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Anxiety and language learning

– strategies to cope with anxiety

Szorongás és nyelvtanulás

– stratégiák a szorongás legyőzésére

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1. Introduction

Horwitz et al. (1986) point out that the first step in coping with language anxiety is acknowledging that it exists. As far as my experience as a learner and a teacher trainee is concerned, this condition is met. Nowadays, with anxiety being a part of our everyday lives, the question is not whether such a phenomenon exists, but what causes it and how learners and teachers can overcome it. Apart from our perception of anxiety being present everywhere, and in the foreign language classroom as well, numerous research studies prove the existence of language anxiety (Young, 1994; MacIntyre, 1995; Horwitz et al., 1986). Previous research has revealed that several factors contribute to language anxiety. A study about speaking anxiety, for example, listed the most prevalent internal (lack of confidence, shyness, stage fear) and external (pronunciation, peers, language, grammar) factors that affect learners (K & Alamelu, 2020). Furthermore, Kara (2013) conducted research on writing anxiety and identified 4 causes of it (students' feelings toward writing activities, writing as a skill, teacher and coursebook).¹

Personally, I am interested in whether some character traits contribute to the appearance of anxiety in the language learning process. The fact that language anxiety can be viewed differently depending on our perspective makes it a rather controversial topic. The approach I found most intriguing is the one that sees this phenomenon as a manifestation of types of anxiety, which are considered more general (Mihaljević Djigunovi, 2006) even though Horwitz et al. (1986) state that foreign language anxiety is distinct in the sense that it

¹ Writing as a skill refers to the strategies that students do not own. Learners also would have welcomed more encouragement and feedback from their teachers. Writing itself means that the development of this skill was neglected in the lessons. The problem with the coursebook was that it did not provide samples and thorough explanations.

is “related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). More recent studies, however, examined personality and one of them even discovered a connection between extraversion-introversion and the level of speaking anxiety in language lessons (Hamed et al., 2015). As a language learner, I experienced language anxiety (in secondary school and also at university, especially before and during speaking activities), but I started to get attracted to the topic as an area for research when I experienced it as an English teacher trainee with students. Since then, I have been wondering how to help language learners, so I decided to investigate the possible causes. What concerned me the most was whether language anxiety is related to anxiety as a personality trait.

Therefore, my intention was to conduct research in order to get a deeper insight into the relationship between trait anxiety and language anxiety. The literature on anxiety revealed that what I am interested in is trait anxiety². So, the main focus of my paper is to find out whether trait anxious learners tend to experience higher levels of anxiety in foreign language classes. Although I searched for information about techniques the students can apply in order to reduce their language anxiety, I mostly found research papers that addressed teachers, so the present study aims to find out about and offer strategies that help language learners cope with anxiety. Thus, my research does not concentrate only on the difference between the anxiety levels of English majors and other English learners, but also on the similarities and dissimilarities between the techniques they apply. So, based on the above mentioned areas of interest, my study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent are university students participating in the research trait and state anxious?

² This expression was created by Charles Spielberger to describe those who tend to be anxious in various situations. For them, anxiety can be considered a personality trait.

2. How does the language anxiety students experience affect their learning?
3. Is there a connection between the level of trait anxiety and foreign language anxiety?
4. How do the level of language anxiety and the strategies applied in order to reduce it vary among English majors and those who are not foreign language majors but have English language learning experience?

My paper is divided into four main sections. The first one is a review of the literature, which provides an overview of the aspects of anxiety and language learning relevant to my research. First, anxiety will be defined. In addition, its relation to stress and facilitating and debilitating anxiety are also discussed. Second, the concept of state anxiety is explained, followed by a section on the role of affective factors in language learning. The correlation between trait anxiety and performance is dealt with as well. Third, the relationship between introversion-extraversion and language learning is discussed. After defining key concepts, the effect of these personality types on language use and speaking in the foreign language class will be introduced. Next, a brief overview of the approaches to language anxiety is provided. Last, I focus on reducing language anxiety.

After discussing the theoretical background, I will present my empirical research. The second part of the paper begins with the presentation and justification of the research design, which is followed by the introduction of the participants. Next, the research instruments are discussed. In this section, I will not only focus on the structure of my questionnaires but also give a brief introduction to the tools I used to compile them. Likewise, the questions I intended to ask in the interviews will be presented and discussed. Finally, an explanation of the procedure is provided to show how I analysed the data. The third section is devoted to the findings and includes the discussion of the results too. In the final part of my paper, I will

summarise the findings of both the theoretical and the empirical research with reference to the research questions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Anxiety

There are numerous definitions of anxiety. Riemann (1998) sees it as something that is part of human life. He justifies this by listing a couple of situations in which individuals experience anxiety. They can be anxious, for instance, about new experiences, like becoming part of a new community or taking up new responsibilities. He also mentions that when people are in situations they cannot cope with, anxiety is likely to arise. The definition of Atkinson (2005) cited by Pethő (2018) is similar, as, in his view, anxiety is a common reaction to tension and stress experienced on a daily basis. Eysenck et al. (2007) see anxiety as ‘...an aversive emotional and motivational state occurring in threatening circumstances’ (p.336). Horwitz et al. (1986) use the term in accordance with the interpretation of Spielberger (1983) who, as he cites, defines anxiety as a subjective feeling that people experience when they are worried, nervous, tense or feel apprehension. It should also be noted that anxiety causes an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Riemann (1998) differentiates four types of anxieties. First, people feel anxious about completely exposing themselves, which they perceive as losing themselves and being dependent. Distinguishing oneself too much from other members of a community can make a person lonely; however, risks need to be taken in order to become an independent individual. Second, anxiety can be caused by change in one’s life, as people perceive it as a reminder of uncertainty and fleetingness. Third, because it could leave individuals defenceless and make them isolated, some also feel anxious about becoming themselves. Last, anxiety can be connected to restrictions, which represents the rules and laws they must abide by. They experience this as a lack of freedom.

Despite identifying its basic forms and stating that anxiety is a universal phenomenon, Riemann (1998) emphasizes that the causes and coping strategies are varied. He also points

out that the type of anxiety along with its level is influenced by many factors. Age, background, inclinations, physical and mental constitution, for example, are such components. In Riemann's view, anxiety is strongly related to existence also because it reflects humans' awareness of mortality (1998). Nonetheless, how it appears is unique to the individual experiencing it, and since its form varies from person to person, anxiety is a concept that is difficult to grasp (Riemann, 1998). Scovel (1978) also claims that "anxiety is a very complicated experience that needs to be perceived as a combination of feelings, state of emotions and personality traits" (cited by K & Alamelu, 2020, p.1054).

When defining anxiety, Lazarus (1999) addresses some important questions about the use of this concept. He created the expression *stress emotions* to identify feelings that appear in situations people find stressful (threatening) or challenging. Shame, panic, anger, guilt and anxiety, for instance, fall into this category. Lazarus also mentions that experts from various fields have used several terms for stress, and anxiety is one of these. He acknowledges that these expressions are related to stress, but he emphasizes that these concepts have to be distinguished because there are notable differences as well. Since the 1960s, the term *stress* incorporates concepts such as frustration, emotional distress, anxiety etc. which are used when referring to the root and emotional consequences of coping with pressure experienced in everyday life. So, as Lazarus (1999) summarizes, stress is basically 'the struggle to adapt to life' (p. 29).

Similarly to Riemann (1998), he claims that anxiety specifically is about the existential threat people face, which derives from the awareness of the presence of death in their lives. (This is the reason why Lazarus puts anxiety in the category of *existential emotions*.) Lazarus also notes that the threat anxiety derives from does not have to refer to an occurrence that is certainly going to befall; however, it is associated with existence, since it is strongly connected to life, death and the individual's identity. (Lazarus, 1999).

At that time, a distinction was also made between fear and anxiety on the basis that the object of fear is always concrete, but that of anxiety cannot be determined so easily (Riemann, 1998). According to Riemann (1998), some scholars say that anxiety is associated with something irrational and unsure, but the concepts of fear and anxiety are overlapping. Zeidner (2014) and Schultz (2013) (cited by Pethő, 2018) support his claim by saying that to experience anxiety it is enough if the occurrence (emergency) that causes worry is only a figment of one's imagination. The state of readiness induced by this threatening situation, which is often characterized by such symptoms as muscle tension, avoidance behaviour, alertness to dangers and being very careful, is identified by Zeidner (2014) as anxiety (cited by Pethő, 2018).

The duality of anxiety lies in its effect on the individual, as it can aid or paralyze a person (Riemann, 1998). In his study, Eysenck et al. (2007) explain that attentional control theory deals with the negative effect anxiety has on attention. What people concentrate on is less under their control if they are anxious because threat-related stimuli divert their attention (Eysenck et al., 2007).³ This is an example of debilitating anxiety, which impairs performance (Young, 1994). Nevertheless, as mentioned before, anxiety can have the opposite effect on individuals. If it positively affects performance, it is called facilitating anxiety (Young, 1994).

Studies show that anxiety and academic achievement show correlation (Kader, 2016). As Pethő (2018) reports (citing Eysenck et al., 2017), experiencing anxiety can result in poorer performance. Kader examined test anxiety and found that students with facilitating anxiety on average performed better on tests than students with debilitating test anxiety. In addition, the study reveals that learners who rather experience debilitating anxiety are prone to procrastination, which is a tell-tale sign of this type of anxiety (Kader, 2016; Horwitz

³ Therefore, the goal-directed attentional system suffers.

1986). Kader (2016) focuses on microeconomics, but he mentions other studies that examined different fields, for example, foreign language and also found that test anxiety negatively affects performance. It is due to the fact that individuals who suffer from debilitating anxiety are not as capable of problem solving when it comes to exams as those who experience facilitating anxiety (Kader, 2016). It should also be noted that Zeidner (1998) (cited by Pethő, 2018) considers test anxiety a contextualized personality trait, which is determined by the character of the individual concerned.⁴

2.2 Trait anxiety

Researchers have identified different types of anxiety (Pethő, 2018). Spielberger (1972) created two categories (as cited in Pethő, 2018) by separating trait anxiety from state anxiety. In the case of trait anxious individuals, anxiety derives from personality. These people tend to be anxious in general, which is why anxiety is a part of their everyday lives. State anxiety, on the contrary, is triggered by such a threatening situation as an exam, for instance. So, there are individuals who are anxious only in certain situations, and there are those of whom anxiety is a characteristic feature. The latter ones are anxious in various situations, and their anxiety is relatively permanent (Pethő, 2018). Young (1994), describes trait anxiety using the adjective *stable*, which supports the claim that it is a personality feature of the individual concerned.

Pethő (2018) also mentions that Spielberg compiled a questionnaire called the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). Data collected from those who filled this in has shown that highly trait anxious individuals are presumably prone to being tense and shy in situations that increase stress. So, as Spielberg's findings reveal, people who tend to be anxious experience higher levels of state anxiety than those with lower trait anxiety (cited in Pethő,

⁴ He points out that factors like the context of evaluation, perceived degree of threat and proneness to anxiety, etc. are also considerable.

2018). In fact, when the level of anxiety of trait anxious individuals is increased by a certain situation, for example, having an exam or test, state anxiety goes hand in hand with trait anxiety (Tar, 2015). Zeidner (1998) found that trait anxiety is meaningful in research on test anxiety (cited in Pethő, 2018).

As mentioned before, anxiety and attention are interrelated (Eysenck et al., 2007). The experiments of Pacheco-Unguetti et al. (2010) disclosed that the effect trait and state anxiety have on attention are different. In their research, they focused on the attentional networks distinguished by Posner and Petersen (1990) and Posner et al. (2007) and examined how they are related to these two types of anxiety. They found that the alerting and orienting networks of individuals with high state anxiety were affected. In the case of highly trait anxious individuals, the executive control network was influenced the most.⁵ Pacheco-Unguetti et al. (2010) highlight the importance of affective factors by claiming that besides exploring the modulations caused by circumstantial factors, structural components like affective personality traits should also be examined.

Affective factors such as anxiety play a vital role in the language learning process as well. Tar (2015) explains that affective factors, which can be even more determining than the cognitive abilities of learners, contribute to foreign language learning. Tianjian (2010) also claims that affective factors have a considerable impact on language learning (cited in Hamed et al., 2015). Anxiety is one of these factors, which according to Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, is prevalent in language classes (Hamed et al., 2015). Pethő (2018) uses qualitative and quantitative methods in order

⁵ The alerting network is responsible for reacting to stimuli while maintaining the desired sensitivity level. The orienting network also takes part in the processing of stimuli, but it is about the selection of necessary information. Voluntary action control and conflict resolution is what the executive control network is involved in.

to explore how anxiety experienced in a classroom setting affects performance, while paying special attention to foreign language anxiety. The results show that anxiety is at its highest in English and German lessons. Students felt more anxious in foreign language lessons than in Hungarian Grammar and Literature lessons; the difference was significant. The study of Pethő (2018) also revealed that speaking anxiety is most dominant in the foreign language class; his findings are in accordance with earlier studies.

As has been pointed out by Koch & Terrell, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Price, 1991 (cited in Hamed et al., 2015), anxiety is triggered by one of the most important skills, which is speaking. Horwitz et al. (1986) also draw attention to the fact that oral communication worries language learners the most.⁶ If anxious individuals are expected to produce speeches spontaneously, they are more likely to have difficulties and freeze. However, completing tasks that involve practice and/or rehearsal, such as drills or speeches they could prepare for in advance, worries them much less (Horwitz et al., 1986). In addition, the research by Tóth (2008) demonstrates that anxiety from oral communication and insufficient performance affects language learners the most.⁷

⁶ He mentions that listening skills are affected as well. Anxious learners find it difficult to differentiate the sounds and structures of utterances of a foreign language, and understanding the message might be problematic too.

⁷ There are counterexamples, of course. A study conducted 10 years later found that anxiety is not necessarily caused by oral communication in the first place (Male, 2018). Male's research focused on the four skills (speaking, writing, listening, reading). He was interested in which of these skills was affected by language anxiety the most among university students in the English education Department of Universitas Kristen Indonesia. The results show that the learners were anxious about their writing skills the most, and speaking is only the third in this line (preceded even by reading). The reason for this was the monotony of tasks and activities, for instance (Male, 2018).

As mentioned before, Pethő (2018) studied performance, and his research identified a negative correlation between language anxiety and academic achievement, which proves that the higher the level of anxiety is, the lower performance is. Previous studies have already proved this. Eysenck et al. (2007) points out that anxiety influences performance unfavourably. Pajkossy (2014) also states that trait anxiety has an adverse effect on performance. He claims that anxiety in general and specifically trait anxiety results in the impairment of cognitive control processes. The reason for this is that in the case of highly trait anxious individuals, threatening stimuli divert attention and resources used for processing away from other mental operations (Pajkossy, 2014). Socan and Bucik, 1998 (cited in Hamedí et al., 2015) proved that in order to reach the optimal performance, the arousal level should be adequate. According to them, the conditions for this are different for extroverts and introverts.

2.2 The introvert-extrovert scale and language learning

Cain (2013) claims that the most important dimension of personality is introversion-extraversion.⁸ Jung (1917) made the concepts of extrovert and introvert well-known and identified a significant difference between these personality traits. Introverts are rather interested in the inner world (of feelings and thoughts), while extroverts are more attracted to the outside world. Hence, social interaction has a different effect on them. Introverts lose energy from it, but meeting with people and engaging in conversations help extroverts recharge their batteries (Cain, 2013). Concisely, the optimal amount of stimuli for introverts and extroverts is different. Several studies conducted research on the role of introversion-extraversion in different fields, since, as Hamedí et al. (2015) point out, these are one of the most significant personality traits; therefore, the differences between these two types are of

⁸ The terms *extraversion* and *extravert* are spelt with A in the work of Jung (1917), but nowadays the variants *extrovert* and *extroversion* are widely used, so I use these interchangeably.

paramount importance. Before discussing the effect of these personality differences on language use and learning, it has to be stated that there is no individual who is entirely introverted or extroverted (Jung, 1917).

In the introduction of her book, Cain (2013) notes that people often make judgements based on the speed of speaking, and they consider those who speak faster more knowledgeable or clever. The point she raises implies that the relationship of communication and introversion-extraversion can also be taken into account in the context of language learning. The study by Dewaele and Furnham (1999) reveals that introverts react to being under pressure more sensitively, which affects how they speak (cited in Hamed et al., 2015). This is due to the arousal level, which is higher than would be optimal for them in situations in which oral communication is expected from them. As a result, their speech is not so fluent, and it is characterised by hesitations⁹ and errors (Hamed et al., 2015). Furnham (1999) also recognizes the influence of personality type on language use, and proves that extroverts take shorter pauses and are more talkative than introverts (cited in Hamed et al., 2015).

MacIntyre (2007) conducted research on the willingness to communicate (WTC) in the target language. The study of MacIntyre, Clement, & Noels (2007) focuses on extraverts and introverts in the foreign language classroom (cited in MacIntyre, 2007). They were interested in the effect of these personality traits on vocabulary building and starting a conversation by applying the words learnt recently. They found that introverts were more willing to communicate in familiar situations, but extroverts showed a higher willingness to communicate if the learning conditions were a bit more unfamiliar. This emphasizes not only the significance of the characteristics of the given situation but also the importance of the

⁹ According to Jung (1917), introverts have a reflective personality, and that is why they think first and take actions after, which makes them slower. Due to their timidity, they tend to be hesitant, which can be traced in all fields of their lives.

psychology of the language learner (Macintyre, 2007). According to Nussbaum (2002), extroverts and introverts approach even discussions that involve argumentation differently. Based on research, he concludes that refutation was more typical for extraverts, while introverted students were more cautious and preferred a constructive and compromise-seeking style¹⁰ in their discussions. The explanation for the latter might be that introverts want to avoid embarrassment, which not winning an argument could mean, and rejection from peers, in which winning the argument could result. Besides, it is also possible that they are just not as confident as extroverts, which prevents them from sharing their opinion (Nussbaum, 2007). Furthermore, Blickle (1996, 1997) found that introverts tend to want to reach consensus in the case of arguments (cited in Nussbaum, 2007). Extroverts, however, enjoy this situation, as they are not worried about the outcome of the argumentative discussion, and it stimulates them (Nussbaum, 2007).

According to Zafar and Meenakshi (2012), besides risk-taking introversion-extraversion is the personality dimension that is most relevant to language learning. They refer to previous research, which shows that tasks that involve skills like writing and reading are more suitable for introverted language learners. Classroom interaction, however, is easier for extroverts, as they are usually more sociable, and do not find working in groups or communicating with others so challenging. In addition, extroverts tend to be risk-takers, who participate in classroom activities very actively, which has an impact on language proficiency (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

Some researchers studied this area, and their findings suggest that there is a connection between extraversion-introversion and performance. Extroverts are believed to be better at language learning than introverts (Cook, 1991; Swain, 1985, cited in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). In Krashen's (1981) view, personality can influence language learning,

¹⁰ They worked as a team to refute arguments and come up with new ones.

and he also suggests that outgoing people's foreign language acquisition may be supported by their personality (cited in Zhang, 2010).¹¹ The research of Nodushan (2011) shows that extroverts have better academic achievements in the foreign language, which implies that they are better at learning languages. The reason for this is that their communication skills are better than those of introverts (cited in Chen, 2020). Due to the fact that it is not that difficult for them to initiate conversations and take part in them, they can obtain more input than introverts (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). Moreover, they get more opportunities to practice. Since they also tend to be risk-takers, they probably do not need as much encouragement to use a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical forms (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). Furnham's findings (1990) (cited in Zafar and Meenakshi 2012) support this notion, as he claims that extroverts are not only characterised by talking more, but also by taking more risks than introverted language learners, who are rather cautious and devote a lot of attention to form (vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar).¹²

Dewaele (2013) identified extraversion as a determining factor, since he examined its influence (along with that of Psychoticism and Neuroticism) on language learning. His research reveals that extraversion and foreign language classroom anxiety are related, but he did not find a significant correlation. The tendency discovered in one of the groups participating in the research cannot be generalized, nonetheless, it can be stated that the more extroverted people are, the more likely it is that their level of language anxiety is lower.

¹¹ While summarizing research on anxiety and language learning, Young (1994) found that the characteristic traits of a successful language learner have been identified. Outgoing was one of these, which can refer to extroverts, who are described as sociable (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012; Chen, 2020). Eysenck & Chan (1982) also discovered that introverts prefer reading to meeting people (cited in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012).

¹² The results of such research, however, are not unanimous. As Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) mention, there have been studies which found that introversion-extroversion does not affect language learning considerably.

Dewaele (2013) attributes the lower levels of language anxiety extraverts experience to such characteristic features as being chatty and optimistic. Bahrudin and Amir (2018) also found that extroverts tend to experience foreign language speaking anxiety less. Zhang's research also tested this theory and found that introverts experience higher levels of anxiety than extroverts (2010). So, a positive significant correlation was identified between personality and language anxiety. (Apart from extroversion, other factors such as motivation, communicative competence, time spent studying English, self-perceived proficiency and achievement confirm this claim as well.)

The study of Hamed et al. (2015) also compared the level of language anxiety to the introversion-extroversion scale, but it focused on a more specific area. They investigated how foreign language speaking anxiety is connected to the level of extraversion and tried to find out whether the personality type has an effect on fluency and accuracy. Besides, the researchers wanted to learn if there is a significant difference between the speaking anxiety of quite introverted, moderately introverted, highly extroverted and moderately extroverted people. In order to do so, they collected data from 60 university students at the age of 18–25 with the help of two questionnaires. (The students who participated in the study conducted in 2013 were all advanced English learners and studied in Iran at Imamreza University of Mashhad.) In the qualitative phase, the participants' level of extraversion and that of public speaking anxiety were examined. The questionnaires were filled in by 60 students, but only 28 of them were involved in the qualitative phase. There was an equal number of introverts and extroverts in the group selected by the researchers, who recorded the speaking of the students, since they were interested in how their personality type is related to their fluency and accuracy.

Based on the findings of the qualitative phase, they stated that the more extroverted the students are, the more fluent their speech is (Hamed et al., 2015). On the other hand, the

results show that the level of extraversion is not such a determining factor considering accuracy (Hamed et al., 2015). The research also revealed that the more extroverted students are, the more unlikely it is that they are anxious, which indicates that introverts are prone to higher levels of anxiety. The researchers identified significant differences between the results of quite introverted and moderately extroverted, moderately introverted and highly extroverted, and quite introverted and highly extroverted students. (The data collected on highly and moderately extroverted, quite introverted and moderately introverted, and moderately introverted and moderately extroverted participants was not very distinct.)

2.3 Language anxiety

As Mihaljević Djigunovi (2006) explains, earlier studies attached particular importance to the role of cognitive skills in language learning. However, nowadays researchers are of the opinion that affective factors influence this process too. Affective factors have been gaining more and more attention since the middle of the 20th century, when people realized that the personality traits of learners are of paramount importance in education. Though defining and measuring affective characteristics proved to be quite challenging, affect was identified to be a factor that is even more significant than the cognitive abilities of students. In her paper, Mihaljević Djigunovi (2006) also discusses anxiety, which is an affective factor. Moreover, she introduces two approaches to foreign language anxiety, of which one, as mentioned before, considers it a phenomenon that is not distinct from other types of anxiety such as apprehensiveness as a personality trait (Mihaljević Djigunovi, 2006).

In order to develop a better understanding of the other approach to language anxiety, the research of Horwitz et al. (1986) should be discussed. The aim of Horwitz et al. (1986) was to identify the symptoms and consequences of language anxiety so that they could provide help for those involved in the language learning process. In their study, they intended

to define foreign language anxiety and describe its unique effects. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), the language learning process is something students are often anxious about. It is especially true if the learning takes place in the classroom.

They held the view that foreign language anxiety was a distinct type of anxiety. They support this claim by stating that this anxiety is present specifically in language learning situations. They also note that foreign language anxiety impedes learning and has an impact on the performance of students. However, after examining the effect of anxiety on language learning, they also found that the reactions of anxious language learners were not different from that of those who experienced other anxieties. Their feelings (worry, apprehension, dread) and other symptoms (forgetfulness, difficulties with concentration, palpitations) were the same. Furthermore, the similarity could be spotted in their behaviour as well. In both cases, avoidance behaviour is common, which can be recognized if learners tend to play truant or are prone to procrastination. Some try to manage their anxiety by studying more than needed, which is called overstudying (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Language learners are judged by others not only based on their performance but also socially. Thus, Horwitz et al. (1986) claim that performance anxiety and foreign language anxiety are related. Within performance anxiety, he pinpoints communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety as phenomena, which involve performance evaluation and are connected to language anxiety.

The first type of anxiety is communication apprehension, which emphasizes the importance of relationships. Those language learners who are afraid of speaking with others experience anxiety in various situations, but Horwitz et al. (1986) highlight three of these. If it is accompanied by oral communication, be it a pair or group work activity, they face oral communication anxiety. The anxiety learners feel when they have to give a public speech is called stage fright. In case their task is to listen to an oral text or learn it by heart, they

experience receiver anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) also explain how these anxieties are enhanced during the language learning process and make it more difficult. They claim that the fact that students are under constant observation puts learners who are anxious when they are expected to communicate with others in a tough spot. Moreover, the speaking situation is not under their control either, which makes the situation for them even more difficult.

Communicating in a foreign language means that the facilities available for learners to express themselves are limited, as they cannot use their native language but only a medium. Communication apprehension appears in a unique form in the foreign language class, since students are aware that incomprehensibility is going to cause difficulties.

The second subtype that is important in the context of performance and language learning is test anxiety, which is connected to fear of failure. In their study, Horwitz et al. (1986) write about beliefs connected to language learning and highlight one, according to which something can only be said in the target language if the learner can express it correctly. However, students are expected to communicate in a foreign language before they can speak fluently, which is why it is inevitable that students make mistakes. Unfortunately, individuals who have test anxiety consider a performance that is not perfect as a failure. For them, attending oral exams is especially challenging. What is more, apart from test anxiety, they can experience communication apprehension in these situations too.

The third phenomenon related to performance anxiety and foreign language learning is fear of negative evaluation. The people affected are afraid of situations in which others evaluate them; therefore, they try to avoid these. The explanation for avoidance behaviour is that they expect that other people will have an unfavourable opinion of them, which makes them anxious. Participating in foreign language classes, however, is a typical example of a social situation that involves evaluation. So, language learning is also unique, since – as it has

been stated when discussing communication apprehension – students are continually exposed to evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986).

According to Horwitz et al. (1986) communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation contribute to language anxiety, but this phenomenon cannot be perceived as anxiety accompanying the language learning process, which is composed of them. They define language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). As mentioned before, other researchers were of the same opinion at that time and claimed that language anxiety is distinct from other types of anxiety. For instance, Gardner and Macintyre (1993) claimed that foreign language anxiety is “apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient” (p. 5).

The study of Horwitz et al. (1986) was relevant to my research; however, as mentioned before, I found the other approach more intriguing. So, I was interested in the role of trait differences, whereas there are several causes of foreign language anxiety. Besides anxiety caused by personal and interpersonal anxieties, Young (1994) identifies 4 other categories, which specify the sources of foreign language anxiety. They originate from role-related beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, language testing and classroom procedures. Zhang (2010) makes a distinction between causes associated with learners and instruction. Apart from personality traits, the former includes language proficiency, learning strategies, social anxiety, learning beliefs, self-efficacy and gender. On the contrary, the latter includes correlates like the beliefs of the instructor, competitive environment, classroom activities and methods, and the test-taking situation (Zhang, 2010). As mentioned before, these factors can even be determined by skills such as speaking or

writing (K & Alamelu, 2020; Kara, 2013). In short, there are numerous factors contributing to language anxiety.

2.5 Reducing language anxiety

Similarly to the variety of factors, the strategies to cope with anxiety are diverse. When discussing this topic, the advice of Riemann (1998), who investigated (general) anxiety, has to be heeded. He warns that strategies that guarantee that people who try them will be completely free of anxiety should be viewed with scepticism (Riemann, 1998). Consequently, while investigating coping strategies, I intended to discover ways to reduce foreign language anxiety.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), the main task of language teachers is to acknowledge that this phenomenon exists. If they are aware that foreign language anxiety is present in lessons and know that anxious learners tend to avoid those activities that they are afraid of, then they will be less likely to misinterpret students' behaviour. Thus, they can avoid attributing poorer performance to a lack of motivation, skills or preparation for the lessons. Horwitz et al. (1986) also suggest ways for coping with anxiety. Education on managing situations that cause anxiety should be provided for students, or language teachers could strive for establishing such a learning environment that helps reduce anxiety. In addition, they name some concrete methods such as relaxation techniques, behavioural contracting, journal keeping, and providing guidance and information about effective language learning strategies. (They also mention that it might be worth involving professionals.) Besides, since anxious individuals are more sensitive to evaluation, special attention should be paid to error correction (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Zhang (2010) also offers some guidelines for teachers to cope with language anxiety in the classroom, and one of these applies to addressing mistakes as well. In order to create a relaxing atmosphere, collaborative tasks and correcting errors in a gentle way are vital.

Likewise, language teachers should help students build a healthy self-perceived proficiency in the target language, consider a variety of measurements in evaluating students and focus on arousing motivation. In addition, Zhang (2010) emphasizes the importance of the facilitative role and support of educators. The four pieces of advice Dörnyei (2001) gives to language teachers (raising students' awareness to the fact that errors are inherent in the language learning process, informing students about the evaluation of tests and decision-making concerning their grades, creating a non-competitive environment and not comparing learners to each other) are also thought-provoking (cited in Ansari, 2015). Male (2018) also states that the teacher is responsible for creating a relaxing atmosphere and making sure that students enjoy the lessons by planning fun activities, for instance. Besides, student-centred learning can reduce anxiety as well as make language learners more confident (Male, 2018).

Lazarus (1999) claims that general anxiety is related to identity and pinpointed the threat to self-esteem and confidence as the main source of anxiety. Numerous research studies prove that confidence is relevant to language learning; thus, more attention should be paid to it when discussing coping strategies. As mentioned before, Horwitz et al. (1986) state that beliefs, behaviours, feelings related to language learning and the self-perception of learners are determining factors concerning language anxiety. Guiora (1983) defines language learning as a “profoundly unsettling psychological proposition” (cited by Horwitz et al., 1986, p.125). This explains why language learning threatens the views and self-perception of the individual. The research of Tar (2015) demonstrates that those who tend to be anxious due to their personality traits are more likely to have lower self-confidence.¹³

¹³ As reported by Tar (2015), there is a connection between language anxiety and the personality of learners. While analysing the main components of language learning strategies and connecting these to the types of anxiety, her study revealed that trait anxious individuals, so those who tend to be anxious, have a more negative self-image. So, the results show that anxiety affects confidence and self-esteem negatively, and this phenomenon concerns those who are trait anxious the most.

Brown (1973) and Horwitz et al. (1986) also found a correlation between language anxiety and the self-confidence and self-image of learners (cited in Pethő, 2018). Furthermore, the majority of students participating in the research of Pethő (2018) on language anxiety reported that they do not feel confident enough to speak in a foreign language, as they are afraid of being laughed at in case they make a mistake.

Thus, methods such as building confidence should be taken into consideration. Johannessen (2003) lists 8 ways to boost the confidence of language learners (cited in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). A few of the most important elements are dividing the instructions given to students into smaller parts, coming up with short activities, providing immediate positive feedback and plenty of opportunities to practice, not relying too much on individual work, asking close-ended questions, involving everyone in the classroom work, not interrupting language learners and making sure that they experience the joy of accomplishment.

According to Young (1994), teachers should address language learners' irrational beliefs and fears, aid students who need further practice (by tutoring, for example), take the role of the facilitator, encourage students by giving them positive feedback, acknowledge that mistakes are essential, avoid having unrealistic expectations, prioritize conveying meaning instead of accuracy, plan collaborative activities and compile tests that do not only focus on grammar. Young (1994) also stresses the importance of relaxation exercises and practicing self-talk. Likewise, Oxford (1990) concentrates on relaxation techniques like meditation, progressive relaxation and deep breathing, since these can help language learners reduce their anxiety. In her view, listening to relaxing music can also be an effective strategy.

Recent studies explore different ways of reducing language anxiety too. Lunt (2019) introduces mindfulness, a relaxation technique, which stems from earlier meditative

practices. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013), it is about “paying attention to the present moment, on purpose and without judgement” (cited in Lunt, 2019, p. 23). Practicing mindfulness exercises teaches individuals how to focus on the present and has beneficial effects on one’s mental health, which also involves reducing anxiety. There are certain techniques (sitting meditation, carrying out daily activities mindfully, recording thoughts and emotions (in a diary), focusing on your body) he specifically recommends for teachers, but he lists some useful ones for students too. Furthermore, Lunt (2019) notes that awareness-raising techniques not only improve concentration and make students more relaxed but also serve as learning opportunities for students. From the exercises that can be implemented in foreign language classes, he highlights three, which are mindful movement, visualisation meditation and mindful eating (Lunt, 2019).

Aside from its positive effects on concentration, foreign language learning (practice) and students’ mental state, mindfulness can also help language learners gain confidence (Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Moreover, Skelly & Estrada-Chichon (2021) confirm that mindfulness does not only reduce anxiety but can also improve the performance of students. The findings of Mortimore (2017) also revealed that using mindfulness techniques can result in a more relaxing environment and improve concentration, but its effect on the academic achievement of language learners was not indisputable based on her study. However, the findings of Önem (2015) prove that such methods can aid learning. Önem (2015) studied meditation along with aromatherapy in the context of language learning and suggested that it might be used to mitigate anxiety. His study is quite intriguing, as in this research meditation and aromatherapy were used successfully to help vocabulary acquisition and reduce the anxiety of language learners. In addition, Önem (2015) mentioned that listening to music and doing breathing exercises can also be useful means to cope with language anxiety.

So, most studies concentrate on giving advice to teachers on reducing language anxiety in the classroom, but exploring specific strategies that can help language learners cope with it is a pressing issue. Therefore, in my empirical research, I also intended to focus on coping strategies that students can use even without the help of the teacher. As I see it, a good example of such techniques is visualisation meditation, the aim of which is to imagine that you are in a place where you feel safe and focus your attention on the thoughts, emotions and sensations associated with this special place (Lunt, 2019). Afterward, learners can simply recall this pleasant experience in a situation that triggers anxiety. Besides, visualisation meditation might be useful for practicing listening in the target language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

As mentioned before, personality traits are gaining more and more attention in language learning research. Although Horwitz et al. (1986) defined language anxiety as a phenomenon that is specific to language learning, more recent studies revealed that language anxiety is more complex than that. Because my main interest was the connection between general anxiety and language anxiety, I focused on this area in order to find out whether general anxiety affects foreign language learning. I intended to conduct library research on the relation between the levels of trait anxiety and language anxiety, but I only found a limited number of studies about it, so I decided to investigate whether there is a relationship between trait and language anxiety of university students. While reading the literature on language anxiety, however, I realised that the coping strategies listed in them mainly address teachers. Thus, the second objective of my research was to survey the techniques language learners use themselves. Moreover, I intended to explore the possible differences in the techniques applied and the language anxiety level between learners who invest in studying foreign languages and base their future career on them, and other language learners.

Therefore, I asked the following research questions:

1. To what extent are university students participating in the research trait and state anxious?
2. How does the language anxiety students experience affect their learning?
3. Is there a connection between the level of trait anxiety and foreign language anxiety?

4. How do the level of language anxiety and the strategies applied in order to reduce it vary among English majors and those who are not foreign language majors but have English language learning experience?

3.2 Participants

Altogether, 62 Hungarian university students participated in my research. 29 of them were English majors (attending BA, MA or the Undivided Teacher Training programme), who were at least in their third year. The minimum three years of studies was set to investigate students who have had enough motivation to stay in the programmes for a longer period. My assumption was that students who are still in their programmes in the third year are more likely to complete their studies, and getting this far can imply that they are motivated and enthusiastic about their major.

The second group of respondents were university students who had years of English language learning experience. So, the number of these 33 students was not equal to the number of English majors participating in the survey. However, not being a representative study, this research focuses on tendencies; thus, the two groups can be compared even if the number of respondents is not the same. In spite of the fact that the group size does not influence the reliability of his questionnaire, Spielberger (1970) suggests that the number of participants should be around 20, and the present study meets this criterion, especially considering the number of students with debilitating language anxiety (cited in Sipos, 1988).

Based on the literature¹⁴, it can be stated that female participants tend to be more anxious than men, but the correlation between the level of anxiety and sex was not the relevant to my research, so I did not ask the informants about this (Pethő, 2018). Since the STAI was initially designed to measure the anxiety of (mentally healthy) adults, I wanted to

¹⁴ For instance, Sipos (1988) reports that female university students experience higher levels of anxiety based on their research.

include a question about age too (Sipos, 1988). The average age of English majors was 22,48 and the that of non-English majors was 22,58. In order to make sure that only the members of the target group filled in the questionnaires, I asked students to give information about their major and the year they are in as well.¹⁵

The questionnaire was not anonymous, since it was my intention to conduct interviews with university students, who were willing to participate in the qualitative phase of the research too. Those who wanted to offer their help were asked to enter their email address, so that I know that I can ask them further questions to analyse the data collected more accurately.

8 students participated in the qualitative phase of my research of whom 4 were English majors and 4 belonged to the non-English major group. In contrast with the questionnaire analysis, I did not exclude the university students experiencing facilitating anxiety from this part of my empirical research, since I focused on reducing language anxiety. In order to gain more insight into the causes of language anxiety and the strategies that students can use to cope with it, I assumed that the information gained from them would be useful in this respect as well. Although, the main aim of the interviews was to discover the coping strategies, it was also my intention to collect more data regarding all the research questions in order to be able to gain a wider and deeper range of data and analyse the data collected in the quantitative phase of my research more accurately. The results were also intended to help students struggling with language anxiety more effectively.

¹⁵ Initially there were 34 answers registered in the questionnaire for non-English majors, but one of them had to be excluded, since the informant wrote that she was in the Teacher Training programme, and one of her majors was English.

3.3 Instruments

The basis of the quantitative phase of my research was two questionnaires (STAI¹⁶ and FLCAS¹⁷), which were followed by 6 questions. A close-ended question was asked in order to decide whether students experienced facilitating or debilitating anxiety; the following items were related to the techniques applied. By merging the items from STAI, FLCAS and my own questions, I created a new questionnaire. This was duplicated, but modifications in the questionnaire which addresses non-English majors had to be made, so that the statements of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety scale could also refer to past experiences.

First, my questionnaire was based on Sipos' Hungarian translation of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory developed by Spielberger et al. It was compiled in 1983 and has been widely used ever since (Tar, 2015). As Sipos (1988) explains, in the 1950s and 1960s anxiety was identified as a personality trait, so there was no distinction made between propensity to anxiety and anxiety experienced momentarily. Cattell and Scheier (1961) were the first who distinguished these two types of anxiety in theory (cited in Sipos, 1988). Nevertheless, Spielberger's model was the one that focused on conscious stimulus processing and differentiated trait and state anxiety (Sipos, 1988). (Previous research has shown that subjects who tend to be anxious also experience significantly higher levels of momentary, in other words, state anxiety.) According to Sipos (1988), one of the greatest merits of the scale of Spielberger is that it can even follow minor changes in anxiety. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was adapted to different languages. The Hungarian version of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-H) is equivalent to the English and Russian versions thanks to

¹⁶ The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory measures state and trait anxiety (Spielberger, 1983).

¹⁷ The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale measures the level of language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986).

several experts, including English-Russian majors of ELTE, who helped word it (Sipos, 1988).

As has been mentioned before, the scale measures trait anxiety (which is a propensity to be anxious) and state anxiety (which is about the anxiety experienced at the moment). Altogether, there are 40 questions, 20 of which are related to each type of anxiety. So, the questionnaire contains 20 questions about how the informants feel at the time if filling in the questionnaire. Informants need to give their answers by ticking numbers 1, 2, 3 or 4 on the given scale, which ranges from 'Not at all' to 'Very much so' (Spielberger, 1983). Thus, they can collect a maximum of 80, a minimum of 20 points. The other 20 items are designed to measure how participants feel in general. So, this 40-item questionnaire, which is based on self-assessment, is able to measure both state and trait anxiety (Sipos, 1988).¹⁸

Second, the next part of my questionnaire was the Hungarian version of FLCAS, which measures the level of anxiety appearing specifically in the foreign language classroom (Tar, 2015). As mentioned before, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to measure anxiety level. The questionnaire contains 33 items, which they associated with the above-mentioned 3 types of anxiety (communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation). In the case of each item, participants can choose from 5 different options based on the extent of their agreement with the statements listed in the questionnaire. The FLCAS was translated to Hungarian by Tóth (2008). In my research I used the version translated by her called the Hungarian Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (HFLCAS), which was validated in 2003 (Tar, 2015).

¹⁸ Sipos (1988) also mentions that there is also a short version of the second scale, which is appropriate for measuring state anxiety. The sum of the scores given for items 5, 12, 15, 16 and 17 can be used for this purpose.

Third, extra items were added to my questionnaire in order to clarify whether the language anxiety experienced is debilitating and gain information about the methods university students use in order to reduce anxiety. The first question asks if participants are rather aided or inhibited by foreign language anxiety. The data collected from university students who chose the option related to facilitating anxiety were not involved in the process of calculating the level of language anxiety, since my aim was to study debilitating language anxiety. The following section was an inquiry into coping strategies. I asked the participants about the techniques they had already used in order to reduce language anxiety. They could choose one or several options from a given list, and they could also add new strategies as there was an 'Other' option as well. Similarly, the next question provided the same list and inquired about the techniques that helped students reduce their language anxiety. Then they were asked to tick those strategies they wanted to try out and make the list more complete by adding other methods to it. This question was meant to identify strategies they did not try but are familiar with. Next, I was also interested in whether their teachers use(d) any coping strategies in their English lessons. The last question was also a dichotomous one, as I asked whether they felt the coping strategies offered and used by their teachers help(ed) them. It was not compulsory to give an answer to this item either, since I expected that there might be participants whose English teacher did not suggest any coping strategies; hence, they could not decide whether these were useful or not.

The basis of the qualitative part of my research was the 8 interviews. The interviews I conducted were semi-structured. Among the 11 questions I had collected in advance there were both close-ended and open-ended ones. I wanted to ensure that the most important aspects are covered, but I also included a 12th question, which allowed the interviewees to share further thoughts and experiences in connection with language anxiety.

In the email sent to the respondents, I wrote that the interviews will be no longer than half an hour, so I planned for about 30-minute long conversations. In most cases we needed approximately 25–30 minutes, but some of the interviews did not last that long, as the answers of the participants were not that detailed. All student participated willingly and allowed me to record the interviews. The recording of the conversations started only after the introductory warmer phase which involved the students some introductory ice-breaking small talk and the discussion of the main information about the interview (aim, confidentiality, right to refuse answering questions, recording).

The first two questions focused on anxiety in general, since I was interested in trait anxiety and the situations that cause anxiety. I also included follow-up questions, just like in the case of some further questions, to get students to elaborate on their responses:

1. Do you consider yourself anxious? To what extent?
2. What makes you anxious? In what situations do you feel anxious?

From this point on, I asked about language anxiety. I was intrigued to know about the experiences of students, so the following four questions concentrated on this and the possible causes that could lead to the strategies used to reduce language anxiety. In fact, I also added a fall-back question to the third one, as I planned to have a conversation about the strategies with the interviewees who gave negative answers to this question. In my view, the experiences of students are of paramount importance in understanding language anxiety better, that is why these questions were formed to get detailed answers:

3. Have you experienced language anxiety in the foreign language class? Have you ever experienced language anxiety outside the classroom?

If not, then why aren't you anxious in language learning situations? What is your secret?

4. When did you experience language anxiety?

5. What could be the cause of anxiety experienced during the language learning process?

6. Has this anxiety changed during your language learning process? If so, why?

Before moving on to the strategies, however, I intended to find out whether the language anxiety students experience was facilitating or debilitating. Therefore, I asked what their stance on this is:

7. Based on your experience how does this anxiety affect your performance?

Since the main goal of the qualitative phase was to find the answer to my last research question and shed light on strategies university students use to reduce language anxiety, the last part of the interviews focused on coping with foreign language anxiety. I was interested in how students learned about the strategies and how they helped them. Furthermore, I intended to find out about their view on the coping strategies included in the questionnaire, so I inquired about their opinion on mindfulness as well:

8. What helped you cope with language anxiety? Why did you choose this strategy? Are there any strategies you have heard of but have not tried yet?

9. Did you get any outside assistance? If so, who helped you? Did your teachers use or show you any strategies to reduce anxiety? Did they help?

10. Have the strategies used to reduce language anxiety helped you in a different area of life?

11. Would you like to try mindfulness? Why?

The transcripts of the interviews, which can be found in the appendix, reveal that the order of the questions was altered in a number of cases in order to make the conversation more natural. Moreover, some questions also had to be left out if the interviewees had already answered them. Besides trying to adapt to what the students intended to talk about, as

mentioned before, the interviews ended with me asking them to share any further thoughts on language anxiety: Is there anything else you would like to share regarding this topic?

3.4 Procedure

The present research involves quantitative and qualitative methods as well. The questionnaires for English and non-English majors were posted on several online platforms in November 2022. Due to the low number of respondents, however, they were re-opened in December 2022. (As the questionnaires were not filled in offline, I could not be there to help the participants, but actually one of them texted me to ask whether the questions in the FLCAS are only about the English classes or others as well. So, participants could reach me if they were unsure of what a question means.) Because the STAI, the FLCAS and the follow-up questions were merged into one questionnaire, the university students could fill this in at one go.

The analysis of the questionnaires was carried out by using Excel; calculations were made separately on the two questionnaires, so that I could compare the results of the two groups. First, I checked whether participants rather experienced facilitating or debilitating anxiety and excluded the data collected from those who reported that language anxiety rather aids them. As a matter of fact, 12 English majors and 6 non-English majors experienced facilitating anxiety. Thus, there were 17 English majors and 27 non-English majors left, and I made calculations using the information gained from them.

Second, in order to determine the mean values of state and trait anxiety in both groups, some items on STAI had to be given new scores. In the case of state anxiety, items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, and 20 needed to be calculated in the opposite way, where 1 ('Not at all') was equal to 4 ('Very much so'), 2 'Somewhat' had to be calculated as 3 ('Moderately so') and so on/ and vice versa. The same was true for items 21, 26, 27, 30, 33, 36 and 39 on

the trait anxiety scale, since the statements listed refer to the absence of anxiety (Sipos, 1988).¹⁹

Third, individuals were put into four groups based on their level of anxiety. They were considered very anxious if they collected 133 or more points on the questionnaire, considerably anxious if their score fell between 100 and 132, moderately anxious if they scored between 67 and 99, and not anxious if they collected 66 or fewer points (Pethő). As Pethő (2018) notes, there are also 9 items²⁰ in this questionnaire that are in fact worded negatively, meaning that the sentences refer to the absence of language anxiety. Hence, these had to be calculated in the opposite way, where 1 ('I do not agree at all') was equal to 5 ('I completely agree') and vice versa (Pethő, 2018).

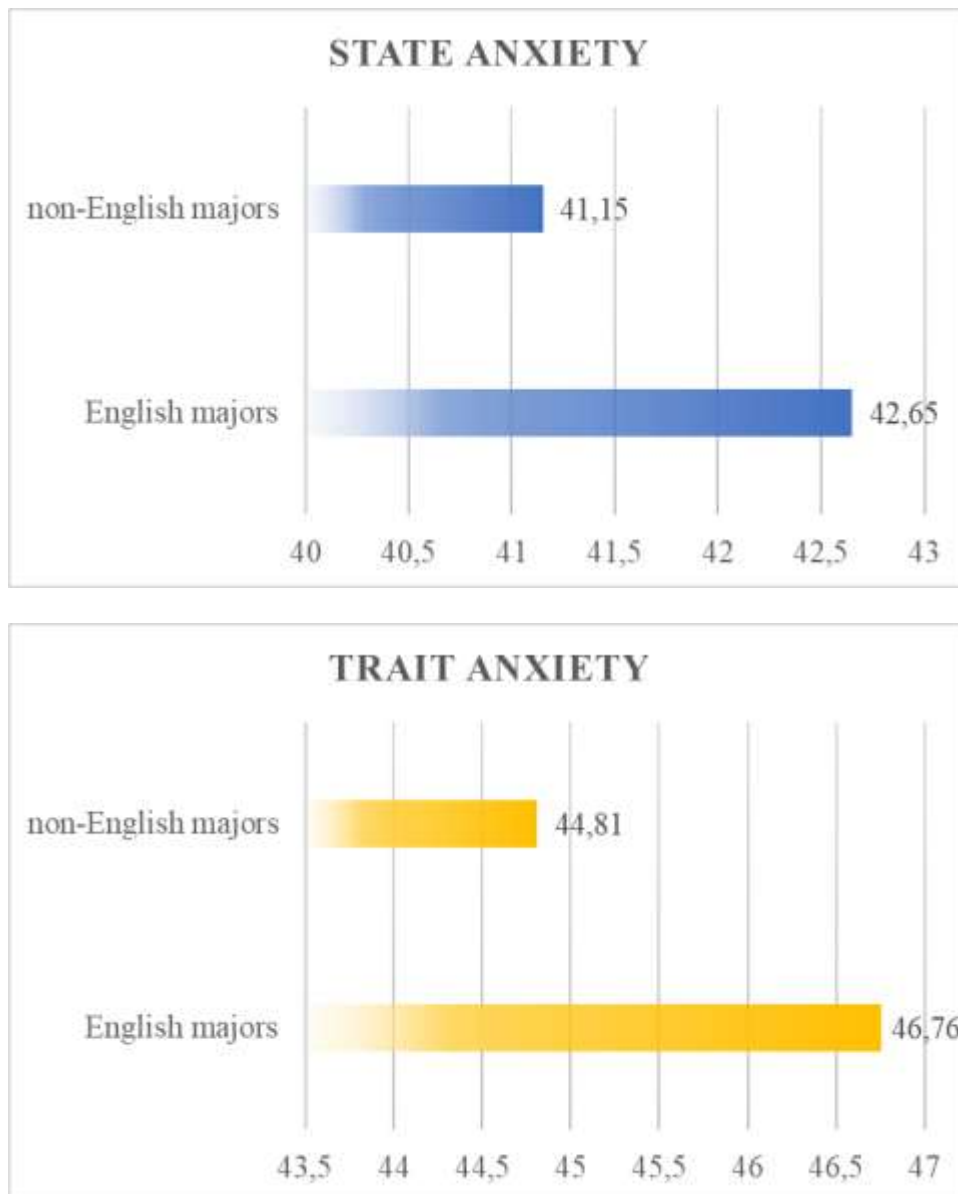
In both cases, students' level of anxiety was determined by adding up the points given for each item, and then the mean value of the sums was calculated. After that, I listed the coping strategies mentioned by the students. The interviews, which were conducted online, were related to the questions about coping strategies. Before discussing the results of the questionnaires and interviews, it is important to stress again that my research focuses on tendencies, so it is not a representative study, and due to the limited number of participants and self-selection, the findings should not be generalized.

¹⁹ (So, 'Almost never' (1) was calculated as 'Almost always (4) and options 'Sometimes' (2) and 'Often' (3) had to be swapped as well (Spielberger)).

²⁰ Pethő (2018) lists the numbers of these items, which are the following: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28 and 32.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Questionnaires



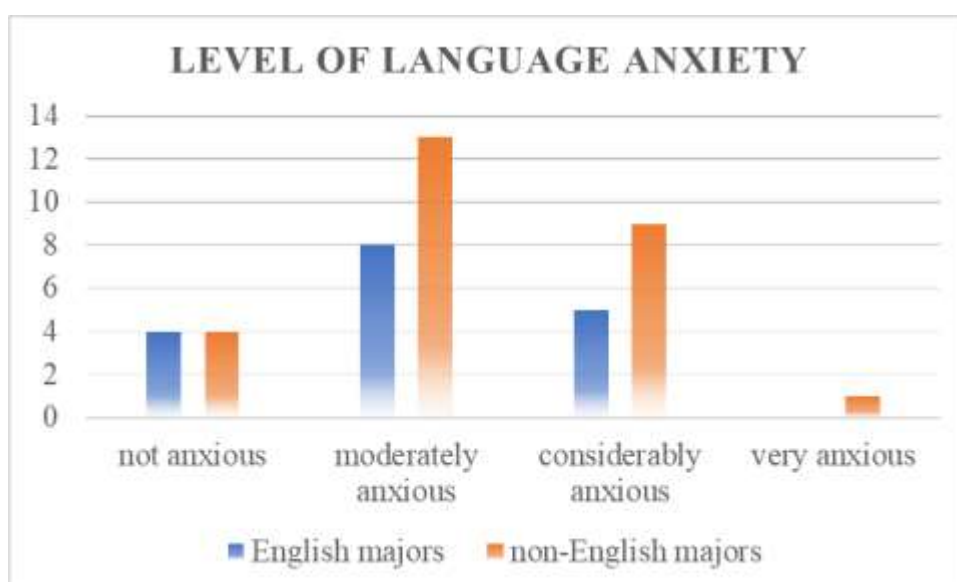
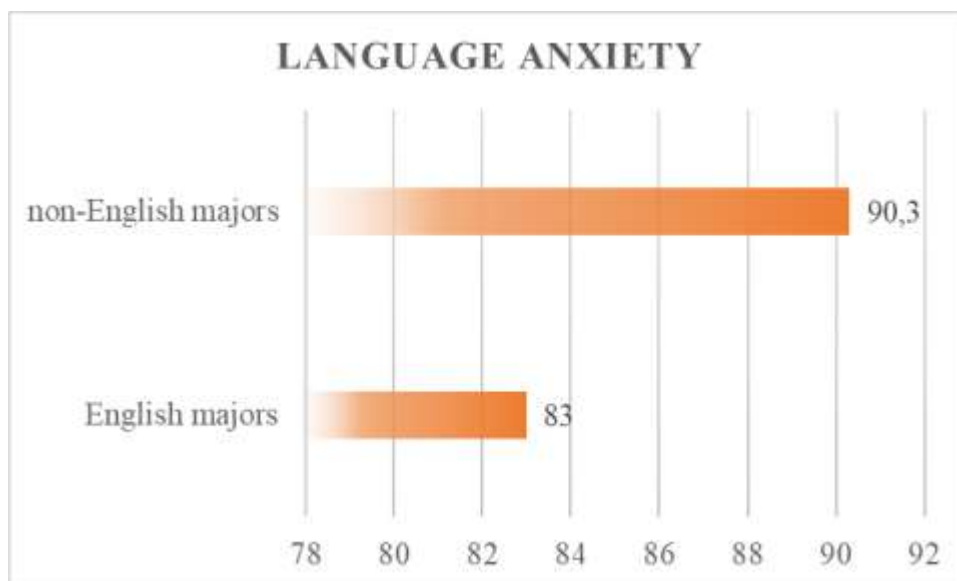
First of all, the mean value of state anxiety among English majors with debilitating anxiety was 42,65 and that of trait anxiety was 46,76. The average score given to state anxiety in the other group was 41,15 and the mean value of trait anxiety was 44,81. To sum up, English majors were moderately state anxious and highly trait anxious; non-English majors had moderate state anxiety and moderate trait anxiety, which answers my first research question about the level of state and trait anxiety of university students.



My second research question addressed the effect of language anxiety on students. In both groups the number of university students with debilitating language anxiety was higher. Finding out that 12 out of 29 (41,38%) English majors and 6 out of 33 (18,18%) non-English majors experienced facilitating anxiety indicates that those who base their studies and/or future on foreign language learning tend to be aided by language anxiety more.

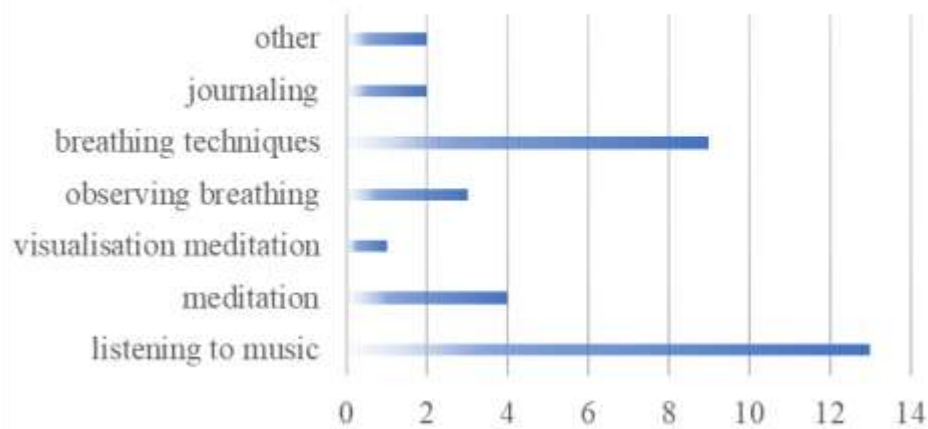
Third, in the case of English majors, 14 out of 17 students experiencing debilitating anxiety were (moderately or highly) trait anxious. There were only 2 students among these 14 individuals who did not consider themselves language anxious. The other 12 had (moderate

or considerable) language anxiety. So, 85,71% of trait anxious individuals with debilitating language anxiety also had foreign language anxiety in this group. Among the remaining 3 participants who had no trait anxiety, 2 did not have language anxiety and one was considerably anxious, according to the FLCAS. In the second group, 20 out of 27 university students had trait anxiety. 19 of these trait anxious respondents also had language anxiety, and only one of them was not anxious in the foreign language classroom. So, 95% of (highly or moderately) trait anxious individuals with debilitating language anxiety also had foreign language anxiety in the non-English major group. The level of language anxiety of the remaining 7 individuals who were not trait anxious was quite varied. 3 people were not anxious, but among the other 4 students, there were a considerably anxious, two moderately anxious and even a very anxious person based on the FLCAS. Although it can occur that a very language anxious student does not have trait anxiety or a trait anxious student does not have language anxiety, a tendency may be traced here. So, my empirical research indicates that there might be a connection between the level of trait anxiety and foreign language anxiety, which supports the findings of my background research (Mihaljević Djigunovi, 2006; Dewaele, 2013). (The tables that show the scores given by the respondents for the state, trait and language anxiety can be found in the Appendices section of my paper.)

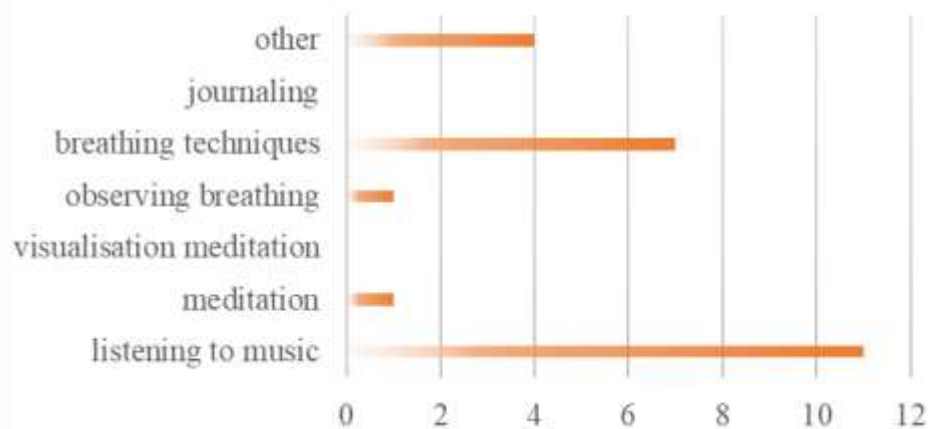


To answer the last research question, there was not much discrepancy between the level of anxiety among English and non-English majors. Those who study English at university had moderate (83) language anxiety, just like those who do not major in English (90,3). Comparing the scores, it can be stated that non-English majors tend to be more anxious in the foreign language class based on this research.

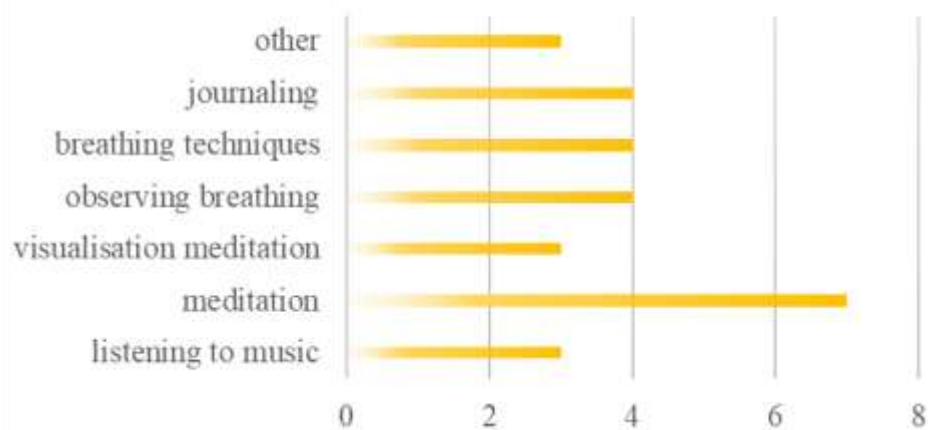
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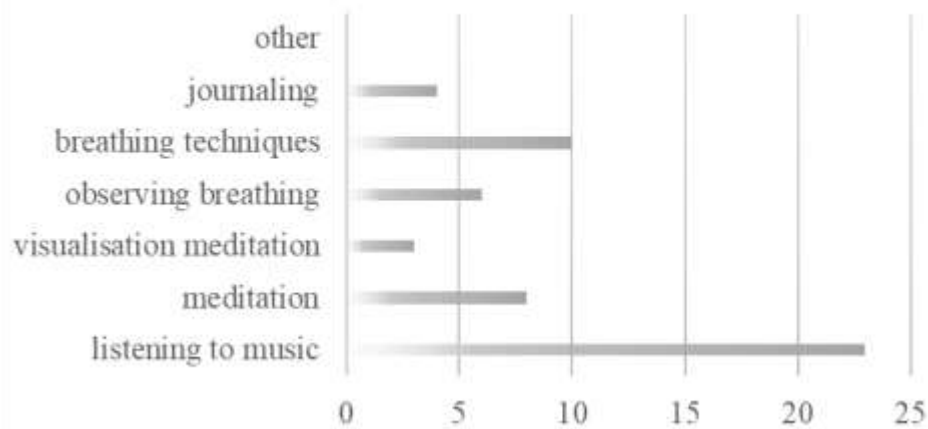
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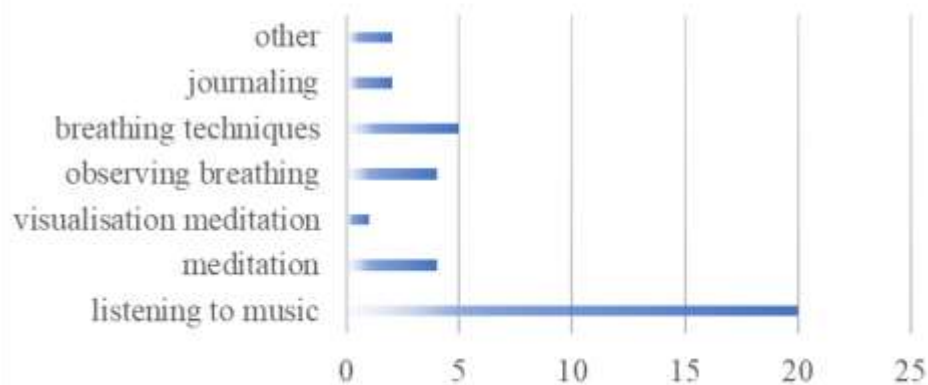
STRATEGIES THAT ENGLISH MAJORS WOULD LIKE TO TRY



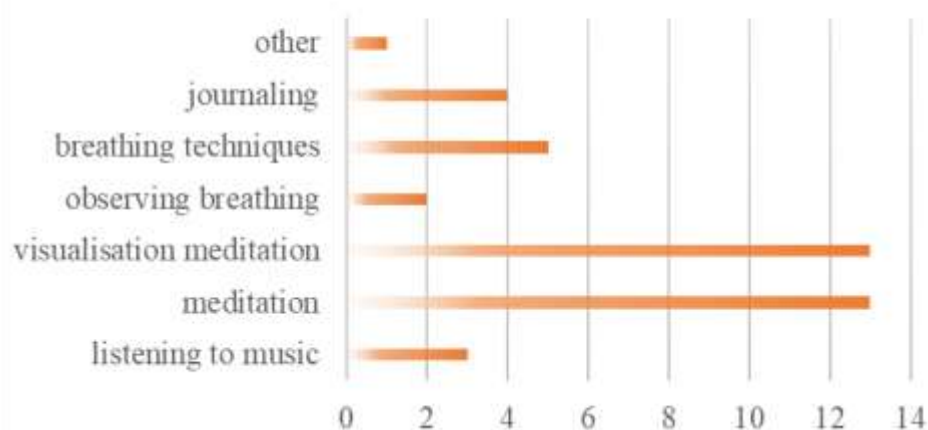
STRATEGIES NON-ENGLISH MAJORS HAVE ALREADY USED



STRATEGIES THAT HELPED NON-ENGLISH MAJORS REDUCE THEIR LA



STRATEGIES THAT NON-ENGLISH MAJORS WOULD LIKE TO TRY



The techniques applied in order to reduce language anxiety (LA) did not vary that much either. Among English majors, the most widely used coping strategies were breathing techniques and listening to music. The most helpful ones were these two as well. Some additional coping strategies were added by students, which include doing exercises (stretching) and talking to foreigners via Discord. 2 university students also reported that there is no strategy that has helped them reduce their language anxiety. Most of them would be willing to try meditation, but journaling, breathing techniques and observing their breath were also popular choices. On the contrary, 2 students mentioned that they would not like to experiment with further strategies, and one person gave voice to their worries about finding a strategy that could help them. Based on the questionnaires, the majority of non-English majors have already tried listening to music in order to reduce foreign language anxiety. (Breathing techniques and meditation were the runners-up.) The most useful coping strategy in this group was listening to music. A university student wrote that nothing aided him, and another individual reported that sleeping was helpful. Most non-English majors intended to try meditation (sitting, walking standing) and visualisation meditation, and only one student did not want to try any other strategies.

So, English majors did not offer numerous coping strategies either to complete the list in the questionnaire, and there was not too much difference between the strategies applied in the two groups. (Some students even gave voice to their worries about finding a useful strategy.) The results also showed that, except for 2 individuals, non-English majors were not taught coping strategies. (One of those two students even reported that these did not help her.) On the other hand, 9 English majors reported that their teachers taught them such strategies, and these actually helped 8 of them reduce language anxiety. Thus, this was the most significant difference between English and non-English majors, which might indicate

that ELT methodology shows competence in the field, which might be useful to disseminate among other teachers as well.

4.2 Interviews

The answers for my interview questions will be discussed based on the four units separated previously, but before the interviews, the eight university students must be introduced briefly. Student A is an English major who is studying to become a teacher. She has moderate state and high trait anxiety. Based on the questionnaire her language anxiety is moderate, and she reported that it is debilitating. Student B is going to be a language teacher too, and her other major is German. According to the questionnaire, she has facilitating language anxiety. The third teacher trainee, Student C, also majors in English. She is neither state nor trait anxious. In spite of the fact that she does not have foreign language anxiety either, she answered the question about the effect of language anxiety on her performance by ticking the option debilitating anxiety. This controversial response I intended to clarify in the interview. Student D is also an English major, who is going to teach Russian too, and she chose the option facilitating anxiety in the questionnaire. Apart from Student D, all the English major's teachers used coping strategies that they found helpful.

The first non-English major I interviewed was Student E. Her state and trait anxiety are both moderate, but she is considerably language anxious, and this anxiety is debilitating. Student F intends to become a language teacher, but she is not going to teach English. She does not consider herself state anxious, but she is highly trait anxious and her language anxiety is moderate. Based on her response foreign language anxiety has a negative effect on her performance. Student G is highly state and trait anxious, but his debilitating language anxiety is moderate. Student H also feels that his language anxiety affects his performance in a negative way. He got 120 points for the FLCAS, which falls into the considerably anxious category. His state anxiety is moderate and his trait anxiety is high. Unfortunately, none of

these non-English majors were given a hand by their teachers to reduce foreign language anxiety.

1. Do you consider yourself anxious? To what extent?

2. What makes you anxious? In what situations do you feel anxious?

The answers for the first set of questions were different but quite similar in some aspects. Student A said that she is rather anxious, but it depends on the situations. Situations in which her performance is being evaluated induce anxiety. Student B also considered herself anxious, but she expressed her view on the complexity of this question, however, she also mentioned that worrying before exams can also have a negative effect on her performance, and there are certain situations that make her anxious. She emphasized that competitive courses make her more anxious in the university, but it is especially induced by oral exams. Comparing this anxiety to her general anxiety it can be said that the latter is not that severe, but her text anxiety is a moderate one according to her scale, which is still controllable. In the case of language learning, the attitude of the teacher and group dynamics were mentioned by her as determining factors. Student C sees herself as a rather anxious person, and the feeling of anxiety is triggered by crowd, living in the city and using public transport as well. She also pointed out that anxiety affects her more when she is overwhelmed. She also drew the attention to the importance of environment by telling me that being at home helps her. It was difficult for her to decide the extent of this anxiety, but she said that nowadays it is not as bad as it was before. She did not only spoke of the requirements in the university but also the free time that is burdening her after that, as she implied. Apart from introducing her symptoms like feeling bodily tension or losing focus, she listed some coping strategies, like doing sports, paying attention to her breathing and getting enough sleep. Student D said that she is moderately anxious. Similarly to students A and B, she also feels anxious if the situation involves evaluation. She even mentioned that anxiety

caused by solving challenging tasks that will be evaluated is connected to her personality traits, as she is a perfectionist. In addition, she also experiences social anxiety, but it is not that dominant now.

Student E gave a definite answer to the first question, and she stated that she is anxious. Her anxiety, which she thinks is moderate, manifests itself before exams. Student F emphasized that her anxiety as well as the extent of it varies from time to time, but she tends to be rather anxious. She expressed her view on the relationship between stress and anxiety, LIT and also told me that both of them are connected to her studies, which makes her afraid of failing. On the other hand, it seems that assignments worry her more than exams, as she mentioned that the anxiety she considers the anxiety experienced before exams rather positive. The first thing student G referred to was exams. He was also concerned about whether anxiety is the right expression, but he mentioned that he feels nervous before test sometimes, but it is not that common, and its presence cannot really be traced during exams. The last student I interviewed considered himself anxious. Student H spoke of moderate anxiety which he experiences on such occasions when he unexpectedly finds himself in social situations.

To sum up, my interviewees reported that they are rather anxious, but none of them considered themselves very anxious. Some mentioned being anxious in the case of social situations, but most of them talked about occurrences which evaluation is an integral part of. Their anxiety is mostly connected to the university and often manifests itself before exams.

3. Have you experienced language anxiety in the foreign language class?

Have you ever experienced language anxiety outside the classroom?

If not, then why aren't you anxious in language learning situations? What is your secret?

4. When did you experience language anxiety?

5. What could be the cause of anxiety experienced during the language learning process?

6. Has this anxiety changed during your language learning process? If so, why?

In this phase, the interviewees talked about their personal experience, which was intriguing. Based on her answer to my question about experiencing language anxiety, Student A is usually not anxious during English lesson, but she is not completely free of language anxiety when it comes to oral exams, especially the ones she finds challenging, which also highlights the importance of evaluation and requirements. She emphasized the fact that she does not consider herself anxious in foreign language situations outside the classroom. What worry her a little are comprehension problems occurring during oral communications which can possibly be caused by her. Mistakes were identified by her as key factors concerning writing anxiety as well, since they cannot be erased. The interviewee mentioned that she always re-reads the texts she writes in English in order to make sure they are grammatically correct and have accurate spelling. She said that she mostly does this in informal writing situations, which are more difficult to be prepared for compared to formal situations that do not involve as much improvisation. Horwitz et al. (1986) discusses this phenomenon in oral communication, while comparing prepared speeches to speaking situations in which improvisation is needed.

Student B's language anxiety is dependent on various factors. She identified the environment, the requirements and the teacher as determining factors. She spoke of not being anxious if the group dynamics is good and the teacher is lenient or flexible enough to let her submit her homework later if she happens to miss the deadline. In addition, she is more encouraged to speak up if the teacher is interested in her opinion and is supportive. While discussing this, Student B also told me that the level of her German language anxiety is

higher than that of English. Furthermore, she spoke of the importance of the theme of the lesson as well, since controversial topics make her more anxious. When talking about her high school experiences, Student B pointed out that communication and expressing their opinion was not an integral part of English lessons. In spite of this, she does not tend to be anxious because of conversations in the foreign language. According to Student B, accuracy and the exam situation itself influence her more. Performance evaluation seems to be determinative too, as, besides the fact that completing university courses is a duty, she identified this as the difference between using English inside and outside the classroom. (The latter does not result in language anxiety.)

Experiencing language anxiety is not characteristic of Student C either, but she shared some thoughts on the importance of the teacher's as well. During her university years, she felt nervous in a course taught by a professor who she felt did not like her. This resulted in more errors than usual when she had to speak, even though the lessons involved games and such. Fortunately, this experience did not affect her language use in other circumstances. We also ended up talking about the relation between being an English teacher trainee and having language anxiety, but she said that her major does not make her anxious either, as she is confident in her English knowledge.

The fourth English major I interviewed, Student D, said that she is currently experiencing language anxiety, but in her Russian lessons. (Sharing her thoughts in the foreign language is what she finds difficult, which impedes her language use.) As for English, she could not recall any occurrences that caused her to be anxious at first. She told me that being familiar with a significant part of English vocabulary due to speaking French had helped her. The support and encouragement of her environment meant a lot, since it made her trust herself. Even though she suggested that telling someone that they have a talent for languages might be harmful, as it could discard the efforts made in order to acquire a foreign

language, it did not influence her negatively. Later she shared her concern about reacting spontaneously in the event of using English, for example for giving directions, outside the classroom. She also referred to a situation in which she pointed someone to the wrong direction due to her language anxiety. Specifically, she is worried about accuracy (pronunciation, using the right word), intelligibility and the embarrassment these possible mistakes might result in. Being afraid of having imperfect pronunciation and limited vocabulary are also key factors according to the literature on speaking anxiety (Ansari, 2015). At the end of the interview, when I inquired about her additional thoughts, she spoke of the personality of the role of the teacher, and she told me about classmates who were afraid that their teacher would reprimand or humiliate them the event of failure.

The first non-English major reported that she does not have language anxiety at the moment, but she stated that the reason for this is probably due to her learning conditions. Now she is taking private lessons, but she implied that the situation would be different if she was a member of a group. She used to be more anxious in primary school, especially because of her performance. She even mentioned copying the pupil sitting next to her, as she was afraid that what she was doing would not be good. When summarizing her high school experiences, Student E talked about the role of teachers in her language learning process, which revealed how the educators made her more or less confident. For 2 years she had to cram for oral tests, so speaking spontaneously was difficult for her in the first part of secondary school. After getting a new teacher, oral communication and improvisation were not problematic for her. On the other hand, she did not hold the former teacher responsible and assumed that instead of their personality, there could have been some other cause of her language anxiety. (The very same language teacher was one of her examiners in the oral part of her language exam, and her presence actually made her calm at that time.) Nonetheless, in the last part of the interview attitude towards does matter. he told me that the personality of

the teacher and their at Regarding the source of anxiety, she also acknowledged grammar mistakes as one of these. She added that she did not only notice it in speaking but also writing (use of English tasks). Student E implied that the embarrassment of telling the teacher a wrong answer can also have a negative effect, so I asked about the possible influence that the teacher's and her classmate's opinion might have had on her. After this question she clarified that the group atmosphere was critical for her, and she assumes that she was not that carefree in the lessons because her classes did not gel. Besides, she told me a story about feeling anxious when using English outside the classroom for giving directions. However, it is a relief for her if she knows that the people she is communicating with, non-native speakers, for example, also make mistakes and might not notice hers.

The first thing Student F stated was that her language anxiety changed during her years of learning English, but currently it is very low. She enjoyed the private lessons, which involved games and learning with her friends. Her teacher's kindness also contributed to the fact that she liked English. Learning English, however, caused her distress when she wanted to take the advanced language exam and realized that she has to improve a lot in a short amount of time, as the difference between the levels B2 and C1 are not the same as in German. She managed to pass the exam, which still gives her confidence, just like understanding series in English. (Later she also told me that a significant cause of her German anxiety is the expectations connected to becoming a language teacher, while she associates English with entertainment and fun.) Recently she has got a job, which involves talking to tourists, and her anxiety appears sometimes when she encounters problems like not being able to remember a word, which disrupt her communication. She also observed that there are tell-tale signs of this language anxiety, since she can overcome these obstacles quite soon, but she does feel anxious on the inside. She tends to go over the conversation after it, so the mistakes and the fear of failure do not seem to impede her during communication.

The memories of Student G's high school English lessons are not so fond. He did not feel comfortable because of his teacher, who, as he implied, humiliated him and his classmates if there was something they did not know. Student G insisted that he did not have a talent for learning English, and he told me that it is not the teacher's fault. Nonetheless, later he spoke of his lessons in more detail and highlighted the importance of the group atmosphere while telling me about being afraid of being laughed at. This kind of pressure was not a factor to consider in the private lessons, since he was alone, and his private teacher was very supportive. After he started to talk regularly to a foreigner, however, the situation completely changed, and practice helped him overcome anxiety (especially the fear of saying something 'stupid').

According to Student H, he experiences language anxiety in the event of oral communication. Tasks like summarizing a written text verbally made him anxious in the classroom, and he pinpointed the requirements concerning accuracy in both writing and speaking as the cause. He acknowledged that he is still affected by this and mentioned that the presence of language anxiety can also be traced in situations outside the classroom, but it is not that severe. Moreover, Student H helped me gain insight into the relation between trait and language anxiety by revealing that he has a propensity to be anxious in social situations, and this is connected to the language anxiety he experiences. Later he added that language anxiety might be related to speaking in front of other people, and the fact that this has to be done in the foreign language makes this "performance situation" more difficult. This confirms that fear of public speaking is one of the elements that affect speaking anxiety (Ansari, 2015).

So, the answers for this part were very useful, since it managed to identify some main causes of anxiety, which could help us better understand and cope with foreign language anxiety. Some of the interviewees do not have language anxiety now, but all had some

memories to share, which revealed that oral communication, accuracy (requirements), the teacher, the group are key factors. Students were anxious if the activities involved improvisation, and they were also afraid of making mistakes, which might result in misunderstandings or social embarrassment. The teacher's personality and attitude along with the group atmosphere mattered a lot as well. Besides, some mentioned the differences between languages, and the relationship between language anxiety and other types of anxiety (such as social anxiety), which shows the complexity of language anxiety.

7. Based on your experience how does this anxiety affect your performance?

Based on the questionnaire Student A has debilitating language anxiety, but since she did not consider herself that anxious, I did not ask further questions about the effect of this phenomenon on her performance. While answering the first question, Student B talked about facilitating anxiety without any prompt. She reported that anxiety can encourage her to find strategies to cope with a given situation and help her prepare for it; nonetheless, it happens that it negatively influences her results in the case of an important exam, for instance. It was not clear whether she referred to general as well as language anxiety at this point, but afterwards I asked her what she meant when she chose the option facilitating language anxiety in the questionnaire, and her answer confirmed that it does motivate her and help her prepare for tests and challenges more effectively. However, she expressed her wish not to be anxious right before these events, because that does not aid her. As the questionnaire and the interview revealed, Student C does not have language anxiety, and even though she mentioned an exceptional event that influenced her performance, it did not play an important role. (Her difficulty lay in finding the right words in English, but she found solutions to this problem, which were paraphrasing and asking for the translation of the Hungarian word she uttered.) Student D, who reported in the questionnaire that language anxiety rather aids her, said that her performance can be negatively influenced by this phenomenon, and when it

happens, her mind goes blank. Nevertheless, she talked about the facilitating effect of anxiety in more detail. Similarly to Student B, anxiety motivates her to study for tests as well.

Among the non-English majors I interviewed, all experienced debilitating language anxiety based on the results of the questionnaire. During our conversation, Student E implied that language anxiety did not have a positive effect on her performance. Student F did not explicitly say that anxiety can help her, but she told me that she perceives it as rather positive if it is not that serious and does not obstruct her. Moreover, she shared her distinct experiences concerning the effect of language anxiety on her performance in English and German. I did not ask Student G specifically about the relation of his language anxiety to his result, as he already spoke of not being able to participate in conversations due to foreign language anxiety in secondary school, which are in line with the findings of the questionnaire. Student H stated that language anxiety impedes him, especially during oral communication.

In conclusion, the interviews disclosed that whether the language anxiety students experience is debilitating or facilitating cannot really be defined clearly. It was especially difficult to determine it, as it often depends on the situation. It seems that anxiety is most disruptive when students have to take exams or express themselves verbally. However, some mentioned that anxiety can motivate them and help the process of preparation.

8. What helped you cope with language anxiety? Why did you choose this strategy? Are there any strategies you have heard of but have not tried yet?

9. Did you get any outside assistance? If so, who helped you? Did your teachers use or show you any strategies to reduce anxiety? Did they help?

10. Have the strategies used to reduce language anxiety helped you in a different area of life?

11. Would you like to try mindfulness? Why?

Regarding the coping strategies, the interviews were very useful; they helped me a great deal in interpreting the data collected beforehand. The techniques Student A applied were not specifically used to reduce language anxiety, as she indicated. She talked about breathing techniques and listening to music. During the pandemics, she took part in yoga classes, and that is how she learned some breathing techniques, such as box breathing, which helped her cope with anxiety. She also offered that sometimes it is enough to take a deep breath to be able to analyse her current situation or be able to see things from a different perspective. It has to be noted that, in her view, it takes practice. Focusing on her breathing proved to be very helpful right before the events that trigger her anxiety because she does not have the opportunity to listen to music then. To my surprise, she listens to her favourite songs when she feels anxious. Since they evoke positive emotions and are associated with memories and nostalgia, they make her relax. She discovered the calming effect of songs after being introduced to my research, but she has already known that music can be a powerful tool. During her short teaching practice, she used songs collected by her students as background music, and she thought that this helped the learners feel a sense of community. Apart from these strategies, she talked about the possible calming effect of scents, but they were not helpful for her. However, the study of Önem (2015) suggests that aromatherapy can be used to reduce language anxiety. Student A could not remember being taught strategies by her language teachers, but she thought that using mindfulness techniques can cope with anxiety, as they encourage individuals to focus on the present. Thus, they do not worry about the future. She claimed that telling herself that she should focus on what is happening now helps a lot. Therefore, she would like to learn more about mindfulness and reducing anxiety in general. In her opinion, it would also aid students if their teachers talked about this topic in English lessons.

Student B expressed that thorough preparation is essential in her case, as being aware that she did everything she could and she has the knowledge to face the challenges reassure her. She even introduced how she spends her days before an exam or presentation and emphasized the importance of focusing primarily on these upcoming events. She also revealed that she is more anxious if the requirements are not clear and she does not know exactly how to prepare for the test or exam. Therefore, she suggested that it can help reduce anxiety if teachers inform students about their expectations in advance. Besides, the aspects of evaluation should be made public as well. Student B also mentioned that contributing to spontaneous classroom discussions is also of paramount importance; she implied that she gains confidence in such instances, as she gets confirmation of her communication skills. Preparation was also a key element here, since she made a remark about collecting her ideas before saying anything. She also takes precautions when signing up for university, as she is aware of the importance of the role of group cohesion and the teacher. Along with these different forms of preparation, she mentioned practice, especially that of grammar, but she referred to German while talking about it. (In addition, she argued that taking tests regularly instead of taking one at the end of the semester puts her at ease in her English courses.) In the final part of the interview, she spoke of a course she took, which aim was to reduce anxiety. Thanks to this university course she learned about relaxing techniques, but she suggested that they should be done regularly in order for them to work. What were more useful for her were focusing on her goals and saying herself that she did everything in her power to prepare for the situation at hand.

While talking about general anxiety, Student C listed quite a lot of techniques or habits that aided her. (Talking to a psychologist and being aware of what she is going through, having a stress pig, listening to music she likes, taking water and crunchy food with her, reading, chewing gums, reminding herself of the fact that the people around her can give

her a hand if it is needed etc. helped her.) Among these, therapy and talking about anxiety can be used to reduce language anxiety too. She also highlighted the significance of self-knowledge, and her attitude and her words called my attention to confidence as well. My background research also proves that confidence is important (Tar, 2015; Pethő, 2018). She told me that if she trusts herself others cannot discourage her. Afterwards, she spoke of her teachers who did not really cover this topic, but she learned in the university that organizing the classroom thoughtfully can help involving anxious students who are reluctant to speak up. (First, students talk in pairs, then they work in small groups, and after that they may have to share their thoughts in front of the whole class.) According to Student C, breathing techniques and similar ones only function as band aids. Moreover, they personally make her more anxious. That is why she views therapy as a viable option.

Student D could not recall any method to reduce language anxiety, and they did not have a discussion about it in any of her classes. After asking about her answers in the questionnaire, she talked about writing a diary in English. In her opinion, an English diary does not only provide an opportunity for practice, but also puts people at ease, since there are no requirements involved in the process of writing. The other strategies she told me about were used by her to cope with general anxiety. The audio material she got from a psychologist was not useful for her, because she could not focus on them. However, listening to relaxing voices, like that of the rain played in the background helped her more.

Continuous positive feedback is something that helps Student E reduce her language anxiety. (Unless she is among people who she has a good relation with, thus is not afraid of making mistakes in front of them, she tends to be insecure.) The support of her private teacher, who praised her a lot, was also meaningful. The fact that she pointed out her mistakes, but it was not the first thing she focused on also aided Student E. In order to reduce anxiety, she listens to songs that motivate her (not only before language exams but other ones

as well) and exercises certain practices (like making sure she remembers a given part of the material), but what puts her at ease is the support and trust of others. She talked about paying attention to her breathing before an exam or writing about her feelings, but what she really emphasized was the encouragement of others. She even mentioned that before an exam she sometimes sends texts about her feelings and worries to people and she is anxiously waiting for them to reply and say that she could pass it. (Furthermore, she would be willing to try mindfulness techniques, as she feels that she should focus on reducing her language anxiety due to her upcoming language exam.)

When I inquired about the coping strategies, Student F said that her teachers did not use such techniques, but their kindness was very helpful. The fact that the tests given by her private teacher did not have a stake also put her at ease. Besides, her English teacher at school tried to create a relaxing atmosphere in the classroom (even before tests by coming in early and telling the learners not to worry). In addition, this teacher had private conversations with those students who needed further encouragement. The further discussion about the strategies did not only involve language learning situations. Student F confirmed what others informed me about listening to music, as she listens to songs that motivate her before exams. Paying attention to her posture and trying out power poses helped her along with pretending to be confident ('fake it till you make it') and telling herself she is capable of passing the exam. She has already used breathing techniques to reduce general anxiety, but what helps her nowadays cope with language anxiety is self-affirmation. She usually gives a speech to herself when she is at work and has to use English.

Student G's teachers did not talk about language anxiety either, but he shared his concerns with her family, whose support meant a lot to him. They simply reassured him that foreigners would understand him even if he makes some mistakes. Knowing that she became more natural speaking English, and he even uses gestures. Moreover, she is sure that the

errors would not even bother him now if he was to meet his former teacher. In fact, Student G expressed his view on language teaching in Hungary too. He told me that grammatical correctness is overestimated in education, which results in communication apprehension. He has never tried breathing techniques or several ones, but self-affirmation (telling himself that everything will be alright) was useful in his case too. Besides, songs he can attach memories to make him less aware of his problems due to the emotions they evoke. Last but not least, he spoke of community, which he considers determinative, as not being afraid of the others looking down on them can make students less anxious.

Student H also realized that the main goal of using a foreign language is mutual understanding. He proclaimed that the fact that school requirements are more distant in time helps him too. Now he can cope with disruptions in communications better because he can just rephrase his sentences. Apart from this, he mentioned that practice can be very helpful as well. In addition, having an outline in his head about what he wants to say is a good strategy as well. It was especially useful for him when he was preparing for the language exam. Moreover, listening to music he likes also serve as a distraction that help him reduce anxiety. He even listens to relaxing songs, but they usually aid him while being at work or studying. Instead of using breathing techniques during communication, for example, he applies these or other relaxing techniques involving visualisation to release tension. According to Student H, mindfulness could help people cope with language anxiety, but he imagines that the techniques can be applied during learning and preparation to make the experience more positive.

To sum up, the boundaries between reducing foreign language anxiety and general anxiety seem to be blurred, and the coping strategies applied by the interviewees underpin that. The interviews did not only prove to be revealing in this respect, but they also drew my attention to the different interpretations of the coping strategies listed in the questionnaire.

Based on the conversations with the university students, the most effective strategies to cope with language anxiety cannot be determined. However, building confidence, preparation, and listening to music seem to be widely used. Even though, these are not necessarily strategies, most students said that the classroom atmosphere and the teacher are paramount in coping with language anxiety. Likewise, numerous studies underline the importance of the role of the instructor (Aida, 1994). Some interviewees also found breathing techniques, writing about their feelings, not attributing too much significance to mistakes, getting praise and support important. In addition, some also pointed out that it would be imperative to talk about language anxiety with the individuals affected by it. Their suggestions support the findings of researchers who investigated language anxiety. Bandura (1997) considers positive feedback crucial in reducing anxiety and increasing language learners' confidence (cited in Zhang, 2010). Among others, Pethő (2018) also found that students are highly influenced by the fear of making mistakes. Hence, talking about the irrational beliefs concerning the process of language learning is imperative based on the literature as well (Young, 1994).

5. Conclusion

The main focus of my paper was to investigate the connection between (debilitating) language anxiety and anxiety as a personality trait. Therefore, I asked the following 3 research questions:

1. To what extent are university students participating in the research trait and state anxious?
2. How does the language anxiety students experience affect their learning?
3. Is there a connection between the level of trait anxiety and foreign language anxiety?

Based on my research, English majors had moderate state anxiety and high trait anxiety, while non-English majors were moderately state and trait anxious. Further research on a larger sample would be needed to draw any conclusions based on this result. In the first group 12 out of 29 university students, and in the non-English major group, 6 out of 33 participants experienced facilitating anxiety. Apart from the diversity of causes, the interviews also shed light on the complexity of the issue of debilitating and facilitating anxiety. Whether it aids or hinders students often depends on the circumstances. The majority of interviewees experienced the negative effect of anxiety on their performance before exams; however, some reported that they can benefit from it while studying for tests.

95% of (highly or moderately) trait anxious individuals with debilitating language anxiety also had foreign language anxiety in the non-English major group, and the proportion was 85,71% among English majors. Though some previous studies (for instance, MacIntyre and Gardner 1989, cited in Dewaele, 2013) reported that general and language anxiety are independent anxieties, the present research revealed that it is highly possible that there is a correlation between trait anxiety and language anxiety. (However, further research is needed

with a larger pool.) The results are in line with the findings of Dewaele (2013), who, as mentioned above, studied the relationship between language anxiety and psychoticism, extraversion and neuroticism²¹. (The last concept was used as a proxy for trait anxiety in his research.) He was curious if anxiety as a personality trait is related to foreign language anxiety and found a significant correlation (Dewaele, 2013). Aside from the results of the questionnaires and my theoretical research, the interviews also support this claim, and an interviewee even verbalized this by saying that his general anxiety and foreign language anxiety are connected. The findings also suggest that, as expected, language anxiety is a complex phenomenon influenced by several factors of which trait anxiety is just one.

The second objective of my research was to survey the strategies language learners use themselves in order to reduce language anxiety. My intention was to get more insight into the coping strategies that may help students despite hindering factors (such as group atmosphere or personality of the teacher) that they do not have much influence on. In addition, I intended to explore the possible differences between English majors and non-English majors. My 4th research question addresses this issue:

4. How do the level of language anxiety and the strategies applied in order to reduce it vary among English majors and those who are not foreign language majors but have English language learning experience?

The research revealed that non-English majors experienced higher levels of foreign language anxiety, but there was not a huge difference between the mean values (of the language anxiety of the two groups.) To my surprise, English majors did not offer numerous coping strategies either, and there was not too much difference between the strategies applied. In both groups, the most popular and useful coping strategy was listening to music, and the majority of university students reported that they would be willing to try meditation.

²¹ These three dimensions are the basis of the Eysenck personality questionnaire (Dewaele, 2013).

Furthermore, the interviewees emphasized the importance of building confidence (self-affirmation), preparation for the situations in which English needs to be used, and listening to songs they like and which evoke positive emotions.

The results of the study also show that the most significant difference between the two groups was that the teachers of non-English majors only sparsely taught them coping strategies. 9 English majors reported that their teachers used techniques to reduce language anxiety, but only 2 non-English majors were not taught such strategies, which suggests that English majors were helped more. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, it did not result in English majors adding more strategies to the list provided in the questionnaire. In addition, none of the interviewees mentioned that their teachers used or talked about such strategies. However, concerning reducing language anxiety, the interviews (made with both English and non-English majors) revealed that addressing the issue of foreign language anxiety in the classroom and focusing on intelligibility instead of mistakes would be imperative.

Since the present study entails small-scale research, further research on a larger sample would be necessary. Self-selection is also a reason why the results of my investigation cannot be generalized. Factors other than trait anxiety were not considered either, as I was mainly interested in the effect of trait anxiety on language learning. Based on the data from this research, I can conclude that there are many variables concerning anxiety and language learning, but the findings show that there is a tendency for trait anxious students to experience foreign language anxiety, and this result might help us search for new strategies to cope with language anxiety. Thus, this area is worth further and deeper investigation as well as the practical application of the strategies.

While working on my research, I found out that it had already helped one student who reported in the interview that it made her realize how listening to music can be used to reduce anxiety. Similarly to this individual, my research helped me deal with my own language

anxiety. I have not only gained a deeper understanding of the relationship between anxiety and language learning, but I have also broadened my knowledge of strategies to cope with it. I hope that other language learners and teachers will benefit from the present study as well.

6. Magyar nyelvű összefoglaló

6.1 Elméleti háttér

6.1.1 A szorongás

Spielberger a szorongást a nyugtalanság, feszültség, aggodalom és idegesség szubjektív érzésével azonosítja (Horwitz et al, 1986). Lazarus (1999) tisztázza a legfontosabb kérdéseket, amik a fogalom használatához kapcsolódnak. Ő alkotta meg a stresszérzelmek (*stress emotions*) kifejezést, ami olyan érzéseket nevez meg, amiket stresszes (fenyegető, kihívást jelentő) körülmények váltanak ki. Ezek közé sorolja például a félelmet, a szégyent, a haragot, a büntudatot és a szorongást. Arra is kitér, hogy a szakemberek számos más terminust használtak a stressz megnevezésére, melyek egyike a szorongás. Elismeri, hogy ezek a kifejezések valamelyest átfedésben állnak a stresszel, de különböznek is attól. A *stressz* kifejezés az 1960-as évektől magába foglalja azokat a fogalmakat, amik a mindennapokban tapasztalt nyomással való megküzdés okait és érzelmi következményeit jelölik. A szorongást szerinte a halál és a nemlét okozta egzisztenciális fenyegetettség, illetve az ennek való kitettség okozza. Lazarus azt írja, hogy a szorongást okozó fenyegetés nem biztos, hogy bekövetkezik, ugyanakkor vannak egzisztenciális vonatkozásai, hiszen az egyén személyéhez, illetve az élethez és a halálhoz kötődik. Ezért teszi azt a megállapítást, hogy kapcsolatban áll az identitással (Lazarus 1999).

A stressztől való megkülönböztetés mellett fontos a szorongás egyénre tett hatásáról is szót ejteni. Young (1994) foglalja össze a debilizáló és facilitáló szorongás közti különbséget. Míg előbbi kedvezőtlen hatással van az egyénre, addig utóbbi javíthatja is a teljesítményt (Young 1994).

6.1.2 A vonásszorongás

A kutatók többféle szorongástípust különítettek el. Spielberger két kategóriát határozott meg, melyek a *trait anxiety* (vonásszorongás) és *state anxiety* (állapotszorongás) nevet viselik (Pethő 2018). A vonásszorongók csoportjába azok tartoznak, akik szorongása személyiségükből ered. Nekik hajlamuk van a szorongásra, ami ennek következtében folyamatosan jelen van mindennapjaikban. Az állapotszorongást azonban valamilyen vészhelyzet pl. vizsgaszituáció váltja ki. Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) szerint így vannak olyanok, akik csak bizonyos helyzetekben szoronganak, illetve olyanok, akikre általánosságban jellemző a szorongás. (Utóbbiakat az különbözteti meg az előbbiektől, hogy többféle szituációban szoronganak.) Pethő (2018) beszámol arról is, hogy Spielberger az általa összeállított kérdőívnek, aminek célja az előbbieken megnevezett két szorongástípus

mérése, a *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)* nevet adta. Megjegyzendő, hogy általában azoknak a személyeknek, akik hajlamosak a szorongásra az állapotszorongásuk is fokozottabb azokénál, akiknek alacsonyabb a vonásszorongásuk. Ebből az következik, hogy ha a kitöltő vonásszorongási szintje magas, akkor feltételezhetően az olyan szituációkban, amik fokozzák a szorongást feszültebbé válik és visszahúzódó magatartást fog produkálni (Pethő 2018).

A vonásszorongás a teljesítmény szempontjából is meghatározó. Zeidner (1998) a vonásszorongásnak nagy jelentőséget tulajdonított a vizsgaszorongás tanulmányozása során (idézi Pethő 2018). Pajkossy (2014) pedig megállapította, hogy a teljesítményre a vonásszorongás negatívan hat. A szorongás általában, és a vonásszorongás specifikusan a kognitív kontroll folyamatok károsodásával jár együtt. Ennek oka az, hogy a magas vonásszorongással jellemezhető személyeknél a zavaró gondolatok és fenyegető ingerek gyors feldolgozása elvonja a figyelmet és a feldolgozási erőforrásokat más mentális műveletektől (Pajkossy 2014). Socan-Bucik (1998) bebizonyította, hogy az optimális teljesítmény eléréséhez az szükséges, hogy az arousal szint is megfelelő legyen. Ennek – ahogyan ők is leszögezték – az extrovertáltak és introvertáltak számára mások a feltételei (idézi Hamedi et al, 2015).

6.1.3 Az extrovertált-introvertált skála

Az emberek személyiségének egyik legmeghatározóbb jellemzője az extrovertáltság és introvertáltság²², ezért az ezen személyiség típusok közötti különbségek kiemelt fontosságúak (Hamedi et al, 2015). Dewaele and Furnham (1999) tanulmányából az is kiderül, hogy az introvertáltak érzékenyebben reagálnak arra, ha nagyobb nyomásnak vannak kitéve, ami hatással van a kommunikációjukra (idézi Hamedi et al, 2015). (Ezt az okozza, hogy ilyen helyzetekben az arousal szint magasabb annál, mint ami nekik optimális.) Beszédük így lassabb és kevésbé folyamatos lesz, amire továbbá jellemzők a megakadásjelenségek (Hamedi et al, 2015).

Az idegennyelvi szorongás fokának az introvertált-extrovertált skálával való összevetésére több kutatás irányult. Hamedi és munkatársai (2015) az idegennyelven folytatott beszédűtől való szorongás és az extrovertáltság mértékének kapcsolatát vizsgálták és arra tettek kísérletet, hogy megállapítsák, milyen összefüggés van a személyiség típus és a

²² Jungnak köszönhetően váltak ezek a terminusok ismertté (1917). A legjelentősebb különbség az általa megnevezett két személyiség típus között az, hogy az introvertáltak szociális interakció során energiát veszítenek, azonban az extrovertáltak esetében ennek az ellenkezője történik (Cain 2013).

beszéd folyamatossága, illetve helyessége között. A kvantitatív fázisban a résztvevők extrovertáltságának szintjét, illetve a nyilvános beszédétől való szorongásuk fokát mérték fel. A kutatás második szakaszában az egyetemisták szóbeli megnyilatkozásait rögzítették, hogy kiderítsék, milyen kapcsolatban áll a személyiségük a beszéd folyamatosságával és a szóbeli nyelvhelyességgel.

A vizsgálatból kiderült, hogy minél extrovertáltabb volt a hallgató, annál kevésbé szorongott az idegennyelven történő beszédétől, ami bizonyítja, hogy az introvertáltakra jellemző a magasabb fokú szorongás. A kutatás kvalitatív fázisának eredményei alapján megállapították, hogy a hallgatók beszéde annál folyékonyabb, minél inkább extrovertált az illető. A beszéd helyességéről azonban kiderült, hogy nem befolyásolja jelentős mértékben az extrovertáltság szintje (Hamedi et al, 2015).

6.1.4 Az idegennyelvi szorongás

Manapság egyre több figyelem irányul arra a megközelítésre, ami az idegennyelvi szorongás azon aspektusaira fókuszál, melyek összefüggésbe hozhatók a személyiségjegyekkel, de az idegennyelvi szorongás egyik legismertebb definíciója Horwitz és munkatársainak 1986-os tanulmányából származik. Horwitzék arra tettek kísérletet, hogy az idegennyelvi szorongást, illetve annak jellegzetes jegyeit meghatározzák. Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) szerint az idegennyelv-tanulás sok esetben vált ki szorongást a diákokból; ez különösen igaz akkor, ha tanórai keretek között zajlik. Az idegennyelvi szorongás akadályozza a tanulókat, ami kihat a teljesítményükre is. Megállapítják továbbá, hogy a teljesítményszorongás kapcsolatban áll az idegennyelvvél. A teljesítményszorongáson belül a kommunikációtól, a vizsgázástól, illetve a negatív értékeléstől való félelmet jelöli meg mint az idegennyelvi szorongáshoz kötődő és a teljesítmény értékelését magába foglaló jelenséget.

Az első szorongástípus, a kommunikációtól való félelem a személyközi kapcsolatok szerepének tulajdonít nagy jelentőséget. Azok a nyelvtanulók, akik félnek a másokkal való kommunikációtól, többféle szituációban is szorongást tapasztalnak. Amikor például a szorongóknak a nyilvánosság előtt kell megszólalniuk, akkor lámpalázzal néznek szembe. Abban az esetben pedig, amikor egy szóban elhangzó szöveg meghallgatása vagy megtanulása a feladatuk, befogadói szorongást (*receiver anxiety*) tapasztalnak. Horwitzék állítása szerint az, hogy a diákok állandó megfigyelés alatt állnak az idegennyelvi órákon, nehéz helyzetbe hozza a másokkal való kommunikációtól szorongókat.

Ezt tovább fokozza az a tény, hogy a beszédsszituáció se igazán az ő irányításuk alatt áll. Az idegennyelvi kommunikáció velejárója, hogy a diákok számára rendelkezésre álló eszközök az önkifejezésre korlátozottak, hiszen nem az anyanyelvükön szólalnak meg. A

kommunikációtól való félelem tehát sajátos formában jelenik meg az idegennyelvi órákon, ugyanis a tanulók tisztában vannak azzal, hogy önmaguk megértetése és mások megértése kihívást fog jelenteni (Horwitz et al, 1986).

A vizsgaszorongás a második típus, ami a teljesítménnyel hozható összefüggésbe. Ez a teljesítményszorongás azon fajtája, ami a kudarcból való félelmet foglalja magába. Éppen ezért elkerülhetetlen, hogy a diákok hibázzanak, a vizsgaszorongók a nem tökéletes teljesítményt mégis kudarcként könyvelik el. Számukra különösen nehéz a szóbeli vizsgákon való részvétel is, hiszen vizsgaszorongás mellett szóbeli kommunikációtól való szorongást is tapasztalhatnak ilyen szituációkban (Horwitz et al, 1986).

A teljesítményszorongás harmadik, idegennyelvtanuláshoz kötődő fajtája a negatív értékeléstől való félelem. Az érintettek jellemző, hogy tartanak azoktól a helyzetektől, amikben mások értékelik őket, így igyekeznek ezek elől kitérni. Az elkerülő magatartás magyarázata az, hogy arra számítanak, hogy mások kedvezőtlenül fogják őket megítélni, ami szorongást kelt bennük. A nyelvórákon történő szóbeli megnyilvánulás tipikus példája az olyan társas helyzetnek, ami értékelést foglal magába. Az idegennyelv-tanulás Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) szerint azért egyedi eset, mert – amint arról már a kommunikációtól való szorongás tárgyalásánál szó esett – a diákok folyamatosan ki vannak téve tanáruk (és társaik) értékelésének.

Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) tehát úgy vélik, hogy a szorongás egy sajátos formája az idegennyelvi, amit azzal indokolnak, hogy ez a szorongás magára a nyelvtanulási szituációra korlátozódik. MacIntyre (1999) meghatározása, ami alapján „az idegennyelvi szorongás olyan egyedi szorongásforma, amely speciális és releváns nyelvtanulási kontextusban jelentkezik, és jól elkülöníthető más szorongásformáktól”, szintén ezt hangsúlyozza (idézi: Pethő 2018: 137). Megjegyzendő, hogy Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) a szorongás nyelvtanulásra tett hatásait vizsgálva arra a következtetésre jutottak, hogy a szorongó nyelvtanulók reakciói nem térnek el a specifikus szorongást tapasztalókéétól. Megegyeznek az érzéseik (aggodalom, félelem, nyugtalanság) és egyéb tüneteik (feledékenység, koncentrációs nehézségek, szabálytalan szívverés) is. Emellett a viselkedésük is hasonlóságot mutat; mindkét esetben jellemző az elkerülés, ami pl. halogatás vagy iskolakerülés formájában nyilvánul meg. Más kutatások (Young 1994; Zhang 2010) az idegennyelvi szorongás okainak tárgyalása kapcsán hívják fel a figyelmet az egyéb szorongástípusokkal való kapcsolatra, illetve a személyiségjegyek szerepére.

6.1.5 Az idegennyelvi szorongás csökkentése

Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) úgy vélik, hogy a nyelvtanulás során a kifejezetten ahhoz kapcsolódó hiedelmek, viselkedésmódok, érzések és a diákok énképe az, ami meghatározza a szorongást. Tar (2015) kutatásának azon része, melyben a szorongás típusait és a nyelvtanulási stratégiák főkomponenseit veti össze, kimutatta, hogy a vonásszorongóknak, vagyis azoknak, akiknek hajlama van a szorongásra, az önképe negatívabb. Kutatása tehát bizonyítja, hogy az önbizalomra, önbecsülésre kedvezőtlenül hat a szorongás, és mindez leginkább a vonásszorongókat érinti. Tar (2015) kutatása továbbá igazolja, hogy az idegennyelvi szorongás és a nyelvtanuló személyisége között van összefüggés. Emellett Brown (1973) szerint is kapcsolat van az idegennyelvi szorongás és a nyelvtanulók önbizalma, önképe között (idézi Pethő 2018). Az említett tanulmányok felhívják a figyelmet arra, hogy érdemes a nyelvtanulók önbizalmának fejlesztésével foglalkozni. Johannessen (2003) számos tanácsot ad a magabiztosság növelésének segítéséhez (idézi Zafar-Meenakshi 2012). Az azonnali pozitív visszajelzés, a kollaboratív munka, a gyakorlási lehetőségek számának növelése és a nyílt végű kérdések feltevése például hasznosnak bizonyulhat, hiszen elősegíti azt, hogy a diákoknak sikerélménye legyen.

Johannessenhez hasonlóan Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) is elsősorban az tanároknak ad tanácsokat. Elsődleges feladatuknak a jelenség konstatálását tartja, hiszen ha elismerik az idegennyelvi szorongás tanórai jelenlétét, és tudatában vannak annak, hogy a szorongók igyekeznek elkerülni azokat a tevékenységeket, amiktől leginkább tartanak a tanórákon, akkor kevesebb lesz a valószínűsége annak, hogy félreértik a diákok viselkedését. Ezáltal elkerülhetik azt is, hogy a gyengébb teljesítményt okvetlenül a motiváció, képességek vagy a készlés hiányának tulajdonítsák. Horwitzék szerint a pedagógusok egyrészt megtaníthatják a diákoknak hogyan küzdjenek meg a szorongáskeltő helyzetekkel, másrészt törekedhetnek olyan tanulási környezet kialakítására, ami segíti a szorongás csökkentését.

Horwitz és munkatársai (1986) ezenfelül megneveznek olyan konkrét technikákat is, mint a relaxációs gyakorlatok, a viselkedési szerződés, a naplóírás és a hatékony nyelvtanulási stratégiákról adott tájékoztatás. Oxford (1990) a meditációt, a légzéstechnikákat, illetve a relaxációs zene hallgatását is hatékonynak tartja az idegennyelvi szorongás csökkentésében. Az utóbbi időben pedig néhány tanulmány beszámolt a mindfulness gyakorlatok pozitív hatásáról is.

Kabat-Zinn (2013) definíciója szerint a mindfulness lényege a jelenre való tudatos odafigyelés, amelyhez nem társul sem kifejezett cél, sem ítélet (idézi Lunt 2019). A mindfulness mentális egészségre és koncentrációra tett pozitív hatását számos tanulmány bizonyította, azonban Lunt (2019) ezek mellett kiemeli a nyelvtanulásban való

alkalmazhatóságot is. Véleménye szerint az olyan technikák, mint a vizualizációs meditáció az idegennyelv gyakorlására is jó lehetőséget biztosítanak. Hasonló gyakorlatokkal kísérletezett Önem (2015) is, akinek a kutatása azt bizonyítja, hogy az aromaterápiával összekötött meditáció nem csupán a szorongás csökkentését segíti, hanem az idegennyelvű szavak megtanulását is. Ráadásul ő is említ olyan stratégiákat, mint a zenehallgatás vagy a légzőgyakorlatok alkalmazása. A kutatásom ezek közül leginkább azokra irányult, amiket a nyelvtanulók maguk is tudnak alkalmazni.

6.2 A kutatás

6.2.1 Kutatási kérdések

Leginkább arra voltam kíváncsi, hogy lehet-e kapcsolat az idegennyelvi szorongás és a szorongás mint személyiségjegy között. Az elméleti kutatás során kiderült, hogy a vonásszorongás iránt érdeklődöm, így a továbbiakban azt vizsgáltam, van-e kapcsolat a diákok által tapasztalt vonásszorongás és a debilizáló idegennyelvi szorongás között. A szakirodalom olvasása során azt figyeltem meg, hogy az ajánlott megküzdési stratégiák inkább a nyelvtanároknak szólnak, így másodlagos célom volt, hogy a diákok által használt idegennyelvi szorongást csökkentő módszereket kutassam. Emellett érdekelt, milyen eltéréseket mutat az angol és nem angol szakos csoport idegennyelvi szorongásszintje. Ezek meghatározása érdekében a következő kérdéseket tettem fel:

1. Milyen mértékű az általam vizsgált egyetemi hallgatók vonás-és állapotszorongása?
2. Hogyan hat az idegennyelvi szorongás a tanulási folyamatukra?
3. Van-e kapcsolat a vonásszorongás és az idegennyelvi szorongás szintje között?
4. Milyen különbségek vannak az idegennyelvi szorongás mértékét, illetve az annak csökkentése céljából alkalmazott stratégiákat tekintve az angol szakos hallgatók és azok között, akik nem angol szakosok, de rendelkeznek angol nyelvtanulási tapasztalattal?

6.2.2 Résztevők

62 Magyarországon tanuló egyetemi hallgató töltötte ki a kérdőíveket, akik közül 29 angol szakos volt. Fontos megemlíteni, hogy angol szakos hallgatók alatt a BA, MA és osztatlan tanárszakos hallgatókat értem. A nem angol szakos csoport létszáma 33 fő volt. Az adatközlők eltérő száma nem akadályozta a kutatást annak nem reprezentatív jellege miatt. Az általam készített 8 interjúban egyenlő számban vettek részt az angol és nem angol szakos hallgatók.

6.2.3 Eszközök

A kutatásom kvantitatív fázisában az általam használt kérdőívet Spielberger vonás-és állapotszorongást mérő kérdőívéből, Horwitz és munkatársainak idegennyelvi szorongást mérő kérdőívéből, illetve a saját kérdéseimből állítottam össze. (Az első kérdésem a facilitáló és debilizáló szorongásra, a továbbiak pedig a szorongáscsökkentő stratégiákra vonatkoztak.)

A kutatásom kvalitatív részét az általam előzetesen megírt interjúkérdésekre alapoztam:

1. Szorongónak tartod magad? Milyen mértékben (egyáltalán nem, közepesen, nagyon)?
2. Mitől szorongsz? Milyen szituációkban szorongsz?
3. Az eddigi nyelvtanulási folyamatod során tapasztaltál szorongást idegennyelvi órán?
Tanórán kívül éreztél már idegennyelvi szorongást?
(Ha nem: Miért nem szorongsz nyelvtanulási szituációban? Mi a titkod?)
4. Mikor tapasztaltál idegennyelvi szorongást?
5. Mi okozhatja a nyelvtanulás során tapasztalt szorongást?
6. Változott a szorongásod a nyelvtanulásod során? Ha igen, miért?
7. Eddigi tapasztalataid alapján hogyan hatott a szorongás a teljesítményedre?
8. Mi az, ami segített megküzdeni az idegennyelvi szorongással? Miért pont ezt a stratégiát/módszert választottad? (Van olyan stratégia, amiről hallottál, de még nem próbáltad ki?)
9. Kaptál külső segítséget? Ha igen, akkor kitől? A tanáraid mutattak/használtak szorongáscsökkentő technikákat? (Ezek segítettek?)
10. Segített az élet más területén az idegennyelvi szorongás csökkentésére alkalmazott stratégiák valamelyike?
11. Szívesen kipróbálnád a mindfulness? Miért?

A kérdéseket négy tömbbe rendeztem. Az első kettő az általános szorongásra vonatkozott, mivel a vonásszorongás iránt is érdeklődtem, de ezután az idegennyelvi szorongásra fókuszáltam. A következő négy kérdés a nyelvtanulók tapasztalataira kérdezett rá. Ezután arról érdeklődtem (7. kérdés), hogy debilizáló vagy facilitáló szorongást éltek-e meg a diákok. Az utolsó szakaszban a szorongással való megküzdéssel foglalkoztam, és a nyelvtanulókat az általuk alkalmazott, illetve ismert stratégiákról kérdeztem.

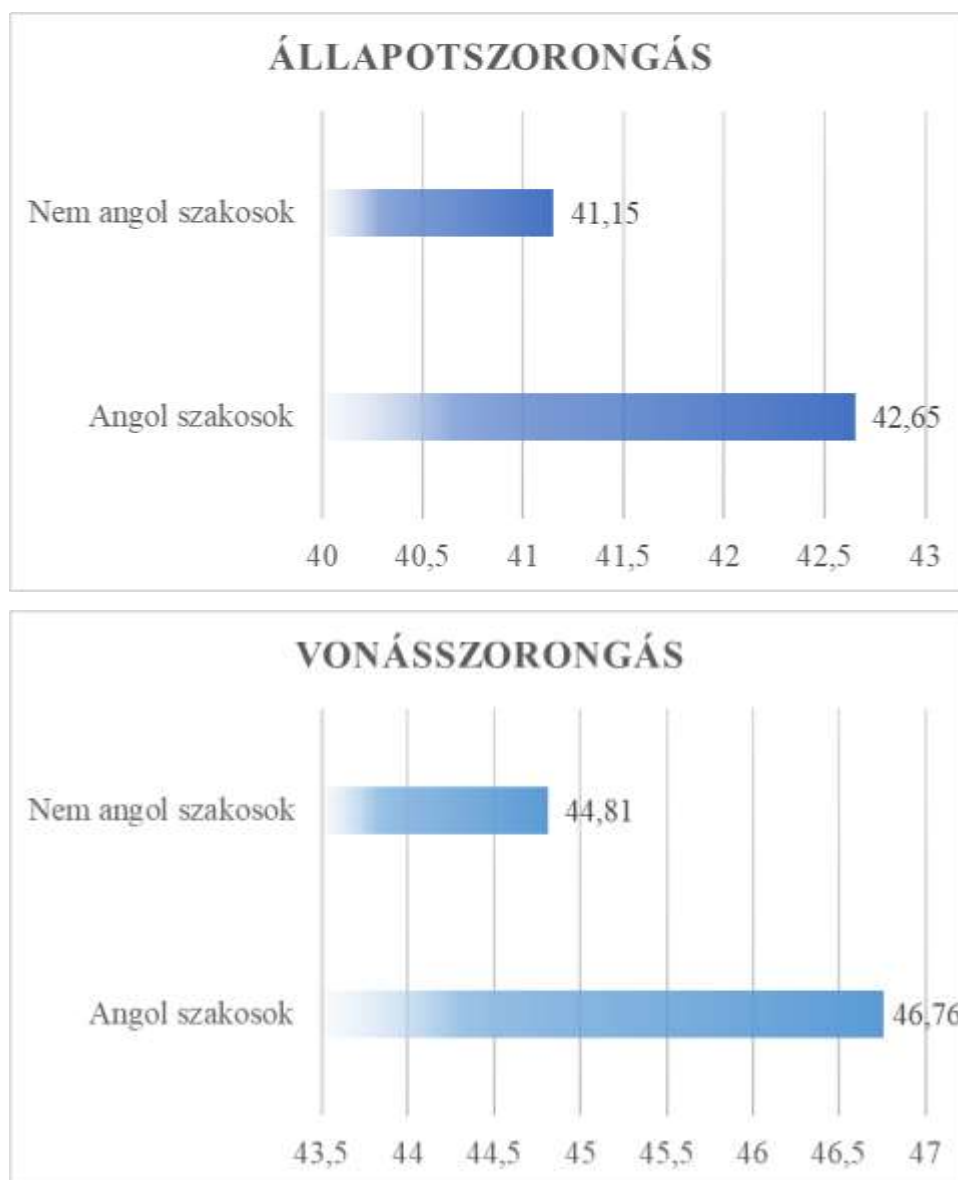
6.2.4 Adatgyűjtés

Az angol és nem angol szakos hallgatók számára készített kérdőíveket különböző online platformokon tettem közzé 2022 novemberében, de a kitöltők alacsony száma miatt a kérdőíveket újra megnyitottam 2022 decemberében. Az összegyűjtött adatok feldolgozása az Excel segítségével történt. A számításokat külön végeztem el a két kérdőíven. (Először azonban ki kellett szűrni a facilitáló idegennyelvi szorongást tapasztaló hallgatók

eredményeit, hiszen ezek elemzése nem volt releváns.) A szorongáscsökkentő stratégiák listáját is összegeztem a kutatás ezen szakaszában, hiszen az interjúk célja elsősorban ezen technikák felderítése volt.

6.3 Eredmények

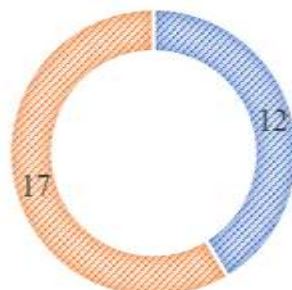
6.3.1 Kérdőívek



Megállapítható, hogy a debilizáló idegennyelvi szorongást tapasztaló angol szakos hallgatók állapotszorongása mérsékelt, vonásszorongása magas volt. A nem angol szakosok mérsékelt vonás-és állapotszorongást tapasztaltak.

ANGOL SZAKOSOK IDEGENNYELVI SZORONGÁSA

■ Facilitáló ■ Debilizáló

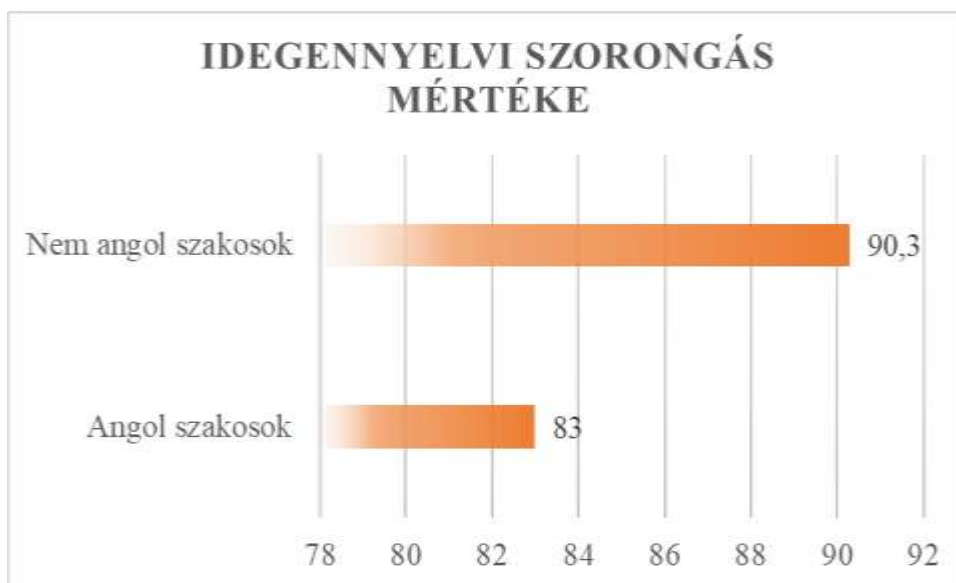


NEM ANGOL SZAKOSOK IDEGENNYELVI SZORONGÁSA

■ Facilitáló ■ Facilitáló



Facilitáló idegennyelvi szorongást 29 angol szakos hallgató közül 12 tapasztalt (ami 41,38%-nak felel meg), a 33 nem angol szakos hallgató közül pedig 6 fő (ami 18,18%-nak felel meg). A 17 debilizáló szorongást tapasztaló angol szakos hallgató közül 14 fő számolt be arról, hogy vonásszorongó. Közülük 12-en tapasztaltak idegennyelvi szorongást is (85,71%). A 27 debilizáló szorongást tapasztaló nem angol szakos hallgató között 20 vonásszorongó volt, és közülük 19 fő számolt be idegennyelvi szorongásról (95%). Bár a minta kicsi, kirajzolódik egy tendencia, miszerint lehet kapcsolat a vonásszorongás és az idegennyelvi szorongás között.



A nem angol szakosok idegennyelvi szorongásának szintje magasabb volt. Tehát kevésbé volt szorongó, aki hivatásának választja ezt a nyelvet, de nem tért el nagy mértékben az angol és nem angol szakos hallgatók idegennyelvi szorongásának foka. Mindkét érték mérsékelt szorongásra utal.



A STRATÉGIÁK, AMIK CSÖKKENTETTÉK AZ ANGOL SZAKOSOK IDEGENNYELVI SZORONGÁSÁT



STRATÉGIÁK, AMIKET AZ ANGOL SZAKOSOK KIPRÓBÁLNÁNAK



A NEM ANGOL SZAKOSOK ÁLTAL MÁR HASZNÁLT STRATÉGIÁK





Az alkalmazott stratégiák közül mindkét csoportban a zenehallgatás bizonyult a legnépszerűbbnek és leghasznosabbnak; a legtöbb angol és nem angol szakos pedig egyaránt a meditációt próbálná ki legszívesebben. Különbséget leginkább a tanárok által alkalmazott stratégiák tekintetében fedeztem fel, hiszen, míg 9 angol szakos hallgató nyilatkozott úgy, hogy a tanára használt szorongáscsökkentő technikákat, csupán 2 nem angol szakos hallgató állította ugyanezt.

6.3.2 Interjúk

Az első kérdéscsoportra adott válaszok azt mutatják, hogy az interjúalanyok inkább szorongónak vallották magukat. Ez a szorongás jórészt a tanulmányiakhöz (például egyetemi vizsgák) kötődik, tehát az értékeléssel is összefüggésben áll. Néhányan azt is említették, hogy szociális helyzetekben szoronganak.

A második általam elkülönített szakasz leginkább az idegennyelvi szorongás okaira derített fényt, ami segítheti, hogy közelebb kerüljünk a megoldáshoz, tehát az idegennyelvi szorongás csökkentésére alkalmazható technikákhoz. Nyelvtanuláshoz és nyelvhasználathoz kötődő szorongást leginkább szóbeli megnyilvánulást igénylő szituációkban tapasztaltak a hallgatók. A tanár személyisége és attitűdje, illetve a hibáktól való félelem szintén fontos oknak bizonyult.

Az interjúk rávilágítottak arra is, hogy a debilizáló és facilitáló szorongás kérdése igen összetett. A szituációtól függően egyes hallgatók mindkettőt tapasztalták. Debilizáló szorongást többnyire a (szóbeli) vizsgák okoztak, de az ezekre való felkészülést a szorongás segíthette is. (Néhány interjúalany arról számolt be, hogy a felkészülés során kifejezetten pozitívan hat rájuk a szorongás, hiszen motiválja őket a tanulásra.)

A hallgatók válaszai alapján nem különül el élesen az általános értelemben vett szorongással és az idegennyelvi szorongással kapcsolatos megküzdésük a gyakorlatban. A leghatékonyabb stratégiákat nem lehet egyértelműen azonosítani az interjúk alapján, de sokan felhívták a figyelmet a magabiztosság növelésére (önmegerősítés), a készülés hasznosságára, illetve a zenehallgatás nyugtató hatására. A beszélgetésekből az is kiderült, hogy a megkérdezett nyelvtanulók nem kifejezetten relaxációs zenét hallgatnak, hanem olyanokat, amikhez kötődnek. Az ezektől eltérő tanácsok is mutatott hasonlóságot, azonban említett további stratégiák nem kifejezetten olyanok voltak, amiket a tanulók maguk is alkalmazhatnak.

6.4 Konklúzió

Dolgozatom elsődleges célja az volt, hogy a debilizáló idegennyelvi szorongás és a vonásszorongás közötti kapcsolatot vizsgálja. Ahhoz, hogy ezt meghatározzam a következő kérdéseket tettem fel:

1. Milyen mértékű az általam vizsgált egyetemi hallgatók vonás-és állapotsszorongása?
2. Hogyan hat az idegennyelvi szorongás a tanulási folyamatukra?
3. Van-e kapcsolat a vonásszorongás és az idegennyelvi szorongás szintje között?

A kérdőívek eredményei alapján az angol szakosokat mérsékelt állapotsszorongás és magas vonásszorongás jellemezte. Ezzel szemben a nem angol szakosok vonás-és állapotsszorongása is mérsékeltnek bizonyult. Az angol szakos hallgatók közül többen (29 személy közül 12) tapasztaltak facilitáló idegennyelvi szorongást, mint a másik csoportban (33-ból 6 fő). Az interjúk fényt derítettek arra is, hogy a megkérdezettek a szituációtól

függően tapasztalhatják egyiket vagy másikat, ami azt mutatja, hogy ez a kérdéskör igen összetett.

A nem angol szakos csoportban a debilizáló szorongást tapasztaló vonásszorongók 95%-a idegennyelvi szorongással is rendelkezett; az angol szakos hallgatók esetében ez az arány 85, 71% volt. Dewaele (2013) tanulmányához hasonlóan a jelen kutatás is arra enged következtetni, hogy feltételezhető kapcsolat az idegennyelvi szorongás és a vonásszorongás között. Az interjúk is alátámasztják ezt az eredményt, amit a megkérdezettek által javasolt megküzdési stratégiák is mutatnak.

Másodlagos célom a hallgatók által használt idegennyelvi szorongást csökkentő módszerek vizsgálata volt, és arra is kíváncsi voltam, milyen eltéréseket mutatnak az angol és nem angol szakosok e téren. Emellett a két csoport idegennyelvi szorongásának szintjét is össze szándékoztam hasonlítani. Ennek megfelelően a 4. kutatási kérdés így hangzott:

3. Milyen különbségek vannak az idegennyelvi szorongás mértékét, illetve az annak csökkentése céljából alkalmazott stratégiákat tekintve az angol szakos hallgatók és azok között, akik nem angol szakosok, de rendelkeznek angol nyelvtanulási tapasztalattal?

A két csoport idegennyelvi szorongásának szintje közötti eltérés nem volt számottevő, de megállapítható, hogy a nem angol szakosok fokozottabb szorongásról számoltak be. A szorongás csökkentése céljából alkalmazott stratégiákat tekintve se fedezhető fel nagy különbség az angol és nem angol szakos hallgatók között, hiszen mind a legnépszerűbb, mind a leghasznosabb technikának a zenehallgatás bizonyult, illetve mindkét csoportban a meditációt próbálták volna ki szívesen még a nyelvtanulók. Az interjúkból kiderült, hogy az említett zene alatt a megkérdezettek valójában azoknak a daloknak a hallgatását értették, amiket szeretnek. Emellett a magabiztosság növelése és az az idegennyelvi szituációra való alapos felkészülés szerepének fontossága rajzolódik ki az interjúkból. Az említett technikákat a diákok maguk is használhatják, de a kutatás kvalitatív fázisából az derült ki, hogy a tanárok szerepe jelentős. Az angol és nem angol szakos hallgatók által kitöltött kérdőívek eredményei alapján is ugyanez állapítható meg, hiszen a két csoport közötti legjelentősebb különbség a nyelvtanáraik által alkalmazott szorongáscsökkentő stratégiákra vonatkozott. (9 angol szakos és csupán 2 nem angol szakos nyilatkozta azt, hogy a tanára használt ilyen technikákat.)

Mivel a kérdőívek kitöltése önkéntes, a résztvevők száma pedig korlátozott volt, az eredmények nem általánosíthatók. Érdemes lenne tehát a kutatást nagyobb mintán is elvégezni. Megjegyzendő továbbá, hogy nem foglalkoztam a vonásszorongáson kívül más befolyásoló tényezőkkel, hiszen leginkább a vonásszorongás és az idegennyelvi szorongás között fellelhető kapcsolat foglalkoztatott. A további kutatás feltárhatja ezen lehetséges

kapcsolat különböző aspektusait és segíthet abban, hogy újabb idegennyelvi szorongást csökkentő stratégiákat találjunk, ami mind a nyelvtanulók, mind a nyelvtanárok szempontjából hasznos lehet.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaires for English and non-English majors

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I7NRErmn6r6sYS2UorBTvYE9CkmcZPQj?usp=sharing>

Appendix B – Scores given for state, trait and language anxiety

E=English major

NE=non-English major

English majors with debilitating anxiety	A-State (score)	Level of state anxiety	A-Trait (score)	Level of trait anxiety	LA (score)	Level of language anxiety
1E	32	no	35	no	44	no
2E	37	no	46	high	71	moderate
3E	31	no	46	high	83	moderate
4E	30	no	37	no	48	no
5E	55	high	40	moderate	68	moderate
6E	46	high	45	high	122	considerable
7E	63	high	62	high	121	considerable
8E	54	high	54	high	84	moderate
9E	57	high	54	high	71	moderate
10E	36	no	47	high	116	considerable
11E	33	no	28	no	106	considerable
12E	54	high	60	high	89	moderate

13E	39	moderate	45	high	80	moderate
14E	35	no	52	high	54	no
15E	63	high	62	high	118	considerable
16E	33	no	39	mod	81	moderate
17E	27	no	43	mod	55	no

Non-English majors with debilitating anxiety	A-State (score)	Level of state anxiety	A-Trait (score)	Level of trait anxiety	LA (score)	Level of language anxiety
1NE	36	no	45	high	81	moderate
2NE	38	moderate	44	moderate	103	considerable
3NE	37	no	34	no	62	no
4NE	54	high	52	high	70	moderate
5NE	66	high	59	high	56	no
6NE	49	high	58	high	101	considerable
7NE	49	high	57	high	98	moderate
8NE	55	high	50	high	91	moderate
9NE	34	no	31	no	86	moderate
10NE	45	high	26	no	141	very
11NE	26	no	21	no	117	considerable
12NE	45	high	49	high	106	considerable
13NE	33	no	39	moderate	75	moderate
14NE	39	moderate	58	high	124	considerable

15NE	29	no	36	no	59	no
16NE	22	no	32	no	38	no
17NE	55	high	51	high	81	moderate
18NE	35	no	50	high	86	moderate
19NE	28	no	49	high	68	moderate
20NE	29	no	45	high	95	moderate
21NE	38	moderate	47	high	103	considerable
22NE	48	high	47	high	100	considerable
23NE	40	moderate	48	high	120	considerable
24NE	35	no	33	no	99	moderate
25NE	50	high	60	high	67	moderate
26NE	55	high	42	moderate	122	considerable
27NE	41	mod	47	high	89	moderate

Appendix C – Interviews

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jiBJedV_yWYh-1r2Rnho90d0wCDPixwh/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117978054510782607557&rtpof=true&sd=true