact that she experienced all physical forms of anxiety listed in the questionnaire shows that she has experienced anxiety several times. The techniques which she uses to deal with anxiety is that she tries to calm herself down before each interpreting class. On the Cambridge English placement test she received 16 points which suggests an A2 level of proficiency. This level can be considered very low to perform an interpreting practice and interpret a text to English which leads to the conclusion that her lack of English knowledge might cause difficulties and therefore anxiety. On the FLCAS her mean value of the answers given is 4.18. Since the scale is between 1-5 this value can be considered rather high which already shows how anxious she considered herself. She strongly agreed and agreed with 12 statements which were related to test anxiety (e.g. *I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on during an interpreting class or practice, I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on during interpreting class*).

She strongly agreed and agreed with 7 statements referring to fear of negative judgment (e.g. *I worry about the consequences of failing during interpreting, I don't worry about making mistakes during interpreting practices* (reverse coded)) and with 5 statements which can be connected to communication apprehension (e.g. *I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation; I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in English*).

Scores given to the FLCAS reflect that this participant has serious test anxiety and a positive connection can be found with her anxiety and fear of negative judgment. The scores also suggest communication apprehension as well.

Watching her recorded interpretation performance different signs of anxiety can be seen, such as stuttering and rapid breathing. Looking up and down and moving back and forth with the chair might also suggest lack of confidence. She also made grammar mistakes and it could be observed that making mistakes bothered her and she found it hard to move on. After one minute the tension started to grow because she started to skip more and more words or

ends of sentences. When she couldn't finish a sentence, she nodded and smiled nervously, but after some time the smile started to turn into a nervous smile. In the second minute she started to break the fourth wall and made silent comments when she failed to interpret a part of the speech, she also started rolling her eyes. She started raising her eyebrows, looking straight into the camera for the first time. Then between 2:30 and 3 minutes she barely said something. She was completely frozen and she couldn't get back for a whole sentence for about half a minute. Then she started to get back in the flow for like 30 seconds and then she froze again but this time she said „okay” loudly and she had an attitude of giving up on her face. Then for another 1 and a half minutes she was stuttering, looking up, rolling her eyes and saying just a few random words without any connection. At 04:53 she totally broke and asked if it is possible to do the task another time. She was the only participant who asked not to complete the process of interpreting. After the researcher's encouragement and assurance that the quality of her interpreting was not the subject of the research, rather the way she felt and her anxiety, she continued the task. She still had short pauses and anxious mimics and reactions but she finished the interpreting task. Her self-rating reflects the above-described struggles (see Figure 5).

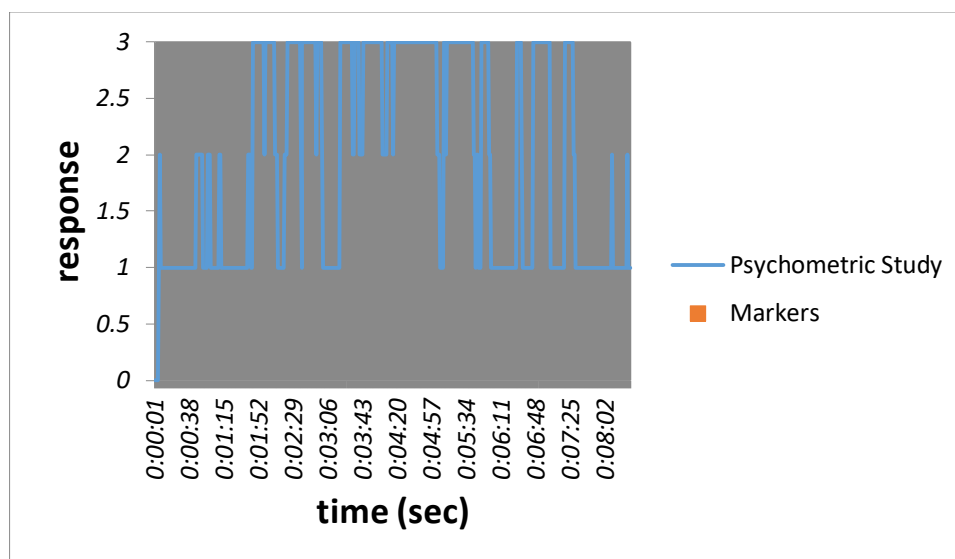


Figure 5: Graph of the most anxious MA student

It can be observed that compared to the least anxious MA student's results examined above, her self-rating scores move between 1 and 3. She did not even chose 0 at all and she often chose 3, marker of her peak of anxiety. She explained that she did not use 0 zero because: *"I never had a 0 state, it's the same in life. With family, relationship, university, friends...anxiety is always present"*. She chose 1 *„when it was going kind of well the interpretation"*. 2 she chose

when she lost control (*"I started to feel that I'm losing control"*). She chose 3, the peak of anxiety, at pauses: *"I chose 3 when I lost it and I froze and I couldn't continue. I chose 3 at pauses"*. On the graph there can be seen all the pauses and even the peak of her tension between 4:20 and 4:50 when she wanted to give up. Watching back her interpreting, she claimed that she was aware of her behaviour and that sometimes she felt she could have given scores even higher than 3 (*"I made some comments while I was frozen because I was angry with myself. In that situation I would have given higher than 3. At this point I have bad mimics and I try to give it up. But I'm the same in life"*). She said that her anxiety was triggered by her own general trait anxiety and by the inability to recall specific words. In these situations, she tried to replace or rephrase that word or phrase, however most of the times she skipped those parts of the speech, resulting in failure and long pauses (*"I try to leave out a word I cannot recall. Or I replace or rephrase"*). She claimed that she does not know any techniques to deal with these situations. She describes her simultaneous interpreting experience as follows: *"First it was not so bad but after few minutes I started to feel like my mind is empty and I cannot recall words. At this point I always focus so much on a certain word that I forget to concentrate on what is being said in the meantime...and then I lose it. It also happens that I somehow catch a word and then I get back in the flow. Then when I listened to myself and I heard that I had used 'people is' or 'peoples' I started to think that I have a lot to learn in English"*.

Overall, results show that the most anxious student from the MA group is on A2 level in English which largely contributed to her anxiety during the interpreting task, as she also commented in the interview. Questionnaire and interview data also revealed that she has trait anxiety, meaning she feels constant anxiousness not just during classes and interpreting situations but during other areas and situations in life as well. Questionnaire results showed that she has all types of anxiety – test anxiety, fear of negative judgment, communication apprehension and the interpreting task showed that her poor language proficiency level and strong trait anxiety add up and trigger even more anxiety, producing both physical and mental symptoms (couldn't recall words, skipped many parts of the speech, lot of pauses, mimics, eye rolling, comments etc.). Among the 12 volunteering students, she was the only one who wanted to give up on the task. She found it difficult to find the suitable words and expressions which caused her lose focus many times and it was also difficult for her to gain back the concentration.

7.3. The least anxious BA student

The least anxious student in the BA group is Candidate 12 (see Appendix 3), a male aged 18-25 from Mureş county. He reported to have previous experience in interpretation during a public event organized by the Caritas NGO. He also claimed to have experienced anxiety during interpreting which manifested in the form of stuttering or/and mental block. His coping mechanism regarding anxiety are drinking water and clearing his head, trying to focus only on the task. On the Cambridge English placement test he received 24 points, which means he is on C2 level in English. Based on the FLCAS results he is the least anxious participant not only among the BA students, but also among the 12 volunteering participants. The mean value showing his general classroom anxiety level is 1.63, the lowest mean value within the group. Examining the statements of the FLCAS, it can be observed that he strongly agreed with the statement: *I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students*. He agreed with statements *I don't worry about making mistakes during interpreting practices* and *The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get*. These might suggest that he is self-confident when speaking English and he is not afraid of making mistakes and thus not afraid of others' negative judgments, however he feels there is room for improvement.

As soon as the interpreting process started, he closed his eyes and tried to focus and get in the flow. He then opened his eyes and looked around confidently. It could be seen that he is not bothered by anyone in the room (in the room there were two people managing the research). When he heard some dates, at around 1:10, it confused him a little bit and he closed his eyes, scratched his forehead and squinted with his eyes while trying to pronounce the date. It could be deduced that saying numbers and dates might cause some difficulties for him in the interpretation process. He repeated this action at 2:21, 3:30 and around 6:30 as well, by closing his eyes and scratching his forehead or his head. These movements are signs of difficulty in the process, where the student self-rated his anxiety level as being on level 2. He remained calm throughout the whole interpreting process and he had a continuous flow. He barely had any short pauses. The graph reflects the above-mentioned movements detected by watching back the recording (see Figure 6).

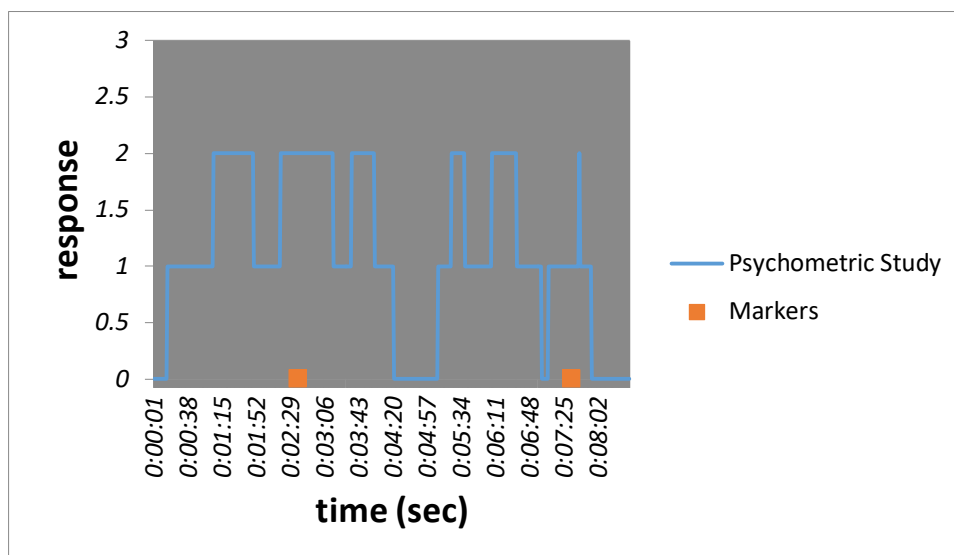


Figure 6: Graph of the least anxious BA student

The movement for this participant ranges from 0 to 2 and it is mostly between 1-2. He did not choose 3 at all. He also added 2 markers to the graph. In the interview he claimed that he chose 0 at easy parts (*“I chose 0 when I felt like I understood the text and I could pass the information easily”*). 1 for him meant basic anxiety, a sort of alertness level due to the unknown situation (*“1 was pretty constant because I never knew what to expect so I was in this basic anxiety state”*). He chose 2 when he did not like how he translated something (*“I chose 2 when I really got stuck with something or I resolved a situation somehow but I felt the frustration in my voice or I could see it on myself”*). His anxiety was triggered by the difficulty to recall specific terminology (*“I liked the topic, it was interesting. But the specific terminology bothered me”*) and the fact that he was being recorded (*“Maybe I was a bit anxious that I knew I’m being recorded just because I didn’t want to act inappropriate for the situation but I would say 90% of the triggering factor was the text itself”*). He claimed that he deals with stressful situations in the process of interpreting by closing his eyes, playing with his hair and it also gives him peace when a topic is familiar to him (*“Maybe I deal with it with something physical like the closed eyes or playing with my hair or just try to forget about the outside factors. If I feel like I understand the text and the topic is familiar to me, it gives me peace”*). He said that he thought the beginning and the end of the interpreting process went well but specific words like minerals, vitamins and percentages and dates confused him (*“Honestly, the text surprised me a bit, the topic. As I look at the graph, I can see that in the beginning and at the end it was pretty okay. In the middle, there were numbers, percentages and vitamin and mineral names I just generalised and simplified. These were the most stressful situations”*). During self-rating his

anxiety level, he marked moments of frustration (*"I put a marker when in the middle somewhere I started to play with my hair and looked away, closed my eyes and I just tried to focus. In the beginning I was looking at the screen too much so I just closed my eyes. Then at the end I was looking at the camera too much"*).

Overall, it can be said that although this participant has no trait anxiety based on the FLCAS mean score, when put in a specific interpreting situation, he might experience state anxiety in specific situations triggered by specific words, dates, percentages, being recorded which all belong to the group of professional stumbling stones or triggering factors. These factors made him lose concentration but he regained it very quickly and he was able to interpret with great fluency and a positive attitude.

7.4. The most anxious BA student

The most anxious BA student is Candidate 10 (see Appendix 3), a female aged 18-25 from Mureş county. She has never had any interpreting experience beside the university classes. She claimed that she had experienced anxiety during interpreting in the form of sweating, mental block and memory problems. She claimed that she deals with this type of anxiety provoking situation with taking a deep breath and trying to focus. She received 19 points on the Cambridge English placement test which means she is at B1 level in English. The mean value of the scores given on the FLCAS was 2.84, which is the highest among the group of BA students. This means she is the most anxious person in the BA group. She strongly agreed and agreed with 2 statements referring to communication apprehension (e.g. *I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation*), 4 statements referring to test anxiety (e.g. *When I need to interpret, I can get so nervous I forget things I know*) and 4 statements referring to fear of negative judgment (e.g. *I worry about the consequences of failing during interpreting*). This might suggest that she has experienced all 3 types of anxiety.

During the simultaneous interpreting task, she seemed nervous at the beginning. When she did not succeed in translating something she shook her head, looked up and smiled nervously. It was noticeable that she struggled with the pronunciation of words such as carrier or preservatives. She also made grammar mistakes but she did not seem to notice them, therefore these mistakes did not bother her. She dealt with stress by using her hands to explain and constantly looking up. There were times during the interpreting task when she had longer

pauses and she skipped some sentences. She used öööö⁴ a lot and she also stuttered sometimes by trying to say an idea quickly. Although she skipped a lot of important information, she transmitted the basic message of the given speech.

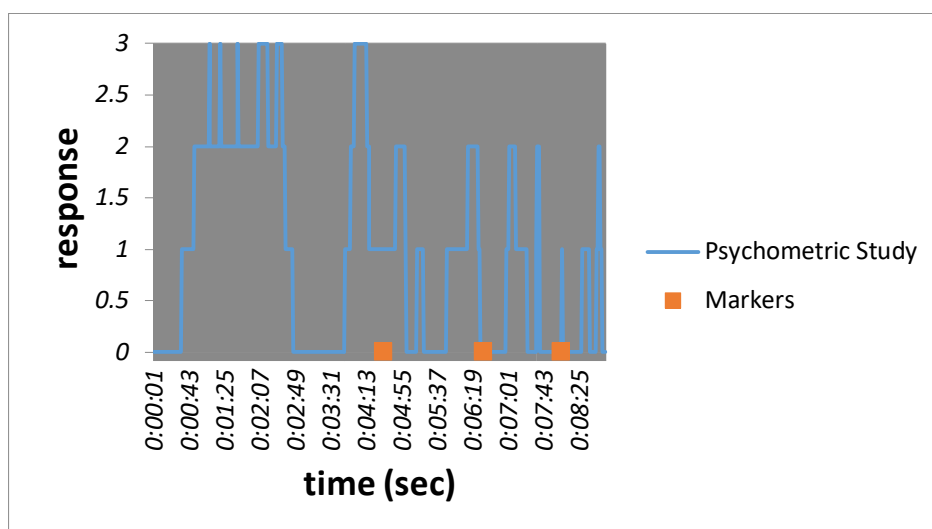


Figure 7: Graph of the most anxious BA student

As you can see in Figure 7 she has a very unique graph as well. All numbers ranging from 0 to 3 were chosen at some point during the interpretation process. At the beginning she has a lot of movements between 2 and 3 and afterwards between 0 and 2. She also used markers at 3 different places. She claimed to have chosen 0 at easy, less challenging parts (*“I chose 0 in situations when I knew straight away how to translate sentences so I didn’t need to think too much. It was not challenging”*), she chose 1 and 2 when she needed more thinking (*“Afterwards there were situations where I needed to think a bit more but it was nothing serious still”*) and she chose 3 when she felt that she is in trouble (*“I chose 3 at parts where I felt like I’m in trouble and I was using öööö too much”*). In her case as well, the difficulty of retrieving specific words were triggering factors and caused her anxiety (*“At the beginning I felt anxious mostly, at specific words and phrases which I didn’t know how to translate but I tried to find a good translation for it which doesn’t sound basic but sounds professional”*). She also commented that she tried to deal with such situations by finding a creative solution or avoiding specific terms by saying the more general category (*“In case of a specific word I try to find a creative alternative. Or I generalize for example instead of a certain mineral I say minerals”*). She used marks at visible mimics, reactions to difficulties (*“I used marks when I shook my head at certain parts where I felt like a ruined something. Or I marked when I lifted my*

⁴ Hungarians use this filler when they don’t know what to say and they are trying to gain time and collect their thoughts, usually the filler word ‘um’ is used in English.

eyebrows or where I could see that I went into a deep thought, so at the too obvious mimics”).

Overall, it can be concluded that this participant, although according to the FLCAS mean value (2.84) has experienced all three types of anxiety to a certain degree, it seems that when put in a situation of simultaneous interpreting, she manages her anxiety well. Her situational (state) anxiety is triggered by factors such as specific terminology (e.g. names of minerals in English), thus professional stumbling stones which can be trained and she easily handled these situations by applying generalizations. She failed to translate some of the information but she concentrated the whole time. As Skrylnyk (2016) suggested, these professional stumbling stones can be predicted and thus trained and with some research and preparation for the task they can be eliminated.

8. Overview and conclusions

The current paper aimed to get an insight into foreign language anxiety among interpreter students. The target groups were MA students from Sapiientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Miercurea Ciuc and BA students from Sapiientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Târgu Mureş.

Several studies have been conducted on measuring foreign language anxiety in classroom context but in order to get a deeper insight and check individual differences the existing scales are not sensitive enough (Chiang, 2010). This is why the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022) was created to help researchers in this field to find out more about language anxiety and its causes. The present study used the idiodynamic method to get a closer look at individual level anxiety during a simultaneous interpretation task.

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) results have shown that participants of the study in general have no communication apprehension so they are confident talking to people in English, even around English native speakers. They have no problems performing oral tasks in front of the class or in front of the teacher thus their general foreign language anxiety has negative correlation with fear of judgement. During the interpreting process they do have test anxiety and they tend forget things they know normally. Positive fact is that they would not mind doing more interpretation, thus they do know that the key of success is practising more and more and putting themselves out of their comfort zone.

Besides showing participants' anxiety types the FLCAS can also show the level of participants' foreign language anxiety during interpreting classes. The quantitative results

present a general trend and patterns within the group, while the qualitative part of the research measured individual differences. This part of the research started with an interpretation task which was performed by 12 volunteers.

The results of the idiodynamic research (interpreting situation) showed that except one person everyone seemed and felt stressed by the task given on different levels. On the given scale half of the participants (N=6) did not even chose 0 at all because they stated that they have a basic anxiety level in general too, so they have trait anxiety. Some had state anxiety triggered by specific situations like a certain topic or the room's temperature. There were circumstantial triggering factors like being tired, the speaker's accent or speed or headphone issues. Professional triggering factors were being recorded, domain specific vocabulary, terminology or a bad translation. These factors cause participants to lose energy and also caused concentration loss.

There were 57 interpreting students who underwent the quantitative part of the research. From these 57 students 12 volunteered to do the qualitative part for a deeper insight into their individual language anxiety during simultaneous interpreting. From these 12 students, the results of 4 were analyzed in detail including all their data and results. These 4 students were the least and most anxious students from both MA and BA groups.

Detailed, in-depth analyses of the 4 students show that previous experience in interpreting and participants' proficiency level in English contribute to their anxiety. The fact that the mean level of anxiety shown by their FLCAS results differ in case of MA and BA students, namely that in the case of the BA group even the most anxious student's score was below 3, might lead to the assumption that MA students were my classmates and they were eager to help my research, while I did not know any of the BA students, so probably in their case those who volunteered were the brave or more confident ones. If we look at the FLCAS scores of the whole BA group, the most anxious student who volunteered was not the most anxious student from the whole group of BA students.

Regarding the most common factors triggering anxiety during the simultaneous interpreting task, it can be noted that retrieving specialized vocabulary and terminology was the most often mentioned stumbling stone. Among the coping mechanism, participants mentioned rephrasing, generalizing or in case of no other solution, omitting that specific information and moving on.

Language anxiety and especially foreign language anxiety has gained substantial attention from the part of researchers and educators. However, most studies are based on large scale questionnaire (e.g. FLCAS) results focusing on groups (most often classrooms) of people,

rather than on individuals. The present research, also employed quantitative analyses of group results, nevertheless, it also aimed to focus on how individual's emotions fluctuate during a specific communicative task (a simultaneous interpreting task). Therefore, the study also aims to contribute to the findings on individual differences regarding speakers' emotions. In order to measure individual level anxiety differences the current research used the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre and Ducker, 2022), which allows for a second-by-second analysis of emotions, thus grasping the individuals' complex emotional reactions to emerging triggers or factors and the dynamic changes of these emotions and reactions.

I believe the present research not only contributed to the awareness raising of the participating students of translation and interpreting regarding their emotions in a given interpreting situation, but it can also offer information for teachers regarding the difficulties students might face during such an interpreting situation, so they can plan and build up a curriculum that fosters the training and acquisition of anxiety and stress coping mechanisms.

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