



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS  
IN A LEBANESE VOCATIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

by  
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# AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The affective factor of anxiety has been found to significantly hinder the language learning process although the nature of foreign language anxiety (FLA) has yet to be agreed upon. The purpose of this project was to investigate the personal and contextual factors including foreign language anxiety that adults in a Lebanese working class vocational language program perceived to influence language learning process. In Phase One, 43 students were asked to fill out a background questionnaire and a modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986). In Phase Two, students were randomly selected to participate in focus groups which were separated into low-, medium- and high-anxiety levels based on their score on the FLCAS. A total of 18 adult students from Lebanon, Syria, Morocco and Iraq participated. Grounded-Theory was used to analyze the transcripts and a theoretical model of perceived factors was generated. Findings of the study suggested that Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement were outcomes of other variables of the language learning process. Achievement was perceived as a direct, bidirectional source of Foreign Language Anxiety. Language Aptitude and Learner's Family and Friends had indirect, bidirectional relationships with Achievement. Remote factors included Comparison with Peers, Class Arrangements, Influence of L1, Learning Strategies, Motivation, Influence of School Systems on Foreign Language Learning, Test Types and Preparation, Teacher-Student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum and Gender. Learner's Family and Friends was interpreted to be a substantial finding as it did not exist in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model of the Chinese context. This exploratory study helped fill the significant knowledge gap due to the scarcity of FLA literature in the Lebanese context; to the author's knowledge no such study on adult foreign language education has been conducted in Lebanon.

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Para mi madre y padre Blanca Adriana y Javier Reyes con todo el amor que plantaron en mi corazón.

*Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

*He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increase strength.*

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40: 28-31

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

While a healthy individual becomes highly proficient in his or her native language by approximately four years of age (Schumann, 1999), foreign language learners show a great deal of individual variation (Johnson & Newport, 1989). There is a copious amount of research on the similarities and differences between language learning during childhood and adulthood. Linguistic researchers have not yet agreed on “whether the skills underlying children’s uniformly superior performance are similar to those used by adult learners, or rather whether adult language learning skill is controlled by a different set of variables” (Johnson & Newport, 1989, p. 111). Taylor (1974) established five categories of language learning variables: 1) critical period, 2) learning strategies, 3) native language influence, 4) cognitive maturity and 5) “affective psychological variables” (p. 23). Taylor proposed there was no cognitive evidence to assume that adults were less able than children when it came to the language learning process; hence, if the “cognitive deficiency” was rejected then we are forced to accept a “non-cognitive deficiency” alternative which is founded upon affective variables to explain the absence of uniform efficacious second language acquisition in adults (1974, p. 32-33).

Unfortunately, although cognitive and affective factors have been investigated, the inquiry into affect, or emotions, has not kept stride with cognition research (Brown and White, 2010). Cognitive factors are associated with aptitude, intelligence, learning strategies, and affective variables include motivation, attitudes, perception of self-

esteem, or the feeling of anxiety (Kebłowska, 2012). According to Kebłowska (2012), practitioners and linguists did not really contemplate the learner's emotional state because they were certain that the learner's cognitive capability, considered superior to affect, was able to sustain any intrusions due to affect; however, psychology theorists suggested that there were six primary emotions that could potentially override cognitive processes: joy, interest, sadness, disgust, anger and fear (Reeve, 1997 as cited in MacIntyre, 2002).

Anxiety, a variation of fear, is the emotion that has been most extensively studied in terms of second language learning (MacIntyre, 2002). Guirao (1983) argued that language learning is a "profoundly unsettling psychological proposition" because it impeded heavily upon an individual's view of the world as well as the concept of the self (as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Language learning, that is to say "learning" is the product of formal instruction, comprised a conscious process, which resulted in conscious knowledge about the language (Krashen, 1985), was predisposed to generate intense emotion because of the interaction between language, culture and identity (Noels, Pon & Clément, 1996 as cited in MacIntyre, 2002).

Eysenck's (1979) seminal article proposed that individual differences such as affect and motivation were integral parts in cognitive development and cautioned researchers of the effect of anxiety on both the efficiency and effectiveness of cognitive processing. Later Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis divided affective variables into motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claimed that individuals with higher intensities of the Affective Filter would have more obstructions to learn the target language because the Affective Filter dealt with the affective variables outside the

language acquisition device and can impede or facilitate the delivery of input. Pawlak (2011) critiqued Krashen's "insistence on the need to lower the affective filter, with such a view, however, is overly simplistic in light of the fact that anxiety is an extremely complex and multifaceted concept, the effects of which may vary from one individual situation to another and are in a constant state of flux" (p. 153-154).

It is important to reflect that Krashen's Affective Filter Model was not the only one to include the construct of anxiety in language learning; other models included: Giles and Byrne's Intergroup Model (Giles & Byrne, 1982); Schumann's Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1986); Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (Gardner, Lalonde, & Pierson, 1983; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993); and Tobias's Model (Tobias, 1979; 1980; 1986).

Although anxiety is a complex psychological construct, its place in these models led to investigations focusing on the relation between anxiety and language performance. These studies have generally been correlative and qualitative in nature (MacIntyre, 2002). Studies have found that foreign language anxiety is one of the best predictors of proficiency in a foreign language (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2000). The multifaceted construct is commonly not regarded as a unitary element but rather as an intricate construct with constituents that have different features (Dornyei, 2005).

The essential research question has been: "Does anxiety cause poor performance or does poor performance cause anxiety?" (Young, 1986 as cited in MacIntyre, 2002, p. 64). Early studies were inconclusive reporting positive relationship between these two variables (Clement, Gardner & Smythe, 1977, 1980), others reported a positive or no relationship (Backman, 1976; Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977;



Pimsleur, Moseberg, & Morrison, 1962 as cited in Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1999). Early studies suffered from unclear definitions of the construct as well as unreliable instrumentation (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1990). The influential study of Horwitz et al., (1986) and its instrument called Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) defined foreign language anxiety as, “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, feelings, beliefs, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. Since then many studies have reported a moderate negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and different measures of achievement, including course grades in high school and college (Gardner , Smythe & Lalonde, 1984; Gardner, Moorecroft & MacIntyre, 1987); performance in oral examinations(Phillips, 1992; Scott, 1986); and even teacher’s assessments of achievement (Trylong, 1987) (as cited Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). Furthermore, the debilitating effects of foreign language anxiety have been documented at all stages of learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a).What is still disputed is the direction of this correlation and/or the existence of a confounding, or uncontrolled, variable that may be responsible for the relationship between achievement and foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, 2000). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety are also investigated (see Cheng, 2002; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 2000, Young, 1991, 1992as cited in Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Furthermore, fewer studies have explored the relationships between anxiety and other learner characteristics, for instance, Price (1991) and Gregerson & Horwitz (2002) found that the tendency to be perfectionistic may contribute to students’ levels of anxiety.

## **A. Purpose of Study**

The pedagogical necessity of this exploratory investigation was suggested by Horwitz et al. (1986), “As long as foreign language learning takes place in a formal school setting where evaluation is inextricably tied to performance, anxiety is likely to flourish” (p. 131). As a partial replica of Yan & Horwitz (2008) this study endeavors to identify anxiety and other factors affecting students’ performance and generate a grounded theoretical model that illustrated how anxiety related to learner factors and situational variables that influenced adult language learning. Since the relationship between language anxiety, achievement and other learner variables has yet to be determined conclusively, this study’s theoretical model from the student perspective provides a hypothesis for future studies to test and verify.

## **B. Research Questions**

The guiding questions of this study are:

1. What personal and contextual factors, including foreign language anxiety, do adult language learners perceive to influence the process of language learning?
2. From the perspective of the language learners, what are the relationships within and among these language learning factors?

## **C. Significance**

The present study addresses the gap in the existing research and adds to the knowledge base provided by the few studies on language anxiety in Lebanon. To the author’s knowledge, Aown (2005), Darwish Askar (2009) and Nazzal (2008) addressed

foreign language anxiety. The significance of this study lies in its adding to the few research studies available about language anxiety in the region. Since levels of foreign language anxiety vary from culture to culture (Horwitz, 2001), this study adds to the existing body of knowledge of language anxiety in all learning contexts.

Due to globalization, English has lately been advancing in Lebanese economic, educational, and social domains (Shaaban, 2005). This investigation not only sheds light on how students perceive language anxiety when they study English in Lebanon by providing information on the unique, subjective experience of the adult learner of English, but it also helps researchers and practitioners take measures that may alleviate language anxiety levels. The Grounded-Theory model is exploratory in nature and adds to the body of research on language anxiety in various cultural backgrounds.

No results are predicted because the study is based on inductive reasoning and not on empirical research. Instead, a Grounded-Theory model was generated in a context where, to the author's knowledge, there is no such model available to capture the role of foreign language anxiety in English language Learning in Lebanon.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section addresses anxiety in the field of educational psychology, types of anxiety, early studies of the construct, its place in models of language learning, its complexity as a construct, an alternative theory of the construct, current literature and the context of Lebanon.

#### **A. Anxiety in Educational Psychology**

Anxiety was first studied in the 1940s and 1950s in educational psychology with the main research question directed towards the “underachieving child” (Taylor, 1964), but by the 1960s, interest had dwindled due to increased investment in research and development of compensatory education (Tobias, 1979). Needless to say, research resurged in the late 1960s and early 1970s when psychologists aimed to find effective behavioral and/or cognitive treatments for debilitating anxiety (Tobias, 1979). Facilitating anxiety motivated “the learner to ‘fight’ the new learning task; it gear[ed] the learner emotionally for approach behavior” (Scovel, 1991, p. 22). In contrast, debilitating anxiety motivated “the learner to ‘flee’ the new learning task it stimulat[ed] the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior” (Scovel, 1991, p. 22). This study dealt exclusively with debilitating anxiety.

## **B. Types of Anxiety**

Spielberger (1980) defined anxiety as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the nervous system” (p.1) and Hilgard, Hilgard & Atkinson (1971) as “a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object” (as cited in Scovel, 1991, p. 18). Anxiety has been divided into three categories; trait, state and situation-specific. Trait anxiety was categorized as a fairly, steady personality attribute, an enduring “predisposition to be anxious” (Scovel, 1978, as cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 479). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) trait anxiety had a minute role, if any, in language learning. State anxiety was classified as a transitory anxiety, a reaction to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus i.e., a test in which case the anxiety which would cease when the threat disappeared (Spielberger, 1983). Situation-specific anxiety was considered as the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a). It was aroused by a specific kind of situation, e.g. speaking in public or class participation (Ellis, 1994). Zheng (2008) insightfully commented that although anxiety has been conventionally divided into trait, situational and state anxiety, the distinctions can crudely be identified on a continuum from permanence to impermanence, with trait anxiety associated to a generally constant predisposition to be anxious in a wide variety of situations on one end and a momentary experience of temporary emotional state on the other. Situational anxiety falls in the center of the continuum, demonstrating the probability of becoming anxious in specific type of situation. When the object of anxiety is a target language then it is termed foreign language anxiety (Zheng, 2008).

### **C. Foreign Language Anxiety**

Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) defined language anxiety as a fear or apprehension which takes place when a learner is expected to perform in a second or foreign language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993); hence this anxiety is connected to performing in a second or foreign language, and is not just a general performance anxiety (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Horwitz et al., 1986, as cited in Oxford, 1999). Furthermore, according to Oxford (1999), anxiety ranked high among factors influencing learning regardless if the learning setting is formal, in other words occurs in a classroom, or informal, ensues “on the streets” (p. 59).

### **D. Early Studies in FLA**

Early studies in language studies included (Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977; Eysenck, 1979; Scovel, 1978) and were inconclusive. In Chastain (1975), language anxiety (test anxiety), and language performance of students studying French, German and Spanish reported inconsistent correlations: positive, negative and zero (no correlation). Kleinmann’s (1977) study of contrastive analysis of native speakers of Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese found a significant positive correlation between facilitative anxiety levels and usage of commonly avoided syntactic structures. The study documented that facilitative anxiety was favorable to performance and indicated the projected positive correlations with Arabic native speakers' readiness to attempt challenging syntactical structures in English. Eysenck’s (1979) model of language anxiety, working and performance suggested that when anxiety is low, performance was low; then, as anxiety increased so did performance, to an optimal point. However, as anxiety increased, performance fell. The curvilinear relationship between anxiety and performance was based on a function of task difficulty. Scovel’s (1978) literature

review also contributed greatly in the early study of language anxiety. He brought forward a significant problem when he advanced that early studies (Swain & Barnaby, 1976; Tucker et al., 1976, Backman, 1976) produced inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between anxiety and achievement in second language learning. Scovel attributed the conflicting and mixed results to different anxiety measures. He claimed that ambiguous experimental results would be resolved if the distinction between facilitating and debilitating anxiety was drawn. The early research on the relationship between anxiety and performance was not conclusive, but the need to distinguish between facilitating and debilitating anxiety was probably its greatest contribution.

#### **E. Foreign Language Anxiety as a Situation-Specific Anxiety**

It was not until the seminal investigation by Horowitz, Horowitz & Cope (1986) that foreign language anxiety was evaluated as a separate phenomenon to language learning (Young, 1991); in other words, it was proposed a “situation-specific anxiety construct” (Olivares-Cuhat, 2010, n.p.). Thirty beginning language students at the University of Texas were interviewed and based on their experience with language and anxiety created the instrument Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Afterwards, it administered it to a group of 75 Spanish language students. Findings showed that a significant amount of language anxiety was experienced by many students (Horwitz, et al., 1986). Horwitz et al. (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Horwitz et al., (1986) suggested that because foreign language anxiety involved performance assessment in an academic and social

contexts, it would be helpful to conceptualize foreign language anxiety in relation to other performance anxieties, specifically:),test anxiety “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure (p. 127, and fear of negative evaluation an “apprehension about others’ evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Watson & Friend, 1969 as cited in Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Yet Horwitz and associates made a vital disclaimer that would resound in the future when they states that the three performance anxieties mentioned above were useful as a springboard for discussion, and not merely a blend of these three factors shifted to language learning. This was further proved when Young (1992) interviewed several experts in foreign language anxiety, Stephen Krashen, Alice Omaggio Hadley, Tracy Terrell, and Jennybelle Rardin, all who agreed that additional aspects need to be included in theoretical models of foreign language anxiety .

#### **F. The Complex Construct of Foreign Language Anxiety**

Cronbach and Meehl (1955) defined a hypothetical construct as a concept for which there is not a single observable referent, which cannot be directly observed, and for which there exist multiple referents, but none are all-inclusive. McCorquodale and Meehl (1948) described hypothetical constructs as containing surplus meaning, as they imply more than just the operations by which they are measured. After foreign language anxiety was hypothesized as a debilitating construct in the language learning process in the 1970s researchers were able add to this construct. A good, broad definition of foreign language anxiety was provided by MacIntyre (1998) worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language. Ten years earlier Horwitz et al. (1986), which proposed that foreign language anxiety was a situation-



specific anxiety, suggested that the complex construct was composed of three performance anxieties: Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation. Communication Apprehension was founded on McCroskey (1977) literature review which defined it as “an individual’s level or fear of anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p.78). McCroskey differed this construct from other constructs as that it specified only anxiety as the fundamental component when it came to evading or withdrawing from communication. As for Negative Evaluation, Horwitz et al. (1986) based this construct on “the apprehension about others’ evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Watson & Friend, 1969, p.. 449). Test Anxiety was based on Gordon & Sarason (1955) which concluded that test anxiety is “significantly associated with anxiety in a variety of situation”, though the correlation between test anxiety and generalized anxiety did not account for most of the variance (p. 321). This supported Horwitz et al. (1986) suggestion that foreign language anxiety was a situation-specific anxiety. Later Aida (1994) examined the constructs of the FLCAS via factor analysis with Varimax rotation to test the three performance constructs from Horwitz et al. (1986) and found that Speech Anxiety, Fear of Failing the Class, Comfortableness with the Foreign Language (Japanese) and Negative Attitudes, with Speech Anxiety and Fear of Failing emerged as main components of the foreign language anxiety construct as they accounted for 37.9 and 6.3% of the variance respectively. Park (2012) found that indeed the FLCAS did measure Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Test Anxiety, with the addition of the construct of Foreign Language Anxiety. According to this literature, foreign language anxiety was composed of other

performance anxieties that placed this complex psycholinguistic construct in the language learning process.

### **G. Linguistic Code Deficit Hypothesis**

One line of research termed the ‘Linguistic Code Deficit Hypothesis’ (LCDH) ( see Sparks, 1995; Spark, Ganshow & Pohlman;1989; Sparks &Ganschow, 1991,1993; Sparks, Ganshow & Javorsky, 2000)ran against the position that the construct of foreign language anxiety was situation –specific anxiety and instead suggested that itwas due to a cognitive deficit and was. Sparks & Ganschow (1991) claimed that the Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale did not measure anxiety, but instead evaluated language proficiency in addition to or instead of affect or emotion. Sparks, Ganschow & Javorsky (2000) suggested foreign language anxiety was a consequence of native language (L1) processing difficulties and that language ability was a confounding variable when investigating the impact of affective factors such as anxiety, attitude, and motivation; nonetheless, they advised that theories posed affective variables as contributing influences should be “approached with caution” (p. 251).

LCDH was vehemently contested by Horwitz (2000) and MacIntyre (1995a, 1995b, 1999). In this exchange, Horwitz (2000) conceded that foreign language anxiety could a result of L1 linguistic processing due to cognitive processing and L1 disabilities for some second language (L2 ) learners, but that LCDH did not offer a reasonable explanation for all anxiety reactions. MacIntyre (1999) and MacIntyre (1991a, 1991b, 1994) claimed that foreign language anxiety was a distinct type of anxiety from other broader anxieties and solidified it as a psychological construct. MacIntyre (1999) ascribed the conflicting findings of the complex construct not to the conceptual base of

the construct but instead to instrumentation used to investigate this phenomenon (as cited in Dornyei, 20005, p. 200). This discussion raised questions about the place of foreign language anxiety in the process of language learning.

## **H. Foreign Language Anxiety's Place in Second/Foreign Language Learning**

### **Models**

Numerous theories of second language acquisition have given a place to affective variables, and, specifically language anxiety. Dornyei (2005) asked, “there is an overall uncertainty about the basic category: Is it a motivational component? A personality trait? Or an emotion?” (p.198). The notion that affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, empathy and attitude had significant influence in language acquisition initially originated in the field of psychology (Gardner 1960; Lambert 1963), but did not find a large following in L2 acquisition research. It wasn't until the early 1980s that the idea gained more acceptance through the influential work of Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis which stated that stressful classroom environments contributed to a “filter” blocking easy acquisition (Krashen, 1982) . According to this theory, affective variables were credited with the ability to make the language learning input more or less comprehensible to language learners. Krashen (1982) divided affective variables into three categories (motivation, self-confidence and anxiety). Variables that contributed to higher levels of the affective filter, which were proposed to be outside of the language acquisition device proper, could act to facilitate or debilitate the conveyance of target language input (Krashen, 1982). Nowadays, researchers' view of the Input Hypothesis of anxiety has changed. Mirsoslav (2011) stated that Krashen's (1982) “insistence on the need to lower the affective filter, [...] is overly simplistic in

light of the fact that anxiety is an extremely complex and multifaceted concept, the effects of which may vary from one individual situation to another and are in a constant state of flux” (p. 153-154). Another important notion to consider is that according to Krashen adults were supposed to access the same language acquisition device that children did (Larsen –Freeman & Long, 1991 as cited in Bahrani, 2011, p. 282). This theory had profound pedagogical impact because it defined the effective language teacher as an individual who can deliver comprehensible in a low anxiety situation (Wilson, 2000 as cited in Bahrani, 2011).

Another theory that was widely accepted is Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). This model was separated into four parts: the socio-cultural milieu, individual differences, language acquisition contexts, and learning outcomes. Affective variables are considered individual differences and included attitudes and motivation, language anxiety, and self-confidence (MacIntyre, 2002, p. 47). While language anxiety has long formed part of the model, it has not received the consideration assigned motivation nor has it been assigned a consistent place (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991 as cited in MacIntyre, 2002). In some reports, anxiety was a precursor to motivation (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) and in others a product of proficiency Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). Gardner and MacIntyre (1993a) suggested that the two variables have a reciprocal, bidirectional relationship: anxiety affects motivation and motivation affects anxiety. (MacIntyre, 2002, p. 64)

Schuman’s (1986) Acculturation Model also accounted for affective variables. It proposed that two groups of variables, social factors and affective factors, combined to form a larger causative variable termed acculturation which consisted of

social and psychological assimilation of the student with the target language group (Schumann, 1986). The taxonomy of factors included social, cognitive, biological, aptitude, output and instructional factors, and affective factors comprised of (“language shock, culture shock, motivation and ego-permeability”), personal factors (“nesting patterns, transition anxiety, reaction to teaching methods, and choice of learning strategies”) and personality factors (“tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to rejection, introversion/extroversion, self-esteem”) (Schumann, 1986, p. 380).

Clement’s Model (Clement, 1980, 1984; Clement and Krudener, 1985) was very similar to that proposed in Schumann (1986) and stated that second language proficiency was influenced by the individual’s motivation. Motivation was influenced by two features of the environment: (a) the “relative ethnolinguistic vitalities of the first and second language groups, and (b) the frequency of contrast with the second language group”(Clement, 1987, p. 272). The role of self-confidence was said to be particularly important to contexts where contact with the second language speaking groups was possible. (Clement, 1987, p. 286) Clement suggested that for the students with more direct contact with the target language group, self-confidence became the most important factor of attitude and exertion for the language learning process (Clement, Dornyei& Noels, 1994). Self-confidence was “operationally defined in terms of low anxious affect and high self-perceptions” of target language competence (Clement, Dornyei& Noels, 1994, p. 423). Therefore, anxiety’s role depended on relations between different ethnic groups, i.e. a different social group.

Giles and Byrne (1982) Intergroup Approach to Second Language Acquisition expounded upon social psychological conditions “which facilitate or inhibit members of

a subordinate ethnic group achieving near native like proficiency in the language of a dominant ethnic collectivity” (p. 17). Giles and Byrne claimed that the theory was “embryonic” and needed further empirical support (1982, p. 37). As this model was grounded on *perceived* ethnolinguistic vitality, understanding the context and relations between ethnic groups was crucial. An obvious limitation of the previous mentioned theories must be noted because there were set in multi-ethnic group context: What would be the case for the multi-linguistic context such as Lebanon where differences lay less in ethnic groups more on different nationalities?

Another model that included upon language anxiety was Tobias’s (1979, 1980, 1986). He suggested that anxious individuals tend to engage in self-fixed, deprecatory cognition rather than concentrating on the task at hand (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 255) and the interaction between anxiety, task difficulty, and ability (Spielberger, 1983 Hunsley, 1985; Sarason, 1986 as cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). According to Tobias (1979), affective interference could occur at three information-processing stages (input, processing and output stages) (p. 575); he stated that in formal classroom settings, “Anxiety is an affective state. Since learning is a process that is essentially cognitively mediated, anxiety can affect learning only indirectly by impacting on the cognitive processes mediating learning at various. (Tobias, 1979, p.575). The indirect influence had many repercussions on the language learning process. Although Tobias borrowed the terms for the stage (input, processing and output) from computer processing jargon, the use of this term matched first language acquisition terms employed by psychologists (Smith, Sarason & Sarason, 1982). These stages were not proposed to be clearly divided from one another; thus, the meaning of a message may have been clear before the message was completely delivered (Macintyre & Gardner,

1994, p. 287). The output stage was dependent upon the quality of the previous two stages. Its success was measured by the arrangement of the “output and the speed of the retrieval of concepts from meaning” (Abu-Raiba, 2004, p. 712). By extension, Tobias’s (1986) model suggested that anxiety may be measured at each stage. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991c) noted that existing scales of language anxiety have primarily focused on output; MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) designed established a new anxiety measure based Tobias’ three-part model. This was a positive contribution to the literature because according to Eysenck (1979), most investigations concentrated on the quality of performance/achievement (output) and presumed that the amount of effort remained relatively continuous (input, processing) (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Therefore, anxiety not only had a place in this model of language learning but it was subsequently investigated as fluctuating and not constant.

## **I. Current Literature**

After Horwitz et al. (1986), many investigations focused on the psycholinguistic construct of foreign language anxiety (see Aida, 1994; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991b, 1991c; Liu, 1989; Philips, 1992; Saito & Samimy, 1996) found a “consistent inverse relationship between anxiety and achievement” in the language learning process (Horwitz, 2001) as cited in Yan & Horwitz (2008). More importantly, although the relationship has been clearly established, it is obvious that anxiety does not work in isolation but instead with other variables (see, e.g., Cheng, 2002; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 2000 as cited in Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Young (1992) addressed this issue from the teachers’ perspective through interview with language learning experts and suggested motivation, cultural

factors, the student coping skills, attention, self-concept, language learning beliefs, and the teaching methodology and student experiences play parts in anxiety. Young's (1991) literature review proposed six potential sources of language anxiety: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, 2) learner beliefs about language learning, 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching, 4) instructor-learner interactions, 5) classroom procedures, and 6) language testing.

The current study was based on Yan & Horwitz (2008) which studied university English learners in China. Researchers found that students perceived 12 variables influence anxiety in language learning process: a) Regional Differences, b) Language Aptitude, c) Gender, d) Foreign Language Anxiety, e) Language Learning Interest and Motivation, f) Class Arrangements, g) Teacher Characteristics, h) Language Learning Strategies, i) Test Types, j) Parental Influence, k) Comparison with Peers, and l) Achievement. Immediate sources of foreign language anxiety were Comparison with Peers, Learning Strategies, Language Learning Interest and Motivation. More distant sources included Regional Differences, Test Types, Gender, Class Arrangements, Teacher Characteristics, Parental Influence, and Language Aptitude. Another interesting finding was that these students only perceived that anxiety influenced achievement, i.e. a "unidirectional" relationship, not a "bidirectional" relationship as has been found in previous studies (Yan & Horwitz, 2008, p. 173). Even though the moderate negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and achievement and some factors of the complex construct have been proposed, the relationship between these factors in different contexts has yet to be agreed upon.



## **J. Context of Lebanon**

Lebanon is a small country in the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, but it has a long history of being at the cross-roads of many civilizations and therefore languages. Arabic was the principal language in society and education until the arrival of Christian missionary in the second half of the 19th century (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). Later during the French Mandate from 1925-1943 French and English were introduced into the education field with Arabic, but French became the language used in the domain of government and education, flattening both Arabic and English (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). After the Lebanese independence, Arabic and English revived in use with Arabic becoming the language of “everyday communication and elementary education, and the second as a language of education in mathematics and sciences in post-elementary education on a par with French” (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002, p. 557).

Several languages are currently used in Lebanon: Lebanese Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish, and foreign languages French, English and Italian, Armenian and Kurdish are only spoken by their perspective ethnic communities and do not form party of the “Lebanese national identity or language policy”(Esseili, 2010, p. 16). These six languages are used in is different manners and levels for different purposes and by different ethnic groups (Esseili, 2010p. 60). Sayigh (1965) stated that Lebanon suffers from a “split personality” due to this intricate and unique language circumstance (as cited in Esseili, 2010, p. 60), “schizophrenia” from its simultaneous Arab and western facets (Gordon, 1985), as well as an “identity crisis” due to Arab-Phoenician dichotomy and its myriad of ethnic groups (Esseili, 2010, p. 60).

Languages in Lebanon are in constant flux of when it comes to usage. Shaaban & Ghaith (2002) mentioned the sociolinguistic study of Abou, Kasparian and Haddad (1996) which documented the change in language use and attitude in Lebanon from the earlier study Abou (1962). Herewith, French was found to have lost status as a main language of cultural activities and education and Arabic's language use patterns changed to reflect an increase in everyday communication and basic cultural activities (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). Abou, Kasparian, and Haddad (1996) reported that French was now used in education sector, and use in high culture and English was used in the science, business, and technology sectors (as cited in Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002, p. 561)

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

This section gives information on the research site, participants, instrumentation, Grounded-Theory analysis, data analysis, and pragmatic limitations.

#### **A. Research Site - Makhzoumi Foundation**

The context of the present study is the Beirut campus of English language vocational language training program of the Makhzoumi Foundation. The Makhzoumi Foundation was established in 1997 by Fouad Makhzoumi with the aim to develop Lebanese society through several initiatives. Today its programs include vocational training programs (language, computer skills, hair dressing & beauty, jewelry design & repair, photography, videography and cellular phone repair), micro-credit services, healthcare center (including dentistry and laboratory services), awareness campaigns, agricultural/ environment program, and social welfare activities (including a memorandum of understanding with the Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]). Its training programs are offered at four different campuses in Beirut, Tripoli, Baalbek and Sidon. This investigation was conducted at the Beirut Corniche el Mazraa campus. The Foundation offers English, French and Arabic language training programs. Data was only gathered from the English language program.

#### **B. Participants**

Learners at the vocational language program at Makhzoumi Foundation enroll voluntarily. The price of the program is budget-friendly compared to similar language

programs in Beirut. Thirty-two hours of instruction, including textbook and workbook costs \$100 USD. Students register and attend for different reasons: affordable instruction, to improve performance in college/university, to apply to an educational institution abroad, to be eligible for high-paid employment/ increase their wages/salary, to help their children with their schoolwork in English, to improve their relationships with their grandchildren, as well as to complete a productive endeavor with their leisure time (N. Shaheen, personal communication, May 9, 2015).

Participants include adult learners of English as a foreign language and exclude native speakers of English. For Phase One of the study, the participants were pooled from seven different levels of English that were grouped into three cluster of classes: cluster one included English 100 and English 101, cluster two included English 102 and English 103, and cluster three included English 104, English 105 , English 106 and English 107. The co-investigator visited classes whose instructors agreed to participate for the last five minutes of each class session and invited students to participate. During these short presentations, the instructor remained outside the classroom as to not influence the students in any way. Participants who agreed to take part in the study filled out the Phase One consent form and were informed of the date and room at the Makhzoumi Foundation that would be made available to them to complete the background questionnaire and FLCAS. The room was made available for three hours a day for one week, November 25 – 28, 2014, to make it as convenient as possible for students to participate. The co-investigator was present in the same room during the indicated time and collected completed instruments and signed consent forms.

### **C. Instrumentation**

Upon arrival, the participants were administered a background questionnaire and the modified English or Arabic version of Aown's (2005) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) based on Horwitz, Howtitz & Cope (1986) (see appendices). The background questionnaire were asked for age, gender, level of education, etc. and included a section entitled "Experience with Foreign Language" based on the Survey of Attitudes to the Foreign Language Classroom (SASFLC) from Campbell & Ortiz (1991) (see appendices).

The FLCAS is a self-report questionnaire that functions on a five point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It yields a raw composite score with a range of 33 to 165 and has an internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient as .93 and its test-retest reliability over 8 weeks was  $r = 0.83$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ;  $n = 78$  (Aown, 2005).

Participants were given the option to take the FLCAS in whichever language he or she was more comfortable because they come from varying levels of English. All participants chose to take the instrument in Arabic. Negatively scored items were: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32. To evaluate each student's anxiety score, all responses were added, included the negative items which were reversed, i.e. a score of 4 became a 2, then divided by 33 which was the total number of questions in the FLCAS. Table 1 shows the mean FLCAS scores for the three anxiety groups (low-medium-and high anxiety).

**Table 1 Descriptive statistics for low-, medium, and high- anxiety groups**

	N		Percentiles		
	Valid	Missing	25	50	75
Anxiety scale (FLCAS)	43	0	2.55	3.83	4.23

Note: The FLCAS scores ranged from 1.41 to to 4.61.

In Phase Two, participants from Phase One were classified as having high, moderate and low levels of anxiety by using the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> quartiles as cutoff points. Students were randomly chosen from each cluster of courses based on their FLCAS scores when possible. A true random number generator list randomizer on [www.random.org/list](http://www.random.org/list) was used to choose these courses. Most students registered for courses in the classes that were invited to participate were women, so male participants were limited. Thus, the resulting 18 participants included high-, moderate-, and low-anxious students from each course level when possible. Selected participants were notified via telephone and were informed of the date and time to meet in conference room as agreed upon by the co-investigator and the educational coordinator of the Makhzoumi Foundation for the focus group interviews. Students not selected to participate in Phase Two were informed via text message. Upon arrival participants completed the consent form for Phase Two. Focus groups were audio-recorded with the participant's consent. A moderator, not the author, led the focus groups in Arabic. The author was present and served as an assistant moderator to clarify questions and probe further into questions if necessary. Medium-anxiety and low-anxiety focus groups took place December 6, 2014 and the high-anxiety focus group took place on December 13,

2014. Later, the interviews were transcribed and translated from Arabic to English by a professional translator.

During the low-, moderate- and high-anxiety focus groups, participants were prompted to share their experience in learning English at the Makhzoumi Foundation, specifically any anxiety they may have encountered and its function in language learning. They were to consider and discuss language achievement, as well as, personal and contextual factors that may have influenced their language anxiety. The focus group question guide was composed of questions from a wide array of topics and was based on previous questions on the subjective experience of foreign language anxiety (Price, 1991; Von Worde, 2003 & Yan & Horwitz, 2008).

#### **D. Grounded-Theory Analysis**

The transcript was analyzed via Grounded-Theory analysis (GTA). GTA was chosen since Glaser (1992) suggested the method was best suited for the “discovery of concepts and hypotheses, not for testing replicating them” (p. 32) and worked best for areas with “sparse amount of literature, so contributions are clear and strong” (p. 34). The GTA method worked best with abstract problems with complex processes (Glaser, 1992), and hence foreign language anxiety was an adequate subject for this analytical method. According to Garrett & Young (2009), there have been few studies that have applied GTA to language learning ().

GTA procedures proceeded as follows: 1) thematic analysis, 2) generation of affinities or variables, and 3) interrelationship diagraph analysis. Thematic analysis involved “finding and marking the underlying ideas in the data, grouping similar information together, and relating different ideas and themes to one another” (Rubin &

Rubin, 1995, p. 229 as cited in Yan & Horwitz, 2008). In the second step, these categories were checked and compared and final labels were assigned labels referred to as factors or variables. In the last step, the interrelationship diagraph analysis connected each theme or construct through “correlational or associative connotations” and directional relationship will be established; and factors/variables with arrows pointing to the right were labeled “drivers” and those pointing to the left were labeled “outcomes” (Yan & Horwitz, 2008, p157-158). The diagraph resulted in a GTA model and showed the factors/variables between anxiety and language learning.

## **E. Data Analysis**

As this exploratory study was a partial duplication of Yan & Horwitz (2008) it followed Grounded-Theory Analysis (GTA) procedures in three major steps (Miles, 1997; Northcutt, 1999; Northcutt, Miles, Robins & Ellis, 1998): 1) thematic analysis; 2) generation of affinities or variables; and 3) interrelationship diagraph analysis. Most of the analysis was based on Miles (1997) as this dissertation provided key information. Every step was a vital component of the GTA process. The following steps were carried out by the author/researcher.

### ***1. Step 1: Thematic Analysis***

First, the thematic analysis began by “finding and marking the underlying ideas in the data, grouping similar information together, and relating different ideas, and themes to one another” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 229). In this step, a three-level coding procedure was followed. In Level One, the transcripts were read intensively and then its data were arranged into small units of basic ideas. Then each basic idea unit was copied by hand onto a 4 x 6 index card; initial codes were assigned to all the ideas that were



operationalizations of the research questions. In the Level Two codings, patterns were identified via comparisons of basic ideas, and cards with similar themes were clustered together. Lastly, in the Level Three coding, the themes produced from Level Two were transformed into higher and more abstract constructs through comparisons across categories.

## ***2. Step 2: Generation of variables/factors***

During this step, the results from Step 1 were further arranged into thematically distinct clusters referred to as variables/factors. After multiple rounds of logic and integrity checks for reliability, comparisons and readjustments, final labels were given to each of the variables/ factors.

## ***3. Step 3: Interrelationship Diagraph Analysis***

The purpose of the third step, the Interrelationship Diagraph Analysis was to ascertain the relationships between variables/factors, in other words how the variables were connected. The original interview data was read and directional relationships among variables/factors were decided based on remarks that had “correlational or associative connotations” (Yan & Horwitz, 2008, p. 157). For instance, a comment by one student in the low-anxiety group on teacher characteristics, elaborated on the speech of the teacher and how this made her feel anxious: “It [foreign language anxiety] affects a lot; it can break you and send you back where you started. You’d feel as if you’re still a beginner, as if you’ve just dropped back two classes at once [...]”. Based on such comments, a directional relationship between the variable Teacher Characteristics and Methodology and Foreign Language Anxiety was determined: Teacher Characteristics and Methodology → Foreign Language Anxiety. In such

manner, an interrelationship diagraph matrix was completed for “all the interview data to show the interconnection between the factors/variables” (Miles, 1997, 303). The direction of influences among the factors/variables was shown by arrows.

Afterwards, the researcher ranked the variables/factors according to their “relationships with each other from *inputs* (variables viewed as influencing or "driving" other system variables, also called "drivers), to *outcomes* (variables perceived to be chiefly influenced by other components of the system)” (Miles, 1997, p. 303). Therefore, variables/factors with arrows pointing towards the right ( $\rightarrow$ ) were considered “drivers”; and those with arrows pointing toward the left ( $\leftarrow$ ) were “outcomes”. The interrelationship diagraph matrix led to a Grounded-Theory model that showed the relationships between the variables/ factors with respect to anxiety and learning English. The resulting model is shown in the next chapter.

### **E. Labeling Factors**

Because there are few examples of Grounded-Theory analysis a sample of the steps taken will be presented. After carefully reading the transcripts and coding, the author used the categories of Yan & Horwitz (2008) as a guide. The categories of factors/variables differed from study in the Chinese context. One particular category, Teacher Characteristics from Yan & Horwitz (2008) split into two factors: Teacher Characteristics and Methodology and Teacher-student Relationship. This occurred because many participants give an extremely high value on the instructor. Participants opinioned placed a great burden on the teacher to “teach” them English and less emphasis was given to their learning role. Many students spoke about how they appreciated patient and motivating teachers which formed a large component of the Teacher-student Relationship factor. This needed to be separated from comments that

referred to Teacher Characteristics and Methodology. Likewise, many participants mentioned their appreciation of the Curriculum so it was also given its own category. Parental Influence was not mentioned so this category was not used in this study; instead a new factor was used and labeled Learner's Friends and Family because the learner's community included more social elements than parents. Regional Differences did not appear in the same way as in Yan & Horwitz (2008) and instead it was labeled Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning.

#### **F. Pragmatic Limitations**

One difference from the methodology followed by Miles (1997) upon which Yan & Horwitz (2008) was based must be mentioned. In the former study, participants ( $N=16$ ) were community college administrators who had years of experience with the pay system of professors. Such was not the case with the participants of the research site, Makhzoumi Foundation, who may have had little or no experience: a) as a student in an adult educational program and/ or b) as a student in a language program. Hence, the author decided to not collaborate with the participants to analyze or rank the factors that were perceived to be personal and contextual sources of language anxiety. In addition, in Yan Horwitz (2008) the researchers themselves analyzed and constructed the interrelationship diagraph analysis; whereas in Miles (1997), participants were invited to collaborate with the researcher in this part of the analysis.

Another logistical limitation of this study was the decision not to collaborate with participants to either construct or check the interrelationship diagraph, because they were students in an adult vocational language program and many would find it inconvenient to meet for an extra session to do so. It was noted in the focus group

sessions (December 2014) that many participants were glad to cooperate but since many of them had a difficulty giving up their time to participate in the study.

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS

This section presents the factors/variables, relationships in the interrelationship diagraph matrix and analysis, functional categories of the model, the Grounded-Theory Model, relationships within the model, and focus group interaction.

#### **A. Description of Major Factors/Variables**

15 major factors/variables were generated from the interview data through the three-step GTA process previously mentioned:

##### 1. Teacher – student relationship

These comments referred to the relationship between the teacher and student as well as beliefs about how this relationship should function.

##### 2. Teacher Characteristics and Methodology

These comments referred to teacher's personal characteristics, skills and methodology.

##### 3. Curriculum:

These comments referred to the curriculum such as textbooks and other material used for class instruction.

##### 4. Test Types and Preparation

These comments referred to the content of tests and other types of evaluations such as pop quizzes as well as preparation procedures for such evaluations.

## 5. Gender

These comments referred to characteristics participants believed distinguished males and females in respect to learning English.

## 6. Learner's Family and Friends

These comments referred to the social environment of the participant and the capability to function in social circles to which the participant belonged, such as family and friends. Because of the centrality of family in Arab society, individuals are at times regarded as family members even if "they are not socially recognized kin" (Joseph, 1996, p. 200)

## 7. Comparison with Peers

These comments referred to the environment and atmosphere inside the classroom such as influence, comparison and competition with peer students.

## 8. Class Arrangements

These comments referred to the manner in which the class was organized including class activities, class size, seating arrangements, days of instruction and course breaks (days between terms).

## 9. Influence of L1

These comments referred to influence from native language such as in syntax, pronunciation, phonetics and other language characteristics which resulted in language transfer issues when learning English.

## 10. Learning Strategies

These comments referred to the methods and media the students used outside the classroom in order to practice and study the English language.

## 11. Motivation

These comments referred to the reasons for motivation and interest in learning English.

## 11. Influence of School Systems on Foreign Language Learning

These comments referred to the perceived linguistic differences between English language learners from different countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including dialect/accent of native language, second language, i.e. French, and introduction of English language into the curriculum of different educational systems.

## 12. Language Aptitude

These comments referred to abilities, talents and competencies an individual should have to achieve high in English language learning ranging from youth, ability to adapt to different social situations and cognitive capability.

## 13. Foreign Language Anxiety

These comments referred to perceptions of foreign language anxiety. Since this study embraced the position that performance anxiety functions as situation-specific anxiety these comments captured the participants' experiences which included "subjective feelings, psycho-physiological symptoms and behavioral responses" that arose from the unnatural language learning situation which occurs in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986).

## 14. Achievement

As learning outcomes these comments referred to students' perceived levels and measurements of achievement in English.

## **B. Findings by Factors/ Variables**

### ***1. Teacher-student Relationship***

This variable of the perception of the relationship between the student and the teacher appeared in this exploratory study because the investigation was conducted at an adult vocational language learning program. Thus the relationship between teacher and student was one of high priority because English was viewed as a skill that was transferred from one party to the other. (The age of the teachers and students were similar. No participants under the age of 18 formed part of the investigation.) One unique feature of this factor/variable was the intimacy of the teacher student relationship and its positive outcomes:

I am with Sabrina in the same class and we really love our teacher and she has been the same one since we started. I always ask for her and she feels like an older sister or a member of my family. I have certainly gotten used to her and her attention brought her even closer to my heart. And she does care for all her students as she would her own children [laughs].

These relationships remained positive even if the teacher and student argued:

I had an argument with a teacher once. She said something and I told her I had never heard of that word before and her response was, "So you've never passed a school before?" But after the argument and me leaving the classroom we were friends again.

Participants requested that the teacher treat the students appropriately as they felt that this affected their language learning:

And when the teacher brings down the student for not knowing something, this would even cause him not to participate even if he knew the answer or even if the



teacher gives the [other] students a chance to mock and make fun of another [student] who made a mistake. The teacher should give more time to the weaker students.

Many of the students commented that the personal relationship between teacher and student which was generally positive, resulted in encouragement of the student to learn the English language. Other students expressed the belief that the student should be able to express himself in this relationship. Overall, students commented that the teacher should accommodate the student to some degree

## ***2. Teacher Characteristics and Methodology***

Teacher characteristics and methodology was another variable that appeared in this model. One special feature of this factor/variable was the need for more discipline in the classroom:

As far as the classroom discipline goes, I think it is a big mistake if all [students] spoke together at once, but if a couple of students wanted to say something to each other or maybe tell the teacher something, then something that should be permissible; as long as they as they speak separately.

[Students] come to ask something here and suddenly the entire conversation shifts somewhere else and those who were integrated in class are left lost and their concentration is broken. This is one of the things that really bothers us. We've already told the teacher how a few students are wasting our time and breaking our chain of thoughts. This is one negative thing.

[We are taken] from one main point and important idea to another irrelevant tangent, sometimes very silly tangent that has nothing to do with our lesson so the

teacher has to go along with this occurrences in order not to create some tensions in the students and tries her best to cut it short, but we still feel disturbed.

The teacher's enthusiasm also made an impact in this factor/variable:

A big smile is the most important things [laughs]. When the teacher comes to class with a wide smile this leaves a certain lovely atmosphere [...]

The teacher's entertaining methodology was viewed as helpful when achieving in the language learning process.

Our teacher made us into a big group, used to one another and how to speak and how to deal with one another. She has a certain style that delivers information in a very smooth and simple way. Even at times when at home if I come across a tough idea I can ring her and she would make things clearer and easier.

Establishing and keeping proper pace of the language learning class was also regarded as vital to achievement:

I feel a good relationship between my teacher and her students in general. She delivers her lessons in a way that reinforced her students' sense of safety and security, not going too fast or carelessly, but rather focuses on each individual point till she is satisfied that all have grasped the point.

Of course, not all participants reported liking their teachers and some were neutral about the subject.

### ***3. Curriculum***

The curriculum factor/variable was from the material used in the vocational language training program. First, curriculum was regarded as easy:

The curriculum here is really easy and I like this foundation better than other language institutions. I like the teachers and the curriculum and the electronic method of

teaching. I mean this is definitely something different than all the rest and makes real life easy.

Most participants rendered curriculum relevant to real, daily life:

So far what we learned in the classroom is what we will be using for the rest of our lives whether you are at the supermarket or at the doctor's office or even shopping for clothes.

The student mentioned the interactive blackboard called ActiveInspire© that teachers were trained in:

This electronic screen [ActiveInspire© board] is something very nice, enabling all student to view the information equally, and even if the teacher had a low voice we'd still be able to hear and understand the audio files she plays. This is a very positive thing.

Some mentioned that classes were not easy. The major complaint from the participants was in terms of adding or expanding the speaking and listening component of the language program:

Arcella [the researcher] has just spoken normal simple language, not hieroglyphs. Then why did we not understand her? Why can't we follow along? There must be a problem. I am at level 7 and am considered one of the good students getting good grades, never less than 80%, and still I find it hard to understand when she speaks.

One extra-curricular activity that is worth mentioning was an event called Open Day organized on Halloween for students to practice and listen to English with

fellow students. The participant reported that the story that was chosen as part of the curriculum was too advanced for her and affected her motivation in the language learning process – she was discouraged when she was not able to understand the input.

#### **4. Gender**

From the beginning, participants did not agree that gender played a part in the language learning process. Some participants said gender was not a variable that should be given consideration:

No, they [language learning and gender] are unrelated.

I don't find any difference at all. In general, our brains function similarly.

Others perceived females as superior in language learning and are even seen as more numerous in the vocational training program:

Females absolutely learn more. I don't really know why, but females understand better than males in general and end up learning much more. You find here at each course level a couple of men and the rest would be women. You feel women have a greater desire to learn.

Women were regarded to be better than men in the realm of language learning:

Women are also brighter than men when it comes to languages.

Females were also seen as the gender to be more motivated:

Both can learn and study but you feel our Arab men don't want to study.

They could be doing tons of other things but girls have bigger motivations.

It was clear that gender was not a conclusive factor in the process of language learning of the participants in this study.

### ***5. Test Types and Preparation***

Taking tests and preparing for tests also influenced the language learning process. In some instances the tests were perceived as able to measure student achievement and at others participants reported that the evaluations were not accurate evaluation of achievement. One commented touched upon the uniform format of the test which could have resulted in inaccurate scoring:

The intelligence of the students comes into play when they figure out how the test questions are crafted and so they modify their learning style to match the test requirements. The foundation is relying on a fixed style of examination which is easy to deal with. We are always receiving high grades which could be misleading at times. The questions don't require much individual effort and they are often straightforward.

The cumulative midterm and final examinations were mostly regarded as recall of in-class material including ability to write paragraphs, essays as well as identify and correct grammar elements. Points were deducted for mistakes and participants said they were not allowed to ask questions or explanation during the administration of such tests. A couple of participants noted that they did not prepare for examinations. Many said they participated by writing:

I always prepare by writing. Let's say you have similar words such as walk', 'wash' and 'watch' and so on. If I do not write them down and practice writing them as I hear them then I could

mistake them, especially in quick speech. Now of course you can always rely on the context for a better understanding, but still I always write everything I see down on paper.

The following participants shared what information she reviewed in preparation:

I write down and review all the information I have in my head before opening the book. I then go through another round of revision when reading the book and yet another while going through the homework.

Many of the participants reported that they prepared by writing down material because the tests have no oral or audio component:

I like the idea [of including oral and audio components to the tests]. It can benefit us [the students] both now and for the future. We're already taking similar things during class but none in the exam, so far it is exclusively written.

End-of-unit quizzes were also seen as more desirable, impromptu way to evaluate students' true progress. These comments should not be disregarded because exams were administered after a month, half-way through the term, and at the end of the term. Promotion of the student to the next level was weighted 40% on the final exam and 30% on the midterm exam and 30% participation.

### ***6. Learner's Family and Friends***

Participants attested that family and friends could encourage or discourage participants during the language learning process. The participants summarized this phenomenon:

It is necessary to have someone as always encouraging them [...] If someone kept pulling you down saying what a loser you are then you would eventually internalize it. Whereas if you were surrounded by positive, encouraging people who had your back, pushing you to learn then you'd feel enthusiastic and energetic to learn from within.

Family was revealed by many participants as an influential portion of this factor/variable:

Both my husband and uncles actually helped and encouraged me to learn and spurred me to study. [...] They reminded me that I am a foreigner in a strange land [Lebanon] and this not to sit down on the couple of skills I have. "I should develop myself more", they would say, and my family places a great value in speaking English.

Participants were both encouraged and discouraged by their family; thus, their achievement was directly affected:

It [family support] affects a lot. Some say, "I don't care what others say", but deep down inside you'd still give their words a second thought and take their opinions into consideration. When I started learning English, my family supported me very much and that gave me a lot of motivation to study and learn, but when they withdrew their support I also dropped [my performance] in class; however, when my friends supported and encouraged me afterwards I was spurred again. So, family and

friends' support definitely matters, even if you tell yourself how you won't take their opinions to heart.

In some cases the community that surrounded the participants discouraged the participant from learning English:

Peoples' opinions would certainly affect me psychologically, but I would never stop anything for anyone. I have a strong will and came here totally out of my own will to study when all those around me stood against me telling me how I would fail to produce a thing or memorize new information.

Another participant reported the same treatment from others:

[...] whereas the first thing that one of my closest friends told me was, "Now?" and "At this age?"

One very distinctive element of this factor/variable was the ability to share achievement in English language learning with their family, especially children:

It [social surroundings] affect me positively whether my children or family whom I still live with. My brother was the first who encouraged me and since I started learning, the way my kids look at me has changed. I used to avoid their presence when they caused riots at home, but now that they see me studying and working on myself they have changed the way they look at me and we are enjoying one another's company and spend quality time together.



## ***7. Comparison with Peers***

In this factor/variable, participants expressed their concern when they compared themselves to peers. At times this comparison caused frustration which rendered the communication of the Teacher-student Relationship inefficient and recommended to arrange the classroom so that all students were of the same fluency level in English:

I am in level 107 [levels available at the Makhzoumi Foundation are 100 – 108], we are receiving students with much higher levels of English and this is causing us frustration especially when you find them responding immediately to the teacher's questions. You tell yourself, "They already expressed the idea? What's the point of me repeating it?" So, students in the class should be of the same level.

At other times participants overestimated their achievement in English and were ridiculed by their peers in the language classroom:

So once I felt too confident and when the teacher asked me about a certain point I was unable to answer. I felt I was destroyed in the middle of the classroom with all the students answering and taking part with your sitting silently in the corner.

Peers were also said to have an influence in the process of language learning in addition duties of support and encouragement of their peers:

[Peers] play a major role. For instance, say you were surrounded by smart students in class this should push you to learn and become first of their class. And we should those who are not-so-

good in class. It is our duty to assist and not become arrogant around them. Everything, good and bad, affects you when learning English.

### **8. *Class Arrangements***

Participants provided much information about how they perceived class needed to be arranged in order to maximize language learning process. There was some controversy on whether the administration of the Makhzoumi Foundation should intensify the program. Some participants reported that two hours, two days a week was sufficient because they had other duties/responsibilities and others which insisted that they preferred more hours. Some participants had taken a more intense course during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan in which classes were held four days week so they preferred a more intense program:

When we started last Ramadan we went through the entire level in a single month, rather than the usual two. We were very happy and satisfied with taking English lessons daily and our focus was great and our understanding increased. But now that we are back to twice a week over two months, we are feeling the next level rather really far away. If it was on a daily basis this could play a major role.

Intercession breaks were also regarded as too lengthy and needed to be shortened to minimize anxiety and increase success. Below two participants discuss this issue:

And there are many transition days, sometimes up to 20 at least, between the levels. This cools your enthusiasm down. And we forget the information.

Another participant echoed this same sentiment:

This process is also time-consuming. It would take us, now at Level 3, about a year at this rate to finish the course series.

Class size was also discussed with six, eight and ten students viewed as ideal:

Ten are may be a bit too many [...]. I say six is ideal. We are 12 in class and sometimes we don't all have the have the change to read or speak our minds.

Overall participants thought the number of students should be decreased:

[Classes should have] less students for each to have a greater window of opportunity.

As far as the class-make up, participants remarked that they would like the classes to be arranged according to similar age, , age and grades, and educational levels. A participant even suggested that homework should be mandatory for entry:

If I was a teacher, I would forbid you coming to class without your homework.

It is only twice a week, seriously, I don't give ear to the excuses of those who don't come with their homework. The teacher doesn't check for this issue.

Participants also mentioned semi-circular seating arrangements as optimal for learning English:

This seating arrangement is bothersome for an English class. It should allow for more movement, perhaps could be arranged in a semi-circular way.

## ***9. Influence of L1***

From the very beginning of the focus groups, the participants diverged on whether their native language (L1), which in most cases was Arabic and at times Kurdish, had some influence in the English learning process or did not. One insightful participant remarked on the benefits of Arabic:

Arabic here presents us with pros and cons. What is positive is how it provides us with translations for vocabulary and explanation for the new grammar being studied in order for us to understand what we are dealing with.

Many of the participants agreed that L1 script, pronunciation, and syntax, specifically Arabic, differed from the target language, English:

There's no base for comparison. The Arabic script differs totally in writing and pronunciation and even in sentence formation. One uses the adjective before its respective noun, and the other flips them over.

Lebanon is well-known for being a multi-lingual context and the Makhzoumi Foundation was no exception. Some participants who had previously lived in Iraq reported influence from Kurdish:

Well they [English] use[s] the Latin alphabet [...] but Kurdish words are harsher than those of English.

Other participants who had contact with French had either previously studied French as an L2 in school or had lived in a context where French was used such as Morocco. In this case, French helped in the English language learning process:

It would definitely make it easier for me to know something instead of starting from scratch.

One participant recognized the benefit and influence of French cognates and how they helped to learn English:

We have some words that are written the same in both English and French but differ in pronunciation only, like abbreviation for example, and so this helps in learning reading and writing.

### ***10. Learning Strategies***

Besides preparing for exams, participants reported learning by a variety of other strategies especially internet browsing, television and cell phone applications:

I go online browsing through English-teaching websites for grammar and listening especially, and do many exercises.

Television programs were also often mentioned:

I would repeat a movie with English subtitles more than once, and so with English songs by repetition and translation you would acquire new vocabulary. I would translate each and every word and by repetition you would memorize them.

Some of the participants went online for additional practice:

I watch YouTube songs with lyrics to understand. So I read while listening, I prefer the lyrics or subtitles be all in English.

Cell phone applications were also used for practice what was learned in the classroom:

I'm trying to increase my listening. Whatever English programs I can download onto my mobile I try to spend my free time

listening to them in English. I found some very helpful applications when it comes to grammar and terminology.

Some participants attended the extra-curricular social events hosted by the Foundation including a Halloween (Open Day) for practicing listening and speaking skills in English:

When we find all people taking part of a social activity then I start wanting to take part too and speak to be heard by all. That's why such activities are real important and offers us self-confidence, just like that Halloween party, because you don't feel as if you're being tied in a classroom, on the contrary you feel yourself diving into the world of communication.

Another learning strategy that was tied to social networks, i.e. when the participant taught her child:

I learn most from teaching my children, especially my eight year old.

Overall, Learning Strategies were seen to influence achievement but not foreign language anxiety.

## ***11. Motivation***

Participants reported that motivation was tied to their language learning process. English classes are not required so all participants enrolled out of their own volition. Motivation was seen to be tied to Learner's Family and Friends:

If someone kept pulling you down saying what a loser you are then you would eventually internalize it. Whereas if you surrounded by positive encouraging people who had your back

pushing you to learn then you'd feel enthusiastic and energetic to learn from within.

The ability to participate in social surroundings that function in English was viewed as a big motivator:

[Interest plays a role] as for how much I should love the language to learn and understand it, and to also comprehend what is taking place around me so that no one should make a fool out of me. And also so that no one is better than I am in principle. I do not want to necessarily be better than those around me but I would settle for the same level as they are. So long as none is better than me.

Social factors, such as communication with English-speaking family members also contributed to the motivation to learn English:

I like English to stay in contact with my family because most are travelling abroad and when I went for a visit last year I felt like a stranger among them.

This also includes the desire to participate in an English-speaking society:

I went to Canada. Everyone uses English there. Now there are many who speak Arabic but if you want to get your own work done then you'd have to speak the language to take a bus or get off and be able to communicate your needs, if you're lost ask for directions you know? It's become a need to speak English.

Motivation to learn the language was linked to liking the language:

Maybe his [the ideal learner] love for the subject, because if he doesn't love it he honestly would not be able to learn it. [...] I am learning it alright because I love the language and I have a goal of mastering it.

## ***12. Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning***

Some participants reported that learners from different countries in the Middle East North African Region were able to reach different levels of achievement because of when foreign languages, in this case English, was introduced in the school systems in their countries of origin. Others did not agree with this assortment:

I wouldn't know if Arabic accents had anything to do with English. They're all Arabic after all. There's a certain variance in pronunciation from one Arabic accent to another, yes, but no effect on learning English.

Participants perceived many differences in achievement due to the Influence of School Systems. The most prominent among them was the superiority of Lebanese learners:

Lebanon [...] because we are taught these language when we start school.

In Lebanon [there are superior learners] because the teaching staff is very well trained.

At one time reasons were unknown, but the Lebanese superiority of the learners persisted:



We don't really know why the Lebanese have mastered the French and English languages.

Other participants voiced that there was no distinction in achievement between Lebanese and Syrian learners. Syrian learners were seen to be at disadvantage due to their accent:

We [Arabic] speakers don't have certain letters in Arabic like the letter "p" and hence you find many Syrians unable to pronounce it but since we were young in Lebanon, you find us able to pronounce these letters with ease.

Iraqi learners were at an advantage due to early introduction of English in the school system, specifically the domains of math and science. French North African speakers were said to have an easier transition to learning English due to the ability to speak French:

It is easier for Moroccans and French North Africans to learn English from their youth. They are used to Latin letters, it is not like trying to learn English from only an Arabic background. Plus, you have a lot of English words infiltrated into everyday use in some areas, for example the days of the week and the months.

Egyptian learners were regarded to be at a disadvantage as well as the Gulf speakers due to their distinctive Arabic dialects:

However, Egyptians will always speak English with an Egyptian accent! Same with the folks from the Gulf region. If their accents do play a role, I think it would more destructive than a constructive one.

Overall, Influence of School Systems on Foreign Language Learning affected achievement.

### ***13. Language Aptitude***

Some of the personal characteristics that participants thought were conducive to successful language learning included knowledge about other cultures:

He [the ideal learner] would have a wider cultural understanding since each language represents the country that speaks it, and he would definitely know more things about these countries than others around him.

Cognitive ability was seen as necessary as well:

Smartness and an ability to understand.

Many participants echoed this remark. Some called it an ability to understand and memorize:

They should of course [...] understand what is said by the teacher and memorize all new vocabulary.

Furthermore, the ideal learner should have the social competence to function in another country and system of government I addition to liking the language:

He [the language learner] probably has the love of knowledge and distinction. It is definitely something special that I can go to

any country and be able to communicate with their people and be able to do my things in any governmental department I enter. Knowledge knows no boundaries and so I salute him that he was able to learn more than 1 language.

The high achieving language learner also was seen having motivation to learn:

The desire is the need to really push you forward.

A more objective personal characteristic was youth:

First of all, I would say learning at a young age is of great importance.

More subjective factors/ included self-confidence.

I would plant self-confidence and ambition.

What I think we should plant in this robot is a certain degree of self-confidence which would save him anxiety and support him when voicing his opinions in English.

This characteristic and its connection to motivation were mentioned when the participants were prompted on what learner need to reach achievement in English:

Second[the second characteristic] is self-confidence while starting to learn.

It was an important part of the process and participants recognized its weight in the language learning process.

#### ***14. Foreign Language Anxiety***

Foreign language anxiety was experience by some participants and not others. Those that did, express differing degrees of language anxiety and from different sources. One point of view was that anxiety did not exist It was seen as type of trait anxiety and tied to personal characteristic of an individual learner:

There's no such thing as anxiety. One is born this way: if they were cowards with weak personalities they would feel anxious [...].

At times participants expressed concern about achievement in the language learning and this resulted in anxiety:

Sometimes, I feel like learning English is actually hard.

I feel I am slow in acquiring this language [English].

Anxiety was perceived as natural but also as debilitating:

It's only natural to experience anxiety when entering into a language you know nothing about. Fear of taking off, if at all, is always present. [...]

This anxiety was also said to have arisen in the language learning classroom:

Only in English class do I get extremely nervous.

Another source of this anxiety was from the unsystematicity of English phonetics:

The more you learn about the language, the more letters you find out that change their pronunciation. I mean there is no single rule that you can follow, like Arabic and French, and instead you will have to memorize each word separately. This is hard; I'm not used to this.

Fear of evaluation was also cited as a reason to become anxious:

I fear being asked or examined in something I haven't understood well in class. Until I understand the question I'm

presented with, I get anxious and scared because I don't ask as I'm shy and never ask for clarifications.

There was also an anxiety for not performing well in class:

I'd say fear. I'm always shy to speak or read English though I know how to and do so very well at home. Come to class I suddenly fear messing up or committing mistakes.

You're always scared of pronouncing something wrongfully and being mocked for it. When you know a certain sentence for sure, you start generalizing that rule. But when you're not 100% certain then you fear saying it and being laughed at.

Another participant voiced something similar:

I'd say fear. I'm always shy to speak or read English though I know how to and do so very well at home. Come to class I suddenly fear messing up or committing mistakes.

Some students found anxiety when they did not understand the instructor:

If the teacher is explaining a certain grammatical rule and I don't get it that causes some anxiety, especially when it is a rule essential to the class. I would not understand the lesson if I didn't understand get this rule she had just explained.

An inability to communicate was also reported to be a path to anxiety:

I am constantly suffering from anxiety whenever I want to speak in English, just like Caryn here. I'm still learning English but would I ever be able to speak it well? This causes me a lot of anxiety, the fear that once I'm done with all these courses I would still be unable to speak a correct English sentence or use the right verb forms.

Yet another reason was the unrealistic to wanting to sound like a native speaker of English and interaction with them:

I think they are just afraid of saying something wrongfully. They want their accents to be 100% like natives’.

One feels pressured only when wanting to communicate with advanced speakers and trying to match their level of fluency.

This concern was present with performing well in English took place both inside and outside of class:

Even at home, I would ask my children to gather and read a story together and they started mocking me. And now I am even shy in front of them and scared of their mockery. All this has instilled a fear of starting to speak in English [...] I even have an 8 year-old daughter. I spend a lot of time teaching her. I find it very easy. I wonder why I don’t feel at ease in this class.

Test preparation came forward as a source of anxiety:

[...]And I start thinking anxiously for days before the test comes and I stay scared until after I have finished taking the examination. I don’t know why, but the fear increase dramatically during the exams.

Taking exams also prompted foreign language anxiety:

I experience a certain level of anxiety during exams, even if I had studied well and understood what was being taught. But when I see this exam paper in front of me I feel immense pressure and I experience anxiety while solving the questions.

And if there was a certain question I did not understand and we are not allowed to ask during tests of course I start getting angry [laughs] though I have really great grades but I still have this problem nonetheless. Sometimes when I get stuck on a specific question I'd find my brain starting to shut down on the rest and it would take me some time to calm myself down. But in class it's very normal. This has been my problem since I was a little girl I've always had this fear from testing. I would have no problem taking part in class and my results are always really good.

One participant explained what she experienced:

Just the word "exam" on its own is sufficient to cause you anxiety. As for me, as soon as I set foot and start the test I would go well. The first step is the most important thing. [...] Like when I take a look at the English exam paper and see how easy the questions are I roll on until I reach a question I don't understand and my brain locks down. What do I do? I leave it till I calm down, I solve the rest and then return to that question.

In order to dispel this anxiety fellow students were recommended to empathize with and support the anxious student:

I would tell him how I went through the same thing in the beginning, but you develop and become better step by step.

Participants voiced that the teacher's role was to be patient and not make the student feel uncomfortable in the unnatural setting of the foreign language classroom:

When the teacher brings the student down for not knowing something [...] this would cause him not to take part anymore even if he knew an answer. Or even if the teacher gives the students the chance to mock and make fun of another who made a mistake. The teacher should give more time to the weaker students.

The instructor should encourage the student by minimizing and accepting mistakes/errors in language production:

You have to pass self-confidence onto your students not to feel fear of making a mistake and encourage them when pronouncing correctly to increase their level of enjoyment. But most important is to remove this fear of making a mistake as what matters most is starting.

As far as the role of the administration, it was recommended that teachers who were well-reviewed by student should be retained and those who were not should be better trained:

Management should look for those teachers most liked and asked for by the students, and work on improving those who experience student repulsions.

In addition, there was debate among the participants on whether the administration should intensify class session by increasing their frequency and length.

In terms of curriculum, participants requested less of a focus on writing and entertaining warm-ups to stimulate student motivation. In particular, a consensus was reached to increase an oral/audio component in class:

I agree with the gentleman here. Their grammar and such are real easy at the foundation and their teaching is good, but if only



they'd let us start talking because we are finding problems in conversation. We still find ourselves hesitant when we try to speak, fearing we say something wrong.

The recommendation was voiced by another participant who had progressed through many levels in the program and was an advanced student:

As far as the foundation is concerned, they are teaching us easy grammar and information and we are navigating through the course very smoothly. However, I feel like they are lacking in practice and flexibility that gives you the confidence necessary to speak.

### ***15. Achievement***

Achievement in the target language was connected to all other factors/variables was thought to be attained when the participant was able to:

- take part in a conversation
- communicate with a native or fluent speaker
- partake in social situations that were in the target language
- watch TV and movies in English
- read in English
- teach his/her own children.

The goal to understand and communicate was seen as vital to reach achieve fluency in the English language:

To be able to communicate with my surrounding environment, especially when there are foreigners and I manage to express my ideas correctly.

I agree. Once we start understanding what is being said in front of us, we'd feel happy and proud that at least now you can understand even if just a little bit.

### C. Interrelationship Diagram Matrix and Analysis

A matrix was constructed based on the relationships between the factors/variables. The “interconnectedness” of these factors (Miles, 1997, p. 303). The interrelationship diagram analysis can be shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Interrelationship Diagram Matrix**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Out	In	Out-in
1. Teacher-student relationship		→					←				→			→	→	5	0	5
2. Teacher Characteristics & Methodology	→										→			→	→	4	0	4
3. Curriculum							←				→			→	→	4	0	4
4. Gender											→			→	→	3	0	3
5. Test Types & Preparation											→			→	→	3	0	3
6. Learner's Family & Friends											→				→	2	0	2
7. Comparison with Peers											→			→		2	0	2
8. Class Arrangements							←								→	2	0	2
9. Influence of L1															→	1	0	1
10. Learning Strategies															→	1	0	1
11. Motivation						←									→	1	1	0
12. Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning															→	1	1	0
															←			
13. Language Aptitude						←	←				←				←	1	4	-3
14. Foreign Language Anxiety		←	←	←	←	←	←	←			←				→	1	10	-9
															←			
15. Achievement	←	←	←	←	←	→	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←		1	14	-13
						←												

The degree of influence was decided by the difference between the number of outgoing arrows (→) and the incoming arrows (←). The factors/variables with similar OUT-IN balance figures were grouped together in the same category. “Out” is an arrow that points to the right; “in” is an arrow that points to the left.

#### **D. Functional Categories of the Model**

The variables in the model were categorized into four categories from left to right in Figure 1. They worked with other factor/ variables in affecting achievement in language learning. The first category consisted of five factors/variables considered “primary drivers”: Teacher-student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum, Test Types and Preparation, and Gender. These factors/ variables were perceived to directly or indirectly influence every other variable in the model. The second category included Learner’s Family and Friends, Comparison with Peers, Class Arrangements, Influence of L1, and Learning Strategies. These factors were influenced by other factors in the third category; hence, they were called “mediating drivers”. There was only one factor/variable in the third category “mediating outcome” – Language Aptitude. Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement formed the last category which was directly and/or indirectly influenced by all factors/variables to the left of the model. These factors were called “primary outcomes”. These factors/ variables are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Interrelationship Diagraph Analysis**

		Out	In	Out-In
Primary driver	Teacher-student relationship	5	0	5
Primary driver	Teacher Characteristics & Methodology	4	0	4
Primary driver	Curriculum	4	0	4
Primary driver	Test Types & Preparation	3	0	3
Primary driver	Gender	3	0	3
Primary driver	Learner's Family & Friends	2	0	2
Primary driver	Comparison with Peers	2	0	2
Primary driver	Class Arrangements	2	0	2
Primary driver	Motivation	2	0	2
Mediating Driver	Influence of L1	1	0	1
Mediating Driver	Learning Strategies	1	0	1
Mediating Driver	Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning	1	1	0
Mediating Outcome	Language Aptitude	1	4	-3
Primary Outcome	Foreign Language Anxiety	1	12	-11
Primary Outcome	Achievement	1	14	-13

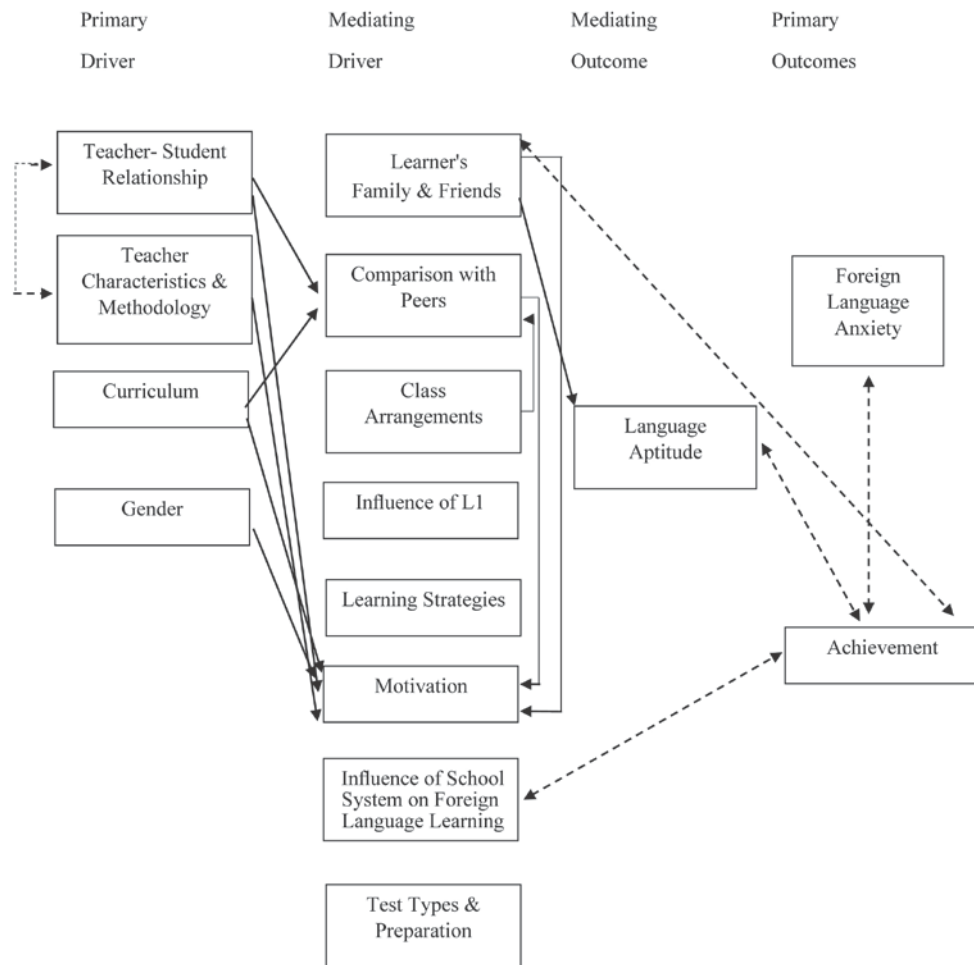
### **E. Grounded-Theory Model**

The researcher followed Miles's (1997) method to convert the interrelationship diagraph into the Grounded-Theory model. The steps were adapted as follows and can be found in Miles (1997, p. 372).

1. After the Interrelationship Diagraph Matrix was completed, the factors' variables were arranged in decreasing order or "out" arrows minus "in" arrows. Large positive numbers indicated primary drivers, small positive numbers indicated mediating drivers, small negative numbers indicated mediating outcomes, and large negative numbers indicated primary outcomes.
2. Factors/ variables were assigned to the four groups mentioned above.

3. The factors/ variables were organized from left (primary drivers) to right (primary outcomes).
4. Two types of relationships were indicated with solid arrows:
  - 4a. Relationships to a driver/outcome category
  - 4b. Relationships from one factor/variable to another to its immediate right (but not more than one category to its immediate right)
    - 5a. Those factor/variables linked to another factor/variable in a category to the left. (May be more than one category to the left).
6. The model was checked for internal reliability.
7. The Grounded-Theory model can be found in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Grounded-Theory Model**



**F. Relationships within the Model**

The factors/variables in the model were related to each other via arrows. These arrows showed sequential order among the factors/variables and did not “suggest simplistic, unilateral, causal relationships; rather they documented major paths of influence among system components identified by the study participants” (Miles, 1997, p. 307). The following relationships were identified in the model.

### ***1. Teacher Characteristics ↔ Teacher – student Relationship***

The findings suggested that Teacher Characteristics & Methodology had a bidirectional relationship with Teacher-student Relationships. The teacher's enthusiasm and patience seemed to have direct, positive impact on the Teacher-student Relationship resulting in encouragement and achievement of the student in the language learning process. On the other hand, when the teacher did not manage the class well, and for example, did not address tangents and/or disruptive students corrected, this has affected the methodology of the class.

Arab non-Western English teacher were perceived to have entered the teaching profession to be compensated monetarily and native Western English teachers were thought to be in the profession due to a passion for teaching. Both perceptions affected the Teacher-student Relationship. Native Western English teachers were also thought to be at a disadvantage because they 1) did not communicate with students in their native language, i.e. Arabic or Kurdish 2) their native speech was at time too fast to be understood by the student, thus affecting the Teacher-student Relationship. The patience of the Native Western English teacher was also seen as conducive to a positive relationship.

### ***2. Teacher-student Relationship → Comparison with Peers***

One particular recommendation called for the teacher not to humiliate students for underperforming in the classroom nor allow other students to do so.

### ***3. Teacher -student Relationship → Motivation***

A personal Teacher-student Relationship that accommodated the student was seen to contribute to the motivation to study English. It was also necessary for the student to be able to express himself in this relationship as this increased motivation.

The teacher's enthusiasm and patience was seen increase student motivation. Many participants spoke of the benefits of having an encouraging teacher and how this affected their motivation to further study English.

#### **4. Curriculum → Comparison with Peers**

Curriculum affected how participants compared each other's performance in the target language. This occurred outside the normal class at an enrichment event called, Halloween English Open Day, which was organized for listening and speaking practice. One participant deemed the aural component, a scary told by of one of the, too advanced for her in comparison with her peers. This made the participant feel uncomfortable.

#### **5. Gender → Motivation**

Some participants thought gender did not have an influence on motivation. Other participants insisted that the male gender was less motivated than their female counterparts. Females and males were thought to have the same ability, but females were deemed as more motivated. .

#### **6. Learner's Family and Friends → Motivation**

People surrounding the participants were thought to have an influence on motivation. Some older participants reported being discouraged or not motivated due to their age. Friends and family were among those who contributed to the encouragement and discouragement. At times these social factors kept the students from studying English and at other times students were very motivated. Class members and the school also motivated the student.



### ***7. Learner's Family and Friends → Achievement***

There was also a bidirectional relationship with Achievement. When the student experience achievement, such as scoring high on tests or well on writing assignments, they shared this with their family and friends. This was a feature that was not present in the Chinese context of Yan & Horwitz (2008).

### ***8. Comparison with Peers → Motivation***

When participants compared themselves with other peers who were more fluent, their motivation was affected negatively. Participants expressed frustration when these students answered before them every time the teacher asked a question.

### ***9. Class Arrangements → Comparison with Peers***

When prompted for changes desired in Class Arrangements, participants requested that classes be arranged according to age, grades and age, even level of education. Of course, not all participants agreed with these suggestions and said that diversity helped in the classroom.

### ***10. Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning ↔ Achievement***

Learners from different regions of the Middle East and North African region were perceived to have certain advantages and disadvantages towards their achievement. Lebanese learners, with an earlier introduction of English in the school system and better trained teachers were seen as superior learners. Syrian learners' dialect was thought to affect their achievement in English. Iraqi learners were also at an advantage because English was introduced early in the school and was taught in the domains of math and science. Learners from Egyptian were at a disadvantage due to their Arabic dialect which negatively affected achievement because their accent in English was always distinguishable. French North African learners because of their

dialect, Latin-based writing system of French, and French-English cognates were also seen as high achievers. Lebanese learners were also regarded as superior achievers in the English learning process for unknown reasons. Their achievement was tied to their region; therefore, there was a bidirectional relationship between Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning and Achievement.

### ***11. Language Aptitude ↔ Achievement***

This relationship was bidirectional because at times Language Aptitude influenced Achievement. The participants thought that good learners should have knowledge about a variety of cultures, in sum, a certain cognitive ability to achieve in the language learning process. One participant cited the ability to process new, never encountered-before information, as a sign she has achieved well in the language. In other situations, Achievement showed a path to Language Aptitude. Participants' ability to write a paragraph and identify and correct grammar mistakes was thought to affect Achievement, as well as the ability to read an article, watch a movie, tutor their own children with their school work, affected achievement.

### ***12. Foreign Language Anxiety ↔ Achievement***

Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement were seen to have a bidirectional relationship. Language Anxiety was at times had an influence on Achievement. One participant perceived that Foreign Language Anxiety was a rooted as a personal trait and thus affected Achievement in a permanent way. Most participants voiced that anxiety was situation-specific and was induced when communicating in English especially with fluent and/or native speakers affected Achievement. Other times, participants thought achievement influence anxiety. The inability to communicate with speakers outside class and in participants' surroundings, in other words, the mere

perception of poor achievement, affected Achievement. Performing well in class also prompted Foreign Language Anxiety. Overall, the bidirectional relationship of Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement was established.

### ***13. Learner's Family and Friends ↔ Achievement***

In this bidirectional relationship, Learner's Family and Friends impacted Achievement and vice versa. When family and friends encouraged and or discouraged the participant's Achievement was affected. When students attended Halloween Open English Day, a social activity for practice of listening and speaking skills, they felt that their Achievement was affected because they were able to communicate others reported that they were able to communicate. Others reported they were able to "measure" their achievement. When some achieved high in English class, they shared their experience with family and thus influence his social surroundings, making the relationship between Learner's Family and Friends and Achievement bidirectional. Another participant's family was positively affected by the change that took place when the family saw the participant studying.. She described a better relationship with children due to the positive influence of her pursuit of Achievement in the English language learning process.

### **G. Focus Group Interaction**

As previously mentioned in the study, participants were divided into three groups, low-, medium- and high-anxiety, based on their scores on the FLCAS. The purpose of this division was to ensure that participants with varied levels of foreign language anxiety had the opportunity to interact with other participants of the same level of anxiety. There was a marked difference in the interaction between the high-anxiety when compared to the medium-anxiety and low-anxiety groups. The interaction

in the high-anxiety group was more tense and adversarial. The researcher/ co-moderator had to intervene in the discussion to explain to the participants that the purpose of the focus group was not to persuade anyone in the group nor the moderators in a particular issue, but that instead everyone was encouraged to express their experience. These individuals scored higher on the FLCAS which indicated that their level of foreign language anxiety was higher than participants in the low-anxiety and medium-anxiety focus groups. The interactions of the high-anxiety focus group could have also been due to the trait anxiety of the individual participants, but this could not be determined as the participants did not take any instrument to divide them into groups according to trait anxiety

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

This section presents the relationships in the exploratory Grounded-Theory model, compares the model with that of Yan & Horwitz (2008), reports major findings and suggests pedagogical implications.

The position of Foreign Language Anxiety in this model suggests that the participants perceive Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement as outcomes from other factors/variables in the language learning process. Simultaneously, achievement is a direct, recursive source of Foreign Language Anxiety. Other factors/variables which appear Foreign Language Aptitude demonstrate less influence upon it. Indirect sources include Learner's Family and Friends and Language Aptitude. Factors/variables such as Comparison with Peers, Class Arrangements, Influence of L1, Learning Strategies, Motivation, Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning, Test Types and Preparation, Teacher-Student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum and Gender are as remote sources. The following section addresses relationships within the model.

#### **A. Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement: A Direct Bidirectional Relationship**

Early studies linking achievement and anxiety were correlative in nature and proved inconsistent. Clement, Gardner & Smythe (1977, 1980) reported a negative relationship, and others reported a positive relationship or no relationship (Backman, 1976; Chastain, 1975; Kleinman, 1977; Pimsleur, Mosberg & Morrison, 1962; Scovel, 1978). However this confusion was due to 1) an inadequate definition of foreign

language anxiety and 2) a lack of an instrument to properly measure it (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999 as cited in Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1999). After the creation and proven reliability and validation of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) evidence supported a moderate negative relationship between anxiety and achievement (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Gardner, Smythe & Lalonde, 1984; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Phillips, 1992; Spielman and Rodnofsky, 2001, Trylong; Young, 1986). Although evidence from quantitative and qualitative studies supported this negative correlation between anxiety and achievement, the direction of this correlation is still being disputed. Horwitz (2001) warned that when correlation is used the direction of the correlation cannot be established nor the existence of a confounding variable having a role in the relationship between foreign language anxiety and achievement be discarded. Therefore studies such as the present one, which go beyond correlation and use mixed methods to study students' perceptions contribute greatly to this debate.

Yan & Horwitz (2008) subjects did not report a unidirectional relationship from anxiety to achievement, "they only commented on how anxiety kept them from achieving and did not mention lack of achievement as contributing to their anxiety" (p. 173). Zhang (2013) found the same unidirectional relationship anxiety affected achievement of listening skills but achievement in listening skills did not have an influence. Such was not the case in the present study where participants perceived achievement, particularly not being able to communicate or performing well in class, affect anxiety.

## **B. Indirect Bidirectional Relationships**

### ***1. Learner's Family and Friends***

This section is restricted to findings that did not include peers; those are reserved for section 3a below. In this study, the encouragement or lack thereof from family, friends and others is related to achievement. In most cases, participants divulge that when their family supported them they achieve higher than if they are not supported. In addition, the ability to adapt to different societies or social circles in which the target language is spoken also influences achievement. On a more extreme account, a participant tells of an earlier time in her life when her husband and mother not only discouraged her but did not allow her to study English. Conversely, participants share their high achievement with their family and friends and this in turn has a positive influence on their family members. This unique finding of the importance of social support outside the classroom insignificant when compared to Yan & Horwitz (2008). In the Confucian worldview, the paradigm for the order of political systems and social systems is the family, and *Analects* 1: 2 reads: "Being good as a son and obedient as a young man, is perhaps, the root of a man's character" (as cited in Flanagan, 2011, p. 50). Because Arab society originated as tribal society, kin relations are important to society. Joseph (1996) stated that this is often manifested in the use of "idiomatic kinship" (p.200; hence this factor's place in the Chinese context which is limited to relationships with parents is extended to a wider circle in the Lebanese language learning context and includes family, those who are regarded as family and friends. It is also worth mentioning that the learners in Yan & Horwitz (2008) were university students as opposed to the present study which participants are adult learners in a vocational language training program. Due to the fact that these participants are older,

as well as close friends who are usually kept for long spans of peoples' lives, the issues having to do with the learner's community of family and friends affected achievement in English language learning. The interesting factor Learner's Family and Friends which has a bidirectional relationship with Achievement serves as a major finding of this exploratory study. It sets a precedent for future researchers wishing to study the Lebanese context.

## ***2. Language Aptitude***

In Yan & Horwitz (2008) Language Aptitude and Darwish Askar (2009), the latter studied university students in Lebanon, found that language aptitude was a source of language anxiety. This study further elucidated this relationship between these variables and set them in a bidirectional relationship where one may affect the other.

## **C. Remote Relationships**

### ***1. Comparison with Peers***

This model renders Comparison with Peers a remote source of anxiety. It supports evidence of Bailey (1983) and Cohen & Norst (1989) which stated that willingness to speak and fear of losing self-esteem in front of peers in the classroom are widespread phenomena in foreign language classrooms (as cited in Ohata, 2005). It also supports previous findings of Chang (2014) that found pressure from students comparing their language proficiency contributes to language anxiety. A similar study of Chinese elementary school children found that pressure from other students, i.e. competition from the games they play in class to learn English is linked to anxiety. This study's findings also coincides with Young's (1991) review of anxiety literature which stated interpersonal issues such a competitiveness lead to anxiety. In Yan & Horwitz (2008) Comparison with Peers as with this study is a remote source of anxiety.



## ***2. Class Arrangements***

Previous reported that literature class arrangements and procedures led to anxiety (Chang, 2014; Darwish Askar, 2009; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Young, 1991). Hence literature from contexts all over the world, as well as China, echo this study's findings in which Class Arrangements is a remote source of anxiety.

## ***3. Influence of L1***

Another interesting finding of this study is due to the multilingual context of Lebanon and the MENA region. L1 influence is seen as a distant source of anxiety principally because some participants believed that L1 has an influence in the English learning process and others do not. It would be interesting to see if this finding would be replicated in a similar multi-lingual context that has similar contact with English.

## ***4. Learning Strategies***

Unlike in the Chinese setting in Yan & Horwitz (2008) which found Learning Strategies to be an immediate source of anxiety and expressed a general frustration in their search for an adequate strategy to achieve in English, the participants in the Lebanese context of the present study consider it a remote source. It should also be taken into account that the Chinese Grounded-Theory model Learning Strategies was influenced by Test Types, Gender, and Parental Influence which then in turn was linked to Interest & Motivation and the outcome of Achievement. In Chinese universities English is a mandatory subject and this was not the case with the adult learners at this research site where people are not taking the course as a mandatory in a career path but intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to study English; hence, Learning Strategies' position as a Mediating Driver in the current model.

## ***5. Motivation***

Gardner & MacIntyre (1993a) suggested that motivation and anxiety have a reciprocal relationship but this model does not propose this relationship. Instead this model it shows evidence that Motivation is influenced by Teacher-Student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum, Gender, Learner's Family and Friends as well as Comparison with Peers, but it does not have a bidirectional relationship with Foreign Language Anxiety. And is a remote source of anxiety.

When compared to the Yan & Horwitz (2008) where English is compulsory in university classroom it plays an important role as it affects Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement but the participants of the present study consider it a remote source of anxiety perhaps because these students are under no obligation to study English and enrolled in the budget-friendly language program out of their own volition.

## ***6. Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning***

This study's findings, concur with Yan & Horwitz (2008) which reported learners from different parts of China who receive better oral English language training was seen to have linked to comparison with peers and thus renders it a remote source of language anxiety. The participants in this study also think learners, due to their different educational system's introduction of language education, are affected in their achievement of English.

## ***7. Test Types and Preparation***

Previous literature on language anxiety revealed that testing is a source of anxiety (Chan & Wu, 2014; Darwish Askar, 2009; Yan & Horwitz; 2008). The participants took only two tests – a midterm and a final exam –and like their Chinese counterparts regard tests as a remote source of anxiety.

## ***8. Teacher-student Relationship***

Teacher-Student Relationship, although a remote source of anxiety like in Yan & Horwitz (2008) shows a bidirectional relationship with Teacher Characteristics in this model. In Yan & Horwitz (2008) students interviewed said that “lively, dynamic and energetic” teachers ease the atmosphere and encourage students in oral expression which is the skill that was suggested to cause the most anxiety. Likewise, Darwish Askar (2009) Lebanese learners interviewed were less intimidated and anxious when their teachers are patient and caring. Encouraging and patient teachers are valued in the present study. This study’s findings echo Young (1991) which stated student-learner interactions are related to anxiety.

## ***9. Teacher Characteristics and Methodology***

Interview data from the present study allow for the creation of its own factor/variable. In the present study Western Native Teachers are considered more patient with learners although Arab teachers are seen as superior communicators due to their ability to speak the students’ L1. Patience is a valued teacher characteristic in other studies as well especially when it comes to error correction. This exploratory study further elucidates Darwish Askar (2009) which found students preferred a teacher who is patient with student errors/mistakes. Furthermore, students in Darwish Askar (2009) stated that teachers should correct all mistakes although some methods were preferred to others and a constant approach should be taken with student across different levels of proficiency in the target language. In this study, students at the research site highly appreciate when teachers are patient when they make errors. Because the language learning occurs in a vocational program they place a great burden on the teacher to “teach them” the language; thus, error correction conducted in a patient manner is

highly valued to the students. In conclusion, this evidence reinforces (Chan & Wu, 2014) in which learners are concerned with negative evaluation from teachers.

### ***10. Curriculum***

In the present model, participants regard Curriculum as easy and relevant to life, but that it lacks a proper aural/oral component as participants worry that they would still have difficulty speaking English even if they complete the research sites' language program and request that tests also should have listening and speaking parts included. In Aown (2005) thesis of Lebanese university learners from Université de Saint-Joseph which felt that their progress in achieving fluency in English is speculated to be tied to their lack of practice and training in curriculum they previously encountered. Although a remote source of anxiety, Curriculum, plays a clear role in the learning English in the context studied.

### ***11. Gender***

Participants in the study do not agree if gender has an influence on language learning; some say gender has an influence and others do not agree. Females are viewed as superior learners as well have a greater tendency to be anxious than men; therefore, this section of the findings needs further development yet can still be compared to previous. Yan & Horwitz (2008) identified women as better language learners than men. Both earlier Lebanese studies Aown (2005) and Darwish Askar (2009) showed no significant difference on anxiety or achievement, respectively. Perhaps this is why this study's findings are slightly unclear. It seemed that although this study's participants believe women tend to experience foreign language anxiety more than men this contradicts Aida's (1994) which stated that gender presents no significant difference in

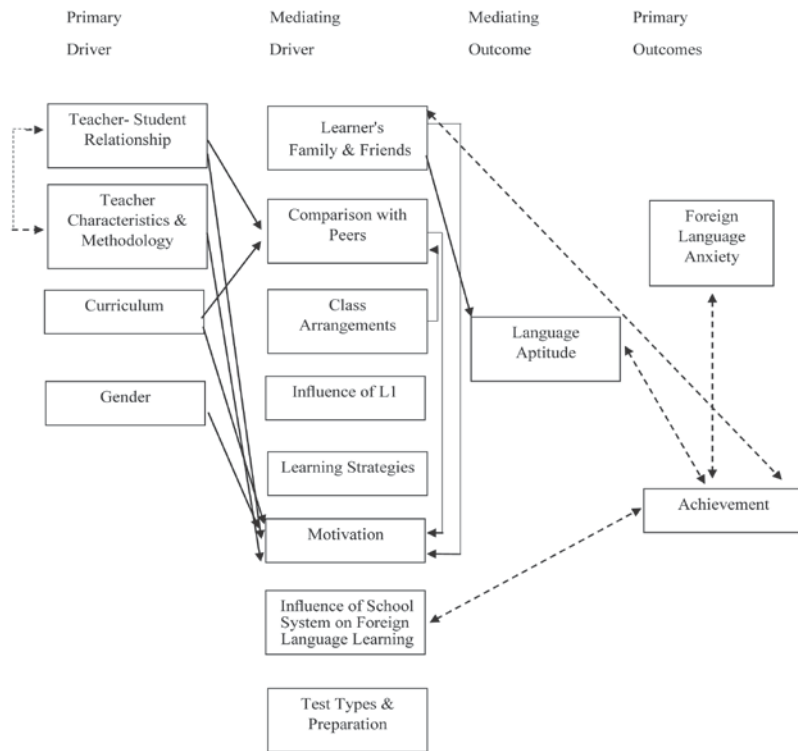
terms of language anxiety. Further studies should delve deeper and ask more specific questions about the relation of gender to language anxiety in the Lebanese context.

This Grounded-Theory model reveals several interesting factors/variables as well as relationships between them and suggests how these factors/variables may work as a system to influence adult English learner in this Lebanese context.

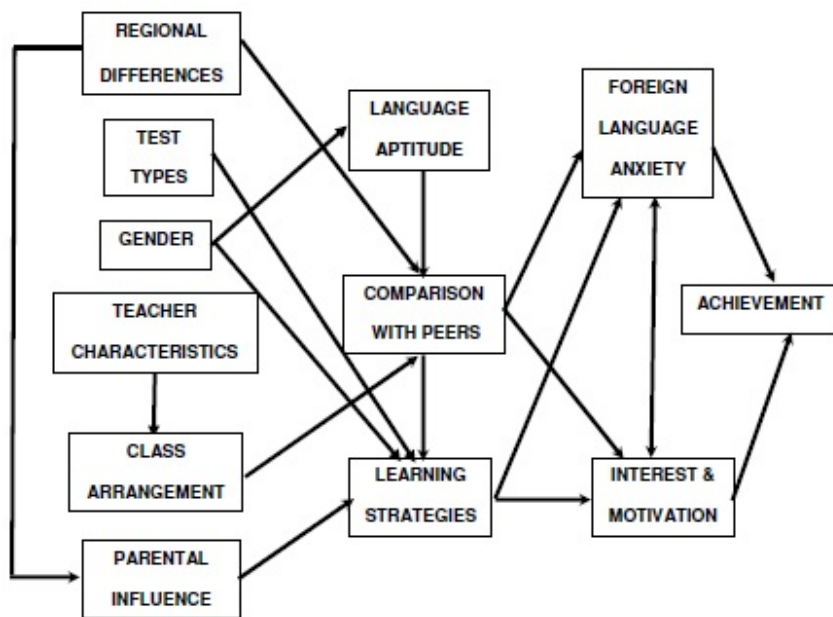
It is important to remember that the relationship between factors/variables in this model are extremely complex psycholinguistic and social phenomena and should not be thought of as oversimplified even though the aim of any model is to depict a linear of any process (Miles, 1997). Due to logistical, budget and time constraints, the interview data was only coded by one researcher. Further research into this context should include additional coders so they can compile their interpretations as one. The model presented in this study rationally describes the participants' experiences with Language Anxiety and Achievement while learning English at Makhzoumi Foundation.

**D. Comparison with Grounded Theory Model of Yan & Horwitz (2008)**

**Figure 2. Grounded-Theory Model of Lebanese Context**



**Figure 3. Yan & Horwitz (2008) Grounded Theory Model of Chinese context**



Both models present different contexts: this study's model reports the perspectives of factors in the Lebanese context and Yan & Horwitz (2008) the Chinese context. The first difference between the models is the absence of Parental influence in this study's model. This is probably due to the age of the university learners in the Chinese context as they are university students. In the Lebanese context the participants study in a vocational language training and tended to be older. Many of participants reported having their own families so Parental Influence was not present; instead, this factor is represented by the Learner's Family and Friends. Another important difference is that in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model Teacher Characteristics was one factor whereas in this study this factor was split into two factors: Teacher Characteristics and Methodology and Teacher-student Relationship. In the Lebanese vocational context there is great stress on the relationship between the teacher and the student because they are closer in age and the relationship is vital to establishing a comfortable and encouraging learning environment for the learner. In the Lebanese context these factors have a bidirectional relationship where one affects the other. Influence of L1 is perceived by the learners to be a factor that influences the language learning process enough to appear in the model by itself whereas the Yan & Horwitz (2008) L1 Influence appears as Regional Differences which includes "primary language, systems and economic development" (p.158). This finding is important to consider that English as a foreign language comes from a different language system in both the Chinese context and the Lebanese context and thus these linguistic context are represented differently by the models.

Regional Differences in the Chinese context affects the learners their due to the size of China is interpreted to have an effect on the language learning process, but this

factor is labeled Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning. This reflects this study's context where learners hailed from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Morocco in which different school systems introduced foreign languages, in this case English, at different times and thus the learner's language learning process is affected.

As far as the relationships with the model, in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model Language Aptitude is a mediating driver, but in this study's model Language Aptitude is perceived as a mediating outcome. Additionally, in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) Foreign Language Anxiety is a mediating outcome and in this study's model it is primary outcome with Achievement and they have a bidirectional relationship. This is not present in the Chinese context where Foreign Language Anxiety has a unidirectional relationship with Achievement. Language Aptitude had a bidirectional relationship with Achievement which was not present in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model. Learner's Family and Friends and Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning also have bidirectional relationships with Achievement which is not present in the Chinese context. This implies that the learner's community and educational system's introduction of foreign language learning is perceived to have an effect on Achievement and vice versa.

In this study's model Curriculum is perceived as separate from Class Arrangements because the students place a high value on Curriculum as it is used daily in their lives with their family and friends as well as their place of employment. This difference can be attributed to the fact that this study's research site was a vocational language program and in Yan & Horwitz (2008) "textbooks and other materials" were included in Class Arrangements (p. 158). In the Chinese context the English courses



were university requirements for graduation as opposed to this study's model where participants voluntarily enroll in the vocational language training program.

In the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model Foreign Language Anxiety was affected by all the other factors to the left of it in the model. In this study's model Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement were affected by other factors left of them in the model. Immediate sources of anxiety are Comparison with Peers, learning Strategies, Language Learning Interest and Motivation in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) and in this study's model immediate sources are Learner's Family and Friends and Language Aptitude. This exploratory models show Comparison with Peers, Class Arrangements, Influence of L1, Learning Strategies, Motivation, Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning, Test Types and Preparation, Teacher-Student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum and Gender areas remote sources of Language Anxiety. In Yan & Horwitz (2008), Regional Differences, Test Types, Gender, Class Arrangements, Teacher Characteristics, Parental Influence and Language Aptitude. Overall, there were many differences between the models.

### **E. Major Findings**

This exploratory' study's major contributions are the factors of Learner's Family and Friends and Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning. According to Joseph (1996) literature on personhood and family is split into two schools of thought. One in which the Arab world is persons are individualistic and "committed to little beyond self-interest" and other position which argues that the "person is totally submerged in families and communities" (Joseph, 1996, p. 199-200). The major findings support the second position in which individuals are encircled by communities, including family and friends; therefore, they have strong perceptions on how other

school system's introduction of foreign language education affects students' language learning process. These features are not present in the Chinese context and will hopefully serve as a springboard for future research.

The most substantial in the context of the Lebanese vocational language program is Learner's Family and Friends. This factor has a bidirectional relationship with Achievement which demonstrates the deep connection that these learners have with their social circles. According to program coordinator Ms. Noura Shaheen many students register in the vocational language program at Makhzoumi Foundation to improve their relationships with their family members (personal communication, May 9, 2015). During the focus groups participants reported that their family members were "English-educated" and others lived in English-speaking countries. Others reported that they took courses because it would help them secure better employment or higher pay. In this study, Learner's Family and Friends represent a strong social network in which "brokerage connections" or *واسطة* (wasta) is used Joseph (1996). Joseph asserted that *واسطة* is an important component of intimate, political and economic spheres in the Arab world (p.201). Learning and using English in Lebanon is highly valued so it of no surprise that this factor had a bidirectional relationship with Achievement in the language learning process. Not only did participant's social circles encourage or discourage the participant to achieve, but participants also reported influencing their family positively because of their success in the language learning process. This factor is not present in the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model primarily for two reasons. First, the closest variable is Parental Influence since the participants in the Chinese context were university students and younger than the participants in this study. Secondly, in the Chinese context the relationship between children and parents is strong due to

Confucian family values where obedience is highly esteemed and is seen as an integral part of society, but in the Lebanese context this influence is extended to family, those regarded as family and friends; hence, the bidirectional relationship between Learner's Family and Friends and Achievement. This is supported by testimonials of participants that reported that their social circle encouraged and/or discouraged them to achieve and learn English as well as when they reported that their family relations were improved when the family took notice the participant's achievements such as high exam scores.

#### **F. Pedagogical Implications**

Students at the research site expressed a number of issues that may alleviate reduction of foreign language anxiety at the research site:

- The focus on writing skills in the Curriculum should be decreased and the oral/aural component increased as are anxious that they will not be able to communicate in English after they finish classes at the research site.
- Entertaining and engaging warm-up activities should be used in order to commence the classes with enthusiasm and motivate the students to participate.
- If Native Western English Teachers are hired to teach at the research site, he or she must be cautious and pace speech adequately in order that comprehensible input can be fully taken advantage of by the students. English that is spoken and heard in the comfort of the classroom should be controlled at  $i + 1$ , as suggested by Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis.

- Class management should be effective and ensure that every student in class has a turn to express themselves and feel their concerns can be addressed by the teacher. Because learning occurs in the unnatural setting of the language classroom patient and energetic teachers
- Discipline should be increased in the classroom. Teachers should manage the classroom efficiently and ensure that all students feel relaxed in the unnatural environment of the language learning classroom.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Although the language learning process and the construct of foreign language anxiety is complex this exploratory study's reveals not only the personal and contextual factors that the learner in the vocational language training program perceived to affect them but also the relationships within and among these factors. Fifteen factors form part of the language learning process in this Lebanese vocational language program:

Teacher-student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum, Gender, Test Types and Preparation, Learner's Family and Friends, Comparison with Peers, Class Arrangements, Influence of L1, Learning Strategies, Motivation, Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning, Language Aptitude, Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement.

As previously mentioned, the major findings of this study are that the Learner's Family and Friends and Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning have bidirectional relationships with Achievement. Another important finding is that Achievement and Foreign Language Anxiety have bidirectional relationships whereupon anxiety affects achievement and achievement affects anxiety. A number of previous investigations, including Yan & Horwitz (2008) which this study partially replicated, previously established a moderate negative correlation between language anxiety and different measurements of achievement (Gardner, Moorcroft and MacIntyre, 1987; Horwitz et al., 1986, Phillips, 1992; Trylong, 1987). Although earlier studies indicated a negative relationship between some aspects of the complex situation-

specific construct of foreign language anxiety and different measurements of achievement (see Aown, 2005, Darwish Askar, 2008; Chan & Wu, 2004, Chang, 2014; Young, 1991, 1992,) the relationship between these factors in different contexts has yet to be agreed upon. It is hoped that this study on the perceptions of learners in Lebanon will contribute to this literature where research on the subject is scarce.

Learner's Family and Friends and perceived Language Aptitude are construed as indirect sources of foreign language anxiety. In addition they have a bidirectional relationship with anxiety. Learner's Family and Friends is a substantial factor in this context because the family is central in the Arab society and "idiomatic kinship", or appropriating kin relationships to those who are not socially accepted as kin, is an important part of intimate, political and economic relationships (Joseph, 1996, p. 200). This explains why participants reported being encouraged and discouraged by family as well as influencing their family with their achievement in language learning.

More remote sources of anxiety are Comparison with Peers, Class Arrangements, Influence of L1, Learning Strategies, Motivation, Influence of School System on Foreign Language Learning, Test Types and Preparation, Teacher-Student Relationship, Teacher Characteristics and Methodology, Curriculum and Gender.

Another interesting feature of the model is that commented which refer to the teacher are classified into two factors: Teacher Characteristics and Methodology and Teacher-student Relationship as opposed to the Yan & Horwitz (2008) model in which Teacher Characteristics is captured in one factor. The creation of the factor Teacher – student Relationship is necessary in this context because the students are closer in age to the instructors than in the Chinese context where they are exclusively university students. In this context participants are adults in a vocational language program

consequently the relationship between the teacher and the student is vital and highly idealized. Student tended to put the teacher on a pedestal, but at the same time placed to the burden of “teaching” the language on the instructor. Teachers who were patient, encouraging and energetic were perceived as having a positive impact on the language learning process.

As for the method of data analysis, the adoption of objectivist Grounded-Theory emphasizes the genuine experience of the learners while allowing it to generate a postulation about the complex roles of personal and contextual factors in the language learning process. The appeal of the theory, which is based on Glaser & Strauss (1967), resides in the fact that positivism is upheld and the “theorist assumes that data represent objective facts about a knowable world. The data already exists in the world; the researcher finds them and ‘discovers’ theory from them” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 237). Hence, the current exploratory study employs a pioneering method in the study of foreign language anxiety in the Lebanese context.

#### **A. Limitations**

Due to the shifting nature of foreign language anxiety, being situation-specific and not stable over time or place, these findings should be taken with caution due to limitations in design and methodology, namely the fact that only one rater was used to code the data and participants were from one adult education institution in Lebanon only. Although, the data were self-reported first on a proven reliable and valid instrument, FLCAS from Horwitz et al., the interview data could have been susceptible to “self-serving bias, autobiographical bias and memory bias” (MacIntyre & Gregerson, 2012, p. 108).

## **B. Further research**

Further research should investigate the relationship between gender and foreign language anxiety since this is not clear in this study. More importantly it would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study of foreign language anxiety in adults in this region because the complex construct is definitely affected by time; and the findings of this proposed research could contribute greatly to the literature. Finally, this study should be expanded to include learners from all regions of the country in order to create more generalizable results. This would be considerably valuable as Graddol (1997) predicted that by the year 2050 English will occupy third place with 508 million people speaking it as a native language and Arabic will occupy fifth place with 482 million native speakers surpassing languages such as Portuguese, Bengali, Russian and German (as cited in Zughoul, 2003).



## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Background Questionnaire - English Version

**Instructions:** The questions below are for research purposes only.

Your answer will not be made available to anyone. Please answer the following questions or check the proper answers.

1. Pseudonym (false name) \_\_\_\_\_
2. E-mail \_\_\_\_\_
3. Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

*Confidential: for identification purposes.*

2. What English course(s) are you currently enrolled in? *Please check all that apply.*

\_\_\_\_\_ English Beginners

\_\_\_\_\_ English 101

\_\_\_\_\_ English 102

\_\_\_\_\_ English 103

\_\_\_\_\_ English 104

\_\_\_\_\_ English 105

\_\_\_\_\_ English 106

\_\_\_\_\_ English 107

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please write

course name.)

1. How long have you studied English? \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

4. Your sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

5. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old

6. Your native or first language: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Experience with the foreign language

a. Were any of your family members (father, mother, brothers. or sisters) born in a foreign country? \_\_\_\_\_

Which one(s)?

Where?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

b. Were you born in a foreign country?

\_\_\_\_\_

Where?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Do any of your family members speak a foreign language *fluently* (not slightly)? \_\_\_\_\_

Which family member(s)?

Which language(s)?

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d. Do you speak a foreign language *fluently* (not slightly)?

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Which one(s)? Did you learn it at home or at school?

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e. Below, fill in the number of years that you studied the foreign language(s) at school.

*First, identify the language; then, place the number of years.*

	First foreign language (FL)	Second FL	Third FL
Elementary/ Primary school (Grades 1-6)			
Middle school (Grades 7-9)			

High school (Grades 10-12)			
	Number of semesters of the first FL	Second FL	Third FL
Vocational School/ College/ University			

8. What is the highest grade you have finished?

Primary school \_\_\_\_\_

Middle school \_\_\_\_\_

French Bacallaureate \_\_\_\_\_

Lebanese Bacallaureate \_\_\_\_\_

International Bacallaureate \_\_\_\_\_

American High School Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate studies \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate studies \_\_\_\_\_

Professional studies \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. What was the main language(s) of instruction at the last educational institute you attended? : \_\_\_\_\_

11. If any, what was the second language taught there? :

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Did you conduct all of your secondary education in Lebanon?

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13. If not, in what countries did you study? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix II: Background Questionnaire - Arabic Version

نموذج المعلومات الشخصية - النسخة العربية

**التعليمات:** إن الأسئلة أدناه هي بغرض الدراسة فقط. لن يتم الكشف عن

إجاباتك لأيّ كان. الرجاء الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية أو اختيار الأجوبة المناسبة.

١. الاسم المستعار: \_\_\_\_\_
٢. البريد الإلكتروني: \_\_\_\_\_
٣. رقم الهاتف: \_\_\_\_\_

لأغراض تحديد الهوية بسريّة

٢. في أي من الدورات التالية مسجلّنت؟ الرجاء اختيار كل ما يوافق

\_\_\_\_\_ English Beginners

\_\_\_\_\_ English 101

\_\_\_\_\_ English 102

\_\_\_\_\_ English 103

\_\_\_\_\_ English 104

\_\_\_\_\_ English 105

\_\_\_\_\_ English 106

\_\_\_\_\_ English 107

أخرى (الرجاء ذكر اسم الدورة):

٣. منذ متى وأنت تدرس اللغة الإنكليزية؟ \_\_\_\_\_ سنوات و \_\_\_\_\_ شهراً.
٤. الجنس: \_\_\_\_\_ ذكر، \_\_\_\_\_ أنثى.
٥. العمر: \_\_\_\_\_ سنة.
٦. مستوى اللغة الإنكليزية الحالي في مؤسسة مخرومي: \_\_\_\_\_ مبتدئ؛ \_\_\_\_\_ جيد؛  
\_\_\_\_\_ جيد جداً؛ \_\_\_\_\_ ممتاز؛ \_\_\_\_\_ متمرّس.
٧. اللغة الأم \_\_\_\_\_.
٨. ما مدى تجربتك باللغة الأجنبية؟
- a. هل وُلد أيٌّ من أفراد عائلتك (الأب، الأم، الإخوة أو الأخوات) في بلدٍ أجنبيّ؟ \_\_\_\_\_  
من هم؟ \_\_\_\_\_  
وأين؟ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b. هل وُلدت في بلدٍ أجنبيّ؟ \_\_\_\_\_  
أين؟ \_\_\_\_\_
- c. هل يتحدث أيٌّ من أفراد عائلتك لغةً أجنبية بطلاقة (وليس بعض الشيء)؟ \_\_\_\_\_  
من هم؟ \_\_\_\_\_  
وأي لغةٍ يتحدثون؟ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- d. هل تتحدث لغةً أجنبية بطلاقة (وليس بعض الشيء)؟ \_\_\_\_\_  
هل تعلمتها بالمنزل أو في المدرسة؟ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

e. الرجاء كتابة عدد السنوات التي درست فيها اللغة (ات) الأجنبية في المدرسة.

أولاً حدد اللغة ومن ثم املأ عدد السنوات.

اللغة الأجنبية الأولى	اللغة الأجنبية الثانية	اللغة الأجنبية الثالثة
		دائي/الأساسي فوف (٦-١)
		دادي فوف (٩-٧)
		وي فوف (١٢-١٠)

فصول الدراسة ل.أ. ١	فصول الدراسة ل.أ. ٢	فصول الدراسة ل.أ. ٣

٩. ماهي أعلى مرحلة دراسية أتممتها؟

الابتدائية

الإعدادية

الثانوية الفرنسية

الثانوية اللبنانية

الثانوية الدولية

شهادة الثانوية الأميركية

شهادة بكالوريوس جامعية

شهادة الماجستير

الدراسات المهنية /طب، محاماة، ... /

أخرى

١٠. ما اللغة الرئيسية التي كانت مستخدمة في آخر مؤسسة تعليمية ارتدتها؟

١١. وما اللغة الثانوية المستخدمة للتعليم (إن وجدت)؟

١٢. هل أتممت تعليمك الثانوي كله في لبنان؟

١٣. إن أجبت بـ/لا/، ففي أي البلاد أتممتها؟



## Appendix III: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

### English Version

**Directions:** Each of the following statements refers to how you feel about your English class. Please indicate whether you (1) *strongly agree*, (2) *agree*, (3) *neither agree nor disagree*, (4) *disagree*, (5) *strongly disagree*.

Please give your first reaction to each statement, and mark an answer for every statement.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.
6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.
10. I worry about consequences of failing in English class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.
12. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.
14. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often like not going to my English class.
18. I feel confident when I speak English in English class.
19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English class.
21. The more I study for a test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.
25. English class moves so quickly; I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.
27. I feel more tense and nervous when I speak English in my English class.
28. When I am on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.
33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Please write your answer to the following question:  
Do you have any feelings about your English class that are not included above?

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## Appendix IV: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

### Arabic Version

تصف الجمل الآتية ما تشعر به فيصف اللغة الإنكليزية. ضد دائرة حول أحد الخيارات الآتية:

(١) أوافق بشدة (٢) أوافق (٣) لا أوافق ولا أعارض (٤) أعارض (٥) أعارض بشدة، للتعبير عن

ردة فعلك الأولى لما تتضمنه الجمل الآتية.

١ - لا أشعر أبداً بالثقة عندما أتكلم الإنكليزية في الصف.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢ - لا يهمني نيتي ارتكاب أخطاء لغوية فيصف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٣ - أرتبك عندما يطلب مني التحدث فيصف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٤ - أشعر بالخوف عندما لا أفهم ما يقوله المدرس في اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٥ - لن أنزع جعلنا لإطلاقي من زيادة صفوف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٦ - فيصف اللغة الإنكليزية، أجد نفسي أسرح بتفكر يتجاه أمور لا علاقة لها بما يجري في الصف.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٧ - أعتقد دائماً ان باقي التلاميذ في الصف أفضل من يفي مادة اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

8 - لا أشعر بالقلق خلال امتحان اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

9 - أشعر بالخوف عندما يطلب مني التحدث باللغة الإنكليزية مندون تحضير.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

10 - أخشى عواقب رسوبي في اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

11 - لأرى سببا من خوف البعض من صفوف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

12 - في صف اللغة الإنكليزية، أشعر بتوتر شديد لدرجة أنني أنسا لأشياء التياًعرفها.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

١٣ - لا أتطوع بالإجابة على الأسئلة في صف اللغة الإنكليزية لأنني أشعر بالخجل والإحراج.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

14 - لا أشعر بالتوتر عندما أتحدث اللغة الإنكليزية مع أناس لغتهم الأم الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

١٥ - أنزعج عندما لأفهم تصحيحات المعلم في مادة اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

١٦ - أشعر بالقلق في صف اللغة الإنكليزية حتى لو كنت قد حضرت للصف جيدا.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

١٧ - غالبا ما أرغب في الذهاب إلى صفوف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

١٨ - أشعر بالثقة عندما أتكلم الإنكليزية في صف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

١٩ - يتملكني شعور بأن المعلم على إستعداد دائما لتصحيح الأخطاء التي ارتكبتها في صف اللغة

الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٠ - تزداد نبضات قلبي عندما يطلب مني التحدث باللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢١ - كلما درست أكثر لامتحان اللغة الإنكليزية, زاد إضطرابي.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٢ - لا أحسب أنني مضطر للتحضير جيد الصف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٣ - أشعر دائما ان بقي التلاميذ في الصف يتكلمون اللغة الإنكليزية أفضل مني.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٤ - أشعر بعدم الإرتياح اذا طلب مني التكلم باللغة الإنكليزية أمام باقي التلاميذ في الصف.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٥ - أحس بأن صف اللغة الإنكليزية يسير بسرعة وأخشى أن لا أقدر على مماشاة باقي الصف.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٦ - أشعر بتوتر في صف اللغة الإنكليزية أكثر من باقي الصفوف.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٧ - أشعر بتوتر وأرتبك عندما أتكلم بالإنكليزية فيصف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

28 - أشعر بالراحة والثقة أثناء ذهابي النصف اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٢٩ - أشعر بالقلق قالتوتر عندما لأفهم كلما يقوله المعلم.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٣٠ - أشعر بأن القواعد التبعلي أن أتعلمها كي أتكلم اللغة الإنكليزية كثيرة بشكل يفوق طاقتي على

التعلم.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٣١ - أخاف من أن يسخر مني التلاميذ عندما أتكلم اللغة الإنكليزية.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٣٢ - أآوقع ان أشعر بالإرتياح مع الذين ينكلمون الإنكليزية كلغة أم.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

٣٣ - أآوتر عندما يسأل معلم اللغة الإنكليزية أسئلة لم أحضر لها جيدا.

(١) (٢) (٣) (٤) (٥)

أجب على السؤال الآالي:

هل لديك أي شعور آخر آجاه صف اللغة الإنكليزية غيرمذكورفي الأسئلة الآي سبقت؟ أذكره.

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## **Appendix V: Phase One Focus Group Interview Questions**

### **Opening Question**

1. Tell us what you most enjoy doing when you're not studying.

### **Introductory Questions**

2. Have you studied foreign languages before? Which ones? Where?
3. What is your favorite foreign language? Why?

### **Initial Open-Ended questions**

4. Tell me about your English language learning classes at Makhzoumi Foundation. How easy were they? How useful and relevant were they in your undergraduate work? How about in life?
5. As you look back at the time when you were enrolled in English language courses at Makhzoumi Foundation, could you tell me how you felt about yourself, the instructor, and instructional practice, in other words what the teacher did in class?
6. Are there any special instances that stand out to you?

### **Intermediate question**

7. Can you describe positive experiences you had in your Makhzoumi Foundation English language courses in relation to your achievement or success in learning English?
8. Can you describe negative experiences you had in your Makhzoumi Foundation English language had in these classes in relation to your achievement or success in learning English?
9. Are there other things that disturbed you about Makhzoumi Foundation English language learning classes that you can tell me, and how did you react to them?\*

### **Key Questions**

10. Have you ever experienced anxiety, that is to say, apprehension, nervousness, uneasiness, panic or stress in your English language courses at Makhzoumi Foundation?



11. Do you have any idea about why you feel or felt anxious in your English language courses?\*\*\*

## **A. GENETIC AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

12. Some students say that one needs to have special talents in order to learn a foreign language, some think that gender can make a difference . . . What personal characteristics do you think one needs to have in order to learn English well?

13. What do you think that schools or individuals can do to make up for the lack of these characteristics?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. Is there anything about you that could make learning another language easier or more difficult?

2. What have you experienced in an English program that helps people of different personalities to learn what they need to learn?

## **B. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS**

14. How much do you think other people's opinions could affect one in learning the language?

15. What, if any, is the parents' role in language learning?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. Do you think peer pressure could affect you? How?

2. How would you rate your English compared with others?

### **C. MOTIVATION AND INTEREST**

16. How motivated does one need to be in order to learn the language well?

What is your motivation in learning English?

17. English is required in your program. What part do you think “interest” plays in learning the language?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. How useful do you think English is in your life?

2. When did you start to feel interested in learning English?

### **D. INFLUENCE OF FIRST LANGUAGE**

18. How do you feel one’s level of Arabic/French or your native language can help or interfere with English learning?

19. How similar do you think Arabic/French or your native language and English are?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. What are some of the errors you or others make because of the influence of your native language?

2. Some people say that because their Arabic or native language is very good, they can’t tolerate the fact that their English is not as satisfactory, and therefore they decide to give up. What do you think about this?

## **E. CLASS ARRANGEMENTS**

20. If you were the English teacher, how would you change the way English is taught in class?

21. How much pressure do you feel concerning your English classes?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. What is the format of your English classes?

2. What are the things you like most about your English classes? What are those you dislike most?

## **F. REGIONAL DIFFERENCES/ INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL SYSTEM ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

22. How (and how much) do you think one's dialect could affect his/her English?

23. Which regions produce better language learners?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. What is your dialect? How does it affect your foreign language learning?

2. Where are you from? How well do you think people from your area can learn the language?

## **G. TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS**

24. How are your Western English teachers compared with your Arab

English teachers?

25. What influences have you received from your teachers in learning English?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. What kind of English do you like most?

2. Which teacher do you think has influenced you most? In what way?

## **H. TEST TYPES**

26. What is the focus of English tests in your program?

27. How does the focus of English tests affect your focus of learning?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. What kind of tests do you have in your classes? What other kinds of tests have you taken or prepared to take outside the class?

2. How do you prepare for these tests? How important do you think your preparation for the tests is to your day-to-day learning?

## **I. ANXIETIES**

28. Some students report that they experience anxiety in learning English.

What do you think makes people feel anxious about the process?

29. How does anxiety affect one's language learning?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. When do you feel anxious about learning the language?

2. What do you think should be changed in the program that could reduce people's anxiety in language learning?

3. If a student were nervous about learning English, what kind of advice you would give him/her?

## **J. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING APPROACHES**

30. What method(s) do you think is/are most effective in learning English?

31. What other learning activities are you involved in besides your English classes in the program?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. How do you learn vocabulary? How do you practice listening, speaking, reading and writing?

2. How effective is your own learning method compared to the ones teachers suggest?

## **K. ACHIEVEMENT**

32. What do you think makes some people better in English than others?

33. What are the chances of you not achieving much in the language?

Potential probes or alternate forms if little or no response:

1. How do you plan to study English better in the future?

2. What measures would you use to define "achievement" in English?

34. Can you think of any ways to make English language courses at Makhzoumi Foundation less stressful? \*\*

### **Closing Questions**

35. Is there anything that I missed? Is there anything that you came wanting to say that you didn't get the chance to say? \*\*\*\*
36. After having these experiences, what advice would you give to someone who has just discovered that he or she is also experiencing language anxiety? \*\*\*\*\*
37. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand language anxiety better? \*\*\*
38. How do you feel now after addressing this issue? \*\*\*\*\*

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