FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY: A STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE STUDENTS OF CHINESE

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STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another author except where due reference is made.

Signature of Candidate:

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ABSTRACT

Across the world, there are many people who take part in learning a foreign language. Within each learner, there are various individual learner differences that affect language learning, one of which is foreign language anxiety (FLA). FLA is considered by some to be one of the most important barriers to successful language learning (Tuncer & Dogan, 2016) and has been found to exist in all of the cultures where it has been studied (Tran, Baldauf, & Moni, 2013). However, there is limited research on student awareness of FLA, and a lack of studies replicated in different cultural contexts. To date, there are no studies that have focused on Australian learners of Chinese. This qualitative study investigated three Australian language learners of Chinese at the university level, and their awareness of FLA. The study also explored the participants' experiences, and how they understood FLA in relation to their language learning. Data was obtained using background questionnaires, the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that the participants were unfamiliar with the term 'FLA' and the concept it presented, but were able to describe feelings that were consistent with the experience of FLA. The analysis also revealed that different factors, including the speed of the class, speaking Chinese, preparation, and friendship, influenced the anxiety that the participants reported. This study demonstrates that language learners are not always aware of FLA, which suggests that language teachers should enrich students' understanding of FLA, and the effects it can have on language learning, so that students can utilize available strategies to work with this anxiety. Future research should continue to investigate FLA in order to improve understanding of the issue and the ways to effectively minimize FLA in language learning contexts.

1. Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Over the last 40 years, the world has seen Asia emerge as a "booming industrial powerhouse" (Leahy & Jensen, 2011, p.418). This is particularly the case for China, whose growing dominance in the world, including its expanding economy and exchanges with other countries (Wang, Moloney, & Li, 2013), has led to a major increase in international demands and attention for Chinese (Mandarin) language education. Australia's recognition of the importance of Asia, and the benefits Asian countries provide (Skerritt, 2017), signaled a push for the teaching of Asian languages for trade and career purposes (Wright, Cruickshank, & Black, 2018). In Australia, Chinese language learning has gained strong political support and has been promoted as a 'must-have' language (Wang et al., 2013). It is important for Australia to have adequate numbers of proficient speakers of Chinese, as the ability to communicate in the language is vital for Australia's relationship with China, as the importance of intercultural communication continues to increase (Guntzviller, Yale, & Jensen, 2016).

The push for learning Asian languages has resulted in an increased participation rate across all states and territories in Australia. The number of schools offering Chinese, and the number of students learning Chinese, doubled between 2008-2010 and 2016. Since the establishment of the 2008-2011 national Asian languages and studies programs, the number of students studying Chinese in Australia has grown to 160,000 (Orton, 2017). It is difficult to provide an accurate account of the number of students studying Chinese within Australian Universities, as there is a lack of reliable and valid data available (Martín, Jansen, & Beckmann, 2016).

Among foreign/second language learners of Chinese and other world languages, individual learner differences can impact upon the success of language learning. Individual learner differences include factors such as intelligence, working memory, language aptitude, personality, motivation, and age. These individual learner differences can all play a role in the success of language learning and this has long interested scholars (Ellis, 2008). Among these learner differences is foreign language anxiety (FLA). Although poorly understood in the past, FLA is understood to be a situation-specific anxiety (Kruk, 2017) defined as the "feelings of fear, nervousness or apprehension experienced when using a second language" (Côté & Gaffney, 2018, p.1). FLA has received a lot of attention in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and second language education (SLE) (Park & French, 2013). Interest in the sources of FLA, and how FLA affects language learning, has resulted in a vast body of literature on the topic.

1.2. Research Interests

During my undergraduate degree, I studied linguistics and Chinese (Mandarin). It was there that I developed an interest in the fields of SLA and second/foreign language teaching and learning. In the first year of my postgraduate degree (Master of Research), I found myself engaged with the concept of FLA. I developed a particular interest for this area, as I had come from a background of language learning myself. I felt that I could relate to the situations and feelings experienced by those affected by FLA. After developing a better knowledge of the concept, many questions came to my mind. If FLA is prevalent across many language classrooms and among many cultures, I wondered why I had not heard of it during my own language studies. Do other language students know the impact FLA can have on language

learning? Why was FLA not something that I had been told about? It was from there that I wanted to explore the topic of FLA further.

1.3. Purpose of Study

Research has consistently highlighted the damaging consequences FLA can have on language learning (Trang et al., 2013). Such consequences include the ability to induce negative feelings such as worry, embarrassment and self-consciousness (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). FLA has also been found to have a negative impact on learning achievement, performance, willingness to communicate and so on (Tran et al., 2013). Therefore, one might expect that language learners are aware of FLA and the impact it can have on one's success in language learning. However, in the fields of SLA and SLE, there has been little attention drawn to language students' awareness of FLA. In fact, there are very few studies that have investigated this area. There has also been a lack of studies conducted or replicated in different cultural groups. Many studies on FLA have been conducted in Asian cultural contexts and have focused on foreign language learners of English. To date, there are no studies that have investigated FLA in students learning Chinese in an Australian context. Considering the prevalence of FLA in language learning, it is important that an understanding of this issue is developed.

In order to develop this area further, this research will focus on Australian language learners of Chinese in the university context. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate these learners in specific relation to their awareness of FLA. This study also aims to explore the participants' experiences of FLA and how they understand it in relation to their own Chinese language learning. It is important that research explores student awareness of FLA, so that the issue can be properly understood (Tran et al., 2013).

1.4. Research Questions

This study was motivated by the need to investigate language students' awareness of FLA, as well as the need to replicate studies on FLA in different cultural contexts. The research questions for this study were the following:

RQ1: In what ways are the participants (Australian language students learning Mandarin) aware of FLA and how it might affect their learning?

RQ2: How and to what extent, do the participants experience FLA?

1.5. Thesis Organisation

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to FLA, including context on Chinese language learning in Australia, the interest and purpose of the research, followed by the research questions. Chapter two provides a review of the relevant literature concerning the background of FLA, the sources and effects of FLA, and awareness of FLA. Chapter three presents the methodology used, including a description and justification of the research design, an outline of the procedure, and the analysis involved in the study. The findings of the study are presented in chapter four and are then discussed further in chapter five. Chapter six concludes with the key findings and new insights from the study, implications for pedagogy, and the limitations and future directions.

2. Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the relevant literature on FLA. The literature to be reviewed comes principally from studies that have investigated FLA within the last 10 years. The chapter will begin in Section 2.2 with the historical background of FLA and how the concept is defined. Then, in Section 2.3, a discussion of FLA as an individual learner difference will be presented. Section 2.4 will include the research that has been conducted on the sources of language anxiety, followed by how FLA affects language learning in Section 2.5. In addition, this chapter discusses student awareness of FLA in Section 2.6. Section 2.7 will then include research conducted on FLA in an Australian context. The chapter concludes in Section 2.8 with the significance of the study and the presentation of the research questions.

2.2. Historical Background

In the past and even to some extent today, 'foreign language anxiety' (FLA) has been a difficult concept to define. There has been a vast amount of uncertainty surrounding the categorization of FLA in regards to whether it is a personality trait, an emotion, or a motivational component. Dörnyei & Ryan (2015) acknowledge that "the conceptualization of foreign language anxiety has been ambiguous" (p.176). Those who are non-specialists in the field of second/foreign language learning are likely to associate anxiety simply with fear or phobia. However, FLA is more complex than this (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Research on FLA began as early as the 1970s. Many of the earlier studies had difficulties distinguishing between the many types of anxiety. There are three main types of anxiety that are often outlined in more recent studies on FLA; these are known as: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (Dewaele, 2007). 'Trait anxiety', is a type of anxiety that is part of a person's character, or an aspect of their personality. It is understood as the tendency to feel nervous or anxious regardless of the situation, and is usually permanent. 'State anxiety', is a combination of trait and situation-specific anxiety (Ellis, 2008). It is an emotional reaction of nervousness or tension experienced when an individual is exposed to a particular situation. Unlike trait anxiety, state anxiety is not permanent and is considered to be less harmful as it has the potential to diminish over time when the individual becomes more comfortable in the situation (Serraj & Noordin, 2013). Then there is 'situation-specific' anxiety, and this is where FLA has been placed. Psychology differentiates between people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations, and those who are anxious only in specific situations (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). This type of anxiety is aroused by specific situations (such as language classrooms) or events when complemented by certain factors (Kruk, 2017). In addition to these types of anxiety, there are also other existing anxieties, such as facilitative-debilitative anxiety (Horwitz, 2010). In relation to the concept of FLA, the idea of whether FLA can have facilitative or debilitative effects on language performance has interested scholars. However, results from these studies have produced mixed results (Serraj & Noordin, 2013).

As a result of the inconsistent interpretations of FLA, earlier studies provided conflicting and contradictory results (Luo, 2015). Horwitz (2010) supports the idea that FLA has been poorly understood in the past, arguing that "with such a wide variety of anxiety-types, it is not surprising that early studies on the relationship between 'anxiety' and achievement provided mixed and confusing results" (p.154). FLA is now understood to be a situation-specific anxiety

experienced in language learning contexts, and is one of many individual learner differences that affects language learning (Ellis, 2008).

The first comprehensive theory of FLA was created by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986). Horwitz et al (1986) argued that research in SLA had failed to properly define FLA and the effects it has on language learning. They explained that anxiety limited to the language learning context is categorized as a situation-specific anxiety and is recognized as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.125). Horwitz et al (1986) defined FLA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.128). Their work found that FLA appeared to be a relatively independent factor, displaying only low correlations with general trait anxiety. The authors defined three key performance anxieties that can be responsible for FLA. These performance anxieties are: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). The work of Horwitz et al (1986) made a significant impact upon the field of FLA. Their theory of FLA is the most significant and influential theory to date as it has influenced many researchers and has been used extensively in the field of FLA (Luo, 2015).

Further research has shown that FLA is a complex and multidimensional issue, as it is known to be related to an individual's personality, as well as different situational, political, and socioeconomic factors (Dewaele, 2007). FLA is now also generally agreed to be unique and largely independent of other types of anxiety (Zhang & Zhong, 2012) and also differs from anxiety experienced in other fields of learning (Shao, Yu, & Ji, 2013).

2.3. FLA as an Individual Learner Difference

Why some language learners are more successful than others, and why some language learners fail to successfully learn another language, are puzzling questions that have sparked interest in the study of individual learner differences in regards to second/foreign language learning (Chan, Chin, Bhatt, & Walker, 2015). Individual learner differences can include intelligence, age, working memory, language learning strategies, language aptitude, motivation, personality and anxiety (Ellis, 2008). Psychological characteristics of an individual have a major effect on the level of learning that takes place in foreign language contexts (Tuncer & Dogan, 2016). Therefore, a vast amount of research in SLA and SLE has been interested in "establishing general principles and deriving pedagogical theories and implications from the study of learner characteristics" (Chan et al., 2015, p.2). However, the study of individual learner differences can be difficult and produce incompatible results due to the complex way that an individual's psychological characteristics are interrelated (Tuncer & Dogan, 2016) and overlap in vague and indeterminate ways (Ellis, 2008). Despite these difficulties, it is widely believed that successful language learning is affected by individual differences.

Anxiety has received the most attention in regards to the affective factors that can influence language learning (Ellis, 2008). It has been the subject of much research within the fields of SLA and SLE, and is considered to be an important variable in developing SLA theories, language teaching methods, and explaining individual differences in SLA (Park & French, 2013). Some researchers believe that anxiety is one of the most important barriers to successful language learning (Tuncer & Dogan, 2016). As a result, research on FLA has grown, especially within the last three decades (Park & French, 2013). Dörnyei & Ryan (2015) emphasize that

anxiety has been "the limelight of L2 (a person's second language) research for several decades" (p.176).

Given the amount of interest in FLA research, there is now a considerable amount of literature on this subject (Tran & Moni, 2015). Studies in this area have been mostly conducted in traditional classroom settings, such as high schools and universities, and even online/distance learning environments (Trang et al., 2013). Research has investigated the nature of the relationship between language anxiety and language learning (Ellis, 2008), exploring the link between FLA and a number of other factors such as age, aptitude, multilingualism, self-efficacy, gender, personality, and emotional intelligence. These studies have been mostly interested in the relationship between oral performance and language anxiety, as opposed to other language skills such as reading, writing and listening (Mak, 2011). However, studies on the relationship between FLA and other language skills have started to emerge. A large majority of these studies have been interested in younger heritage/non-heritage language learners often learning English as a foreign language, as opposed to other world languages (Dewaele, 2007). Research on FLA has also been heavily interested in the causes of language anxiety, and how language anxiety affects language learning (Ellis, 2008). Many of these studies aim to provide pedagogical implications on how to cope with, and minimize FLA (Aydin, 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986; Kruk, 2017; Luo, 2015; Mak, 2011; Marwan, 2007; Park & French, 2013; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Shao et al., 2013; Tran et al., 2013; Zhao, Dynia, & Guo, 2013; Zhou, 2017).

Past research has generally collected data through questionnaires, structured interviews, and autobiographies. One of the most accepted and well-known instruments created for the study

of FLA is the 'foreign language classroom anxiety scale' (FLCAS) created by Horwitz et al (1986). The FLCAS is a self-report measure questionnaire that consists of 33 items that are rated with a 5 point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. It was created for the purpose of measuring the degree and sources of language learners' classroom anxiety. Specifically, the anxiety related to foreign language as shown by subjective feelings, perceptions, negative attitudes towards language classes, and avoidance behaviours (Horwitz et al., 1986). The FLCAS is considered to be a valid and reliable measure of anxiety in second language learning (Liu & Cheng, 2014; Mak, 2011; Shao et al., 2013; Tuncer & Dogan, 2016). As a result, multiple studies have used this instrument in order to obtain data on FLA (Mak, 2011; Park & French, 2013; Shao et al., 2013; Sinnasamy & Karim, 2014; Thompson & Lee, 2013; Tuncer & Dogan, 2016).

Many studies have adapted the FLCAS in order to suit different language learning contexts (Liu & Jackson, 2008). In Mak (2011), the responses to the FLCAS from their pilot study found that participants were mostly selecting the mid-point response (neither agree nor disagree) on the five-point Likert scale. The FLCAS was then adapted to a four-point scale "in order to force respondents to commit themselves" (p.205). Many studies also adapt the wording in the FLCAS in order to suit the group of learners they are investigating (Liu & Cheng, 2014). In Park & French (2013), the authors translated the FLCAS from English to Korean in order to measure the levels of anxiety in Korean students studying English. Sinnasamy & Karim (2014) also used a translated version of the FLCAS. In their study, the FLCAS was translated into the Malay language because "Malaysian students entering the institutions of higher learning come from diversified backgrounds in terms of culture, religion, language proficiency, family background, and geographical factors" (p.433). Other studies, such as Dewaele & MacIntyre

(2014) have selected only certain items from the FLCAS. In their study, 8 items were extracted from the FLCAS and used in addition to items created on foreign language enjoyment.

Although FLA has been found to exist in all of the cultures where it has been studied (Tran et al., 2013), there is a lack of research that investigates different cultural groups. Studies have explored Asian cultural groups (Chang, 2008; Kao & Craigie, 2013; Lien, 2016; Liu & Cheng, 2014; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Liu & Zhang, 2013; Luo, 2015; Mak, 2011; Marwan, 2007; Park & French, 2013; Shao et al., 2013; Thompson & Lee, 2013; Tran et al., 2013; Tran & Moni, 2015), Middle-Eastern cultural groups (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010; Karagol & Basbay, 2018; Salehi & Marefat, 2014; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Shabani, 2012; Tuncer & Dogan, 2016) and Western cultural groups (Kruk, 2017; Sparks & Patton, 2013; Zhao et al., 2013; Zhou, 2017). However, there are few studies that have investigated FLA in an Australian context (Garcia de Blakeley, Ford, & Casey, 2017; Machida, 2001; Mejía, 2014), and no studies that investigate Australian learners of Chinese.

2.4. Sources of Language Anxiety

Many language learners in the context of foreign language learning experience feelings of anxiety, tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry. As a result, researchers have been interested in the causes of language anxiety. As mentioned previously, Horwitz et al (1986) defined three key performance anxieties: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, which can all cause or contribute to FLA. 'Communication apprehension' is "a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127). It can result in difficulties speaking in groups (oral communication anxiety) and in public (stage fright) (Horwitz et al., 1986). It can also affect

listening or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety), for example understanding teacher instructions (Marwan, 2007). Considering that oral communication is important in language learning, such as everyday communication outside the classroom and interacting with native speakers (Garcia de Blakeley et al., 2017), communication apprehension can play a major role in FLA. 'Test anxiety' is a type of performance anxiety that comes from a fear of failure. Students may fear failing tests and feel apprehension towards academic evaluation (Shabani, 2012). This stems from the ongoing performance evaluation that is experienced in most language classes. Students who are test-anxious are known to "put unrealistic demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127). 'Fear of negative evaluation' is another performance anxiety that may contribute to FLA. As the name implies, it is the feeling of apprehension when it comes to evaluative situations. It can include fear of evaluations from others, avoidance of evaluative situations, and an expectation that others will evaluate the individual negatively (Liu & Jackson, 2008). This type of performance anxiety, while similar to test anxiety, differs because it is not limited to test-taking situations only (Shabani, 2012).

FLA may also be caused be a number of other closely related factors. Zhang & Zhong (2012) build on the earlier classification by Horwitz et al (1986), adding that FLA can also be categorized as being learner-induced, classroom-related, skill-specific, and society-imposed. 'Learner-induced anxiety' can be a result of learners' beliefs about language learning (Shabani, 2012). Studies have found that students may trigger anxiety as a result of their own "erroneous beliefs, unrealistic high standards, poor language abilities, self-perceived incompetence, inclined competitive nature and dispositional fear of negative evaluation" (Zhang & Zhong, 2012, p.28). For example, some language learners believe that they should not attempt the target language (TL) unless correction is intervened. Some learners also underestimate the

difficulty of learning a language, assuming that they can become proficient in two or less years. These sorts of beliefs have the ability to lead to anxiety and frustration once the learner realizes those beliefs are erroneous. Lien (2016) adds that "confident learners experience low anxiety and believe they will perform well, while less confident learners with higher anxiety tend to think that they will not be able to complete tasks well" (p. 125). Students may also feel anxious if they fail to achieve the expectation of what they think they should sound like. This can happen when students are shown material such as audio recordings and videos that expose them to native speakers of the language. Comparison with other classmates can also provoke anxiety (Aydin, 2018). Students may compare their own performance in the TL to others, or worry that they will look foolish or be laughed at by their peers (Zhang & Zhong, 2012).

'Classroom-related anxiety' is provoked by variables in the language classroom, such as the teacher's beliefs about language teaching, the manner of error correction provided by the teacher, the level of perceived support given, and the teaching style used within the language classroom. Classroom practices, such as the type and nature of the task being done, may also provoke FLA (Zhang & Zhong, 2012). For example, students may be afraid that the teacher will put them on the spot during class (Mejía, 2014).

'Skill-specific anxiety' is anxiety provoked by a certain language skill. Studies have investigated how the different language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, can provoke anxiety in language students. Research has shown that speaking tends to be the most anxiety-provoking skill for language students (Zhang & Zhong, 2012). This is what Horwitz et al (1986) called 'communication apprehension', the idea that language learners can experience fear or anxiety when communicating with people in the TL (Horwitz et al., 1986). Research

that has investigated the relationship between anxiety and reading, has distinguished foreign language reading anxiety as its own independent construct experienced specifically with the language skill of reading (Zhou, 2017). It is now regarded as a construct that is closely related, but distinguishable from general FLA (Zhao et al., 2013).

'Society-imposed anxiety' is anxiety caused by society and includes identity formation, cultural connotation, and parental intervention (Zhang & Zhong, 2012). For example regional differences (Aydin, 2018), such as social and cultural norms, values, and habits, that differ across geographical areas (Yan & Horwitz, 2008) are contributing factors to society-imposed anxiety. Parental intervention or expectations, have also been found to be society-imposing factors (Thompson & Lee, 2013).

2.5. How FLA Affects Language Learning

Scholars, language teachers, and even language learners themselves have been interested in the possibility that anxiety can interfere with, and inhibit language learning (Horwitz, 2010). As a result, the vast majority of research on FLA has investigated how anxiety affects language learning, focusing mostly on the effects it can have on course achievement and proficiency. However, the effects that FLA has on language learning remains controversial.

There is a lack of agreement in regards to whether poor language learning is a cause, or a result of FLA (Horwitz, 2001). Dörnyei & Ryan (2015) explain that suggestions were made that FLA is "merely a consequence of learners' cognitive deficits" and was therefore "not a core construct worthy of research but a mere by product" (p.178). Yan & Horwitz (2008) also report that several studies suggest that anxiety is a result, not a cause of poor language learning ability.

However, the studies outlined in their paper are all almost 20 years old, making them quite outdated. The idea that FLA is a symptom of poor language learning, rather than a cause of poor language learning has been strongly contested (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Thompson & Lee (2013) add, "whether anxiety is seen as being the cause or the result of poor language classroom performance, there is no doubt that there is a relationship between anxiety and achievement" (p.731).

Research has found a significant relationship between proficiency, achievement and FLA (Tran & Moni, 2015), with FLA being one of many factors that influences students' performance and achievement (Tran et al., 2013). Dörnyei & Ryan (2015) support this idea adding that "there is no doubt that anxiety affects L2 performance" (p.176). Some studies argue that FLA can predict L2 achievement (Sparks & Patton, 2013) with many studies concluding that higher levels of anxiety are associated with lower levels of language achievement (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) and lower levels of anxiety exhibiting stronger L2 achievement. In a study by Awan et al (2010), the relationship between FLA and achievement was investigated. The study found that FLA negatively influenced the participants' achievement. As the level of anxiety increased, the students' academic achievement decreased.

However, some studies have found that learners with strong L2 achievement also had high levels of FLA (Sparks & Patton, 2013). A study by Park and French (2013) investigated 948 university students learning English in Korea. A Korean version of the FLCAS was used to measure the participants' levels of anxiety. The study found females to have higher levels of anxiety than males. The study also revealed that females and high anxiety students received higher grades than males and those with lower levels of anxiety. The authors commented "it

was surprising to find that in contrast to many studies high anxiety learners received a higher grade compared to low anxiety learners" (p.468). Despite this, it is generally agreed that there is a negative correlation between FLA and achievement (Yan & Horwitz, 2008).

FLA is often seen as a negative aspect of language learning that needs to be eliminated in language learning contexts (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Studies have found that FLA has the ability to pose potential problems for language learners (Marwan, 2007). It has been found to negatively influence learners' cognition, learning attitudes and emotions, self-ratings, willingness to communicate, achievement and performance (Tran & Moni, 2015). Those who experience FLA can often suffer from low self-esteem, negative self-image, difficulties pronouncing words correctly, and use of incorrect grammar in the TL. Such experiences can lead to confusion and embarrassment in the language classroom (Kruk, 2017). As a result, learners who experience FLA may find their study less enjoyable (Marwan, 2007).

In the longer term, the effects of anxiety on students can result in students giving up and dropping out of their language classes (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). There are high dropout rates in Chinese language programs in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Australia. Although there is still limited research into student attrition in language learning courses, a number of factors have been flagged as possible contributors to high drop-out rates. These factors can include inability to cope with the demands of the program, pressure of work (academic and employment), quality of instruction (perceptions of the quality of teaching), and health and personal reasons. FLA is considered to be one of the major reasons for attrition in language programs (Martín et al., 2016). Students who suffer from high levels of FLA, may choose to discontinue learning the language, even if they have spent their entire high school

experience doing so. Such consequences are a shame, as individuals and schools have invested a lot of money, time and energy in the teaching of a skill that will ultimately not be used (Dewaele, 2007).

Acknowledging again the classic study on the effects of FLA, Horwitz et al (1986) invited 225 students to join a support group for foreign language learning. Over one third of these students were interested in participating in the group, however 30 participants were recruited due to time and space limits. The support group initiated discussions about the students concerns and difficulties they experienced in their language learning. The study revealed that the students experienced "freezing in class, standing outside the door trying to summon up enough courage to enter, and going blank prior to tests" (p.128). These students also experienced tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations and sleep disturbances.

With such potentially damaging consequences, it is little wonder that anxiety has been a priority for researchers and practitioners alike (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Research on FLA has potentially strong pedagogical implications and many researchers have argued that foreign language teachers should learn to recognize explicit anxiety-indicating cues, so as to identify learners who struggle with high levels of FLA (Dewaele, 2007). Studies have found approximately one of every three students to suffer from a certain degree of FLA. If this is the case, FLA should be taken seriously in all types of foreign language instruction (Luo, 2015).

According to some scholars, the idea that FLA is a negative aspect of language learning and should be eliminated, is inaccurate (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Krashen (2008) challenged the idea of 'overcoming' anxiety, arguing that anxiety should be respected and listened to, and can

in fact prove useful. "While some people may have unusually high levels of foreign language anxiety, in many cases anxiety is simply a warning that we are violating, or about to violate, the principles of language acquisition and performance" (p.19). In his view, anxiety related to fear of speaking means we are about to say something that we do not have the ability to say. Dörnyei & Ryan (2015) add that FLA is the most misunderstood affective variable of all. They clarify that while 'worry', the cognitive component of anxiety, has been shown to have a negative impact on performance, 'emotionality', the affective component, does not necessarily have detrimental effects. The view of Krashen (2008) and other scholars (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012) is that a certain degree of anxiety can be positive because it means that the learners are acquiring the TL (Chang, 2012). The concept of FLA being positive is known as 'beneficial anxiety' (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Some research has shown that facilitating levels of anxiety can challenge learners to confront new tasks, increase their effort in their language learning, and promote learning (Chang, 2012). Therefore, a certain degree of anxiety can be seen as a factor that facilitates learning.

In the study by Tran et al., (2013), they investigated 419 Vietnamese students learning English, and 8 Vietnamese teachers of English. Their study aimed to explore the extent to which language students and teachers were aware of the existence of FLA and their attitudes towards it. Among the 419 students, 68.7% were considered to be suffering from some degree of anxiety. The participants reported that learning English as a foreign language made them feel anxious. However, both student and teacher participants in the study agreed that some degree of FLA is natural for students learning English. Tran & Moni (2015) suggest that "in addition to focusing on reducing student anxiety, arousing some degree of anxiety in students tactfully might be a good way to make them learn" (p.16).

Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) explored the relationship between FLA and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) in language learning. The results showed that low levels of anxiety do not equate to high levels of enjoyment, and high levels of enjoyment also do not equate to low anxiety. The authors argue that "although there has been some suggestion that a facilitating form of FLA is possible, such effects have been inconsistent and difficult to find in the research literature" (p.239).

Considering the evidence that FLA can be both a positive and a negative for language learners, it is important to work with FLA, as opposed to reducing it (Tran & Moni, 2015). In order to do so, it is crucial that further research investigates and develops understanding on the effects that FLA has on language learners. Therefore, it is important to understand how language students are aware of FLA and the effects it may have on their language learning.

2.6. Awareness of FLA

As previously mentioned, FLA has proven to be a significant individual learner difference that has been found to exist in all of the cultures where it has been studied (Tran et al., 2013). Its prevalence and impact on language learning is mostly agreed to be detrimental. Therefore, one might expect that language students are aware of FLA and the affects it may have on their language learning. Despite the importance placed on FLA by researchers, the extent to which foreign language students are aware of FLA still remains unknown. It is also not clear whether foreign language students have an accurate understanding of the status of FLA, (its level of perceived seriousness and importance), as there are very few studies that have investigated student awareness of FLA (Tran et al., 2013).

Tran et al (2013) argue that "unless students and teachers perceive FLA to be a factor in their learning or in their teaching process, efforts to find strategies to manage it are not likely to occur" (p.218). In their study, as noted earlier, they explored the extent to which language students and teachers were aware of the existence of FLA and their attitudes towards it. 18 of the participants were interviewed, in order to investigate their awareness of FLA prior to the study and their perceptions about its spread and status. The study found FLA to be widely recognized among the participants. In fact, all 18 of the participants interviewed had been aware of FLA prior to their participation in the study. More specifically, these participants were aware of the existence of FLA, and felt that FLA was a serious problem that needed to be managed.

Another study worth mentioning is Tran & Moni (2015). Their study explored language student and teachers' perspectives and experiences on managing FLA. The study found that students and teachers recommended a 'dual-task approach' to the management of FLA. This means that management of FLA should not only reduce its negative effects, but (as noted above) also work towards making the most of its positive effects. The authors argue that there is a lack of acknowledgement of the supportive roles that friends and family can play in language learning. Some of their participants argued that FLA management should not be the sole responsibility of students and teachers. Instead, some students argued for the importance of gaining support from all of those involved in EFL education, including friends and family. The role of friends and family in education is that they can provide emotional support and encouragement, especially for those students suffering from FLA. Their study concluded that efforts to improve English proficiency, positive attitudes towards English learning, and willingness to seek support from others were helpful strategies in reducing FLA. Support and encouragement from friends and family may not be available to all language students, but for some it may play a

part in helping language learners reduce their FLA, even in a context like Australia. Tran & Moni (2015) argue "given that anxiety is unavoidable in learning a FL, this study found that both teachers and students reported that it was better to accept it and make it serve learning and teaching purposes as much as possible rather than seeking solutions to eradicate it, which is both impractical (because it is impossible if learning is to occur) and illogical (because anxiety does have some positive aspects)" (Tran & Moni, 2015, p.14).

It is crucial to understand that FLA is an aspect of language learning that cannot be eliminated. However, it is important to understand that FLA can be managed. If language teachers are able to promote better awareness of FLA, students may be more inclined to manage their FLA. It is possible that normalizing FLA in language classrooms, could help students understand the potential effects they are experiencing during class. As a result, students may try to utilize the potential strategies that can help manage FLA. In turn, it is possible that this could result in better performance and achievement for language students.

2.7. FLA in an Australian Context

While there is a large body of literature on the effects of FLA, there are few studies that investigate how FLA affects Australian language learners. Many of the existing studies that have assessed FLA, have investigated English language learning in countries where English is universally studied at high school or university (Awan et al., 2010; Kao & Craigie, 2013; Kruk, 2017; M. Liu & Zhang, 2013; Mostafavi & Vahdany, 2016; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Sinnasamy & Karim, 2014; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). However, the foreign language learning landscape in Australia is quite different to language learning in other countries.

The government of each state and territory in Australia is responsible for primary and secondary education. Therefore, the teaching of foreign languages varies a little from state to state. Despite these variations, all secondary schools are required to offer a minimum of one language (Orton, 2016). However, Australia is faced with the challenge of low completion rates in second languages and high rates of attrition from university programs (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009). In Australia, just 10% of year 12 students were studying a foreign language in 2006, compared with 60% of senior secondary students in Europe learning two or more languages in 2009/2010 (Martín et al., 2016). Martín et al (2016) adds that "the most striking characteristic of language and culture programs in Australian universities is the relative scarcity of students" (p.5). Language programs in Australian secondary schools face the challenge of a halt and decline effect around year 11 and 12 (Dunworth & Zhang, 2014).

Studies that have investigated FLA in an Australian context, include the recent study by Garcia de Blakeley et al (2017). They explored the existence of anxiety among adult Latino-American immigrants in Australia, who spoke Spanish as their first language (L1) and English as their L2. The study found that half of the participants suffered from FLA and experienced higher levels of anxiety when communicating in their less dominate language. Another recent study, by Mejía (2014), investigated the link between anxiety and oral activities among Spanish language learners in an Australian university. Their study also explored the impact of the language teacher on students' anxiety, and the strategies used by students to cope with FLA. The study found a number of factors could decrease FLA, including a comfortable teaching environment, certain interactive activities, and oral activities that were engaging and practical (Mejía, 2014). Another study, investigated the relationship between FLA and oral examination performance in high school students learning Japanese in Australia (Machida, 2001).

These existing studies that have investigated FLA in an Australian context, have chosen to investigate the relationship between FLA and speaking in the foreign language. However, these studies have been conducted among very different groups of language learners (high school students, university students and immigrants) and completely different languages (English, Spanish and Japanese). Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the situation of FLA in Australia when there are few existing studies.

2.8. Significance of the Study

The aims of this study are to discover if Australian language students of Chinese are aware of FLA, as well as how they experience FLA in terms of their own language learning. Research on FLA has neglected many areas that can contribute important knowledge to the field of FLA. It still remains unclear if language students are aware of FLA, with very few studies investigating this area. Language students play a major role in the language learning process. Therefore, one may expect that language students are aware of FLA and the ways in which it may affect their language learning. If students are aware of the nature of FLA, then they may have the opportunity to work with it and manage it appropriately. Conversely, if they are unaware of FLA, they may not be aware of the strategies that can help aid FLA. Studies that investigate student awareness of FLA are important if the issue of FLA is to be understood properly (Tran et al., 2013).

Researchers have argued both positive and negative effects of FLA on second language learning. While it is possible that FLA may be beneficial in some ways, FLA has proven to have predominantly negative effects on language learning. However, it is important to acknowledge that anxiety is a factor that is unavoidable and impossible to eliminate from

language learning contexts completely. As a result, it is important to find ways to effectively work with and minimize FLA in second language learning contexts. The ability to cope with and minimize FLA in language learning contexts may improve language achievement in individuals.

An interesting aspect of this research is that it will contribute knowledge on how language learners are aware of FLA and how it may affect their performance and achievement in the TL. A unique feature of this study is that it is investigating Australian learners of Chinese, something that is yet to be done in the field of FLA. Most studies have focused on students learning English as a foreign language, as opposed to other world languages. The findings from studies in other contexts cannot simply be applied to the situation in Australia, where the language learning landscape is quite different. It is important to understand FLA specifically in relation to Australian learners of Chinese because of the emphasis placed on Chinese language learning within the country. It is also important that FLA in the Australian context is understood because there is a lack of studies that have investigated different cultures, such as multicultural Australia. Replication of studies in different cultural contexts will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on FLA.

New knowledge on FLA, and a better understanding of the topic, can yield potential national benefits for Australia. This study has the potential to inform the design of future research by generating information on the kinds of themes/factors that are relevant to contemporary learners of Chinese at the university level in Australia. As there are many individuals who take part in learning and teaching foreign languages, this research can benefit language students, language teachers, those seeking career opportunities in tourism and trade, as well as many

individuals world-wide (such as immigrants). Language teachers will find that a developed understanding of FLA and the factors that affect the process of SLA will be helpful in that it can help them reduce FLA. Teachers can also use new knowledge to strive towards a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere (Shao et al., 2013). This research may also benefit other groups, such as those involved with the implementation and design of language learning programs.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1) In what ways are the participants (Australian language students learning Mandarin) aware of foreign language anxiety and how it might affect their learning?

2) How and to what extent, do the participants experience FLA?

3. Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research design of the study and its appropriateness to the research topic and questions. The primary purpose of the research was to discover if the participants were aware of FLA or not, and the effects it may have on their language learning. The research design also sought to uncover the participants' levels of anxiety.

3.2. Research Design

In order to answer the research questions and achieve the aims of this study, a qualitative research approach was undertaken. This approach was considered the most appropriate method to accomplish the goals of the study for a number of reasons. Qualitative research is interested in how participants experience and interact with a phenomenon at a given point in time and in a particular context, in this case, the natural setting of the language classroom. Qualitative research also has the ability to produce "thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinion, and experiences" (Rahman, 2016, p.104). When there is little known about a phenomenon, or existing research is limited, qualitative research is a useful research methodology because it is exploratory. It enables the conduction of in-depth studies (Yin, 2010) and allows researchers to "paint a richly descriptive picture of their participants' worlds – the participants themselves, the setting, and the major and minor events that happen there" (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p.9).

The last two decades have seen a growing trend in qualitative research projects over quantitative approaches (Heigham & Croker, 2009). With a short timeframe, it would not be as practical to conduct a wide-spread quantitative study with a large number of participants. Therefore, given that qualitative data is primarily textual, not numerical (Heigham & Croker, 2009), it was deemed appropriate for a small-scale project like this one. This study also takes on an emic perspective, as it is interested in the participants' views and perspectives (Heigham & Croker, 2009). The following study investigated three participants. The ability to focus on a small group of participants also allowed an in-depth exploration of the issue of 'awareness' in relation to FLA. Considering that existing research on awareness of FLA and FLA in an Australian context is limited, this approach was deemed highly appropriate. This is because the qualitative design of this study allowed significant amounts of data to be generated from the participants' shared experiences from their interviews. This approach would also help to highlight any issues in relation to FLA and Australian learners of Chinese that can be explored in future research.

3.3. Research Instruments

The study used a range of research instruments in order to obtain data. These included a background questionnaire, the FLCAS, and semi-structured interviews. The FLCAS is a quantitative research instrument. However, the intention of using this instrument was to accompany the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. More specifically, the data obtained from the FLCAS would provide the participants' level of anxiety and would flag the sources of FLA that were the most anxiety-provoking. This information could then be used to complement the interview data. These instruments were considered to be the most appropriate

choice for collecting the data and answering the research questions, as explained in the following sections.

3.3.1 The Background Questionnaire

A short background questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was created in order to collect demographic information on each of the participants included in the study. The responses to the background questionnaire sought information on the age of the participants, what languages other than English they are able to speak or understand, what they were studying at university as their major, the amount of time they have been learning Chinese, and what contexts they have studied Chinese both at the time of completing the questionnaire, and in the past. The participants' names were also requested on the background questionnaire. However, this information was not disclosed in the study. Instead, pseudonyms were used in place of the participants' real names in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

3.3.2 The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The FLCAS (see Appendix 2) is an instrument developed by Horwitz et al (1986). It was specifically designed to measure the degree and sources of language learners' classroom anxiety. The instrument is a 33-item self-report questionnaire that includes 24 positively, and 9 negatively worded statements. Each of the 33 statements are rated using a 5-point Likert-scale with choices that range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Positively worded statements were rated from 5 for 'strongly agree' to 1 for 'strongly disagree'. The scoring was reversed for the negatively worded statements (items number 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32) (Salehi & Marefat, 2014). The 33 items ask the participants a number of questions about their speaking, listening, reading and writing anxiety in their Chinese language classes. Each of these

statements reflects the individuals' feelings towards communication apprehension, test-anxiety and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986).

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the three participants. Each participant was interviewed face to face for approximately 20 minutes in a sound-proof recording room in the Macquarie University campus. Prior to the interviews, a total of 11 questions were designed (see Appendix 3). The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to gather in-depth information and explore the issue of 'awareness' in relation to FLA. The flexibility of these semi-structured interviews meant that while the interview questions were prepared in advance, there was room for probing where more information was needed (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

3.4. Rationale for the Use of Instruments

Since its development, the FLCAS has been used extensively in studies concerning anxiety and language learning (Horwitz, 2001). The FLCAS has in some sense become the standard measure of language anxiety (Horwtiz, 2010) which is reflected by the number of studies it has been used in (Chang, 2015., Kao & Craigie, 2013., Kruk, 2017., Liu & Cheng, 2014., Liu & Jackson, 2008., Luo 2015., Machida, 2001., Mak, 2011., Park & French, 2013., Shabani, 2012., Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013). The FLCAS has been tested for both validity and reliability. It has an internal reliability of .93 and test-retest reliability of r=.83 (p <.001 (Horwitz et al, 1986). The "well-validated" instrument "is based on an analysis of three potential factors of anxiety, namely communication apprehension, negative evaluation of performance and test anxiety" (Mak, 2011, p.205). The validity of the instrument deems it as an appropriate tool for examining the role of anxiety in language learning (Horwitz, 2016) and the levels of anxiety

of the participants. In this study, the FLCAS was used in order to find out the level of anxiety of each participant and complement the participant's responses from their interviews. The responses from the items on the FLCAS were also used to discover what aspects of language learning made the participants the most anxious, and how these were related to what they said during their interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were an appropriate choice of instrument for exploring the participants' awareness of FLA. Qualitative research interviews (QRIs), are considered one of the most important qualitative data collection methods and are often the most effective and convenient means of gathering information (Qu & Dumay, 2011). They involve collecting in-depth information, facts, and stories, through a set of questions that aim to address the study's research questions (Johnston, 2010). Through the QRI context, rapport building, openness, and shared understanding, gives the researcher the opportunity to hear about events, situations and information relevant to participants in the study. Interviews allow the researcher to learn about meanings, emotions, experiences, and relationships that cannot otherwise be easily observed (Rossetto, 2014). Because of their flexibility and accessibility (Qu & Dumay, 2011), semi-structured interviews also allow for more elaboration and explanation than a structured style interview (Johnston, 2010)

3.5. Participants

The participants in the study were a sample of Australian students studying at a university in Sydney, Australia. All of the participants, despite coming from different university major backgrounds, were enrolled in first-year Chinese language classes (CHN104 -Introductory Chinese I). This particular Chinese class is an introductory level language course intended for

students with no previous knowledge of Chinese, spoken or written. In the class, students are able to develop the four language skills: speaking, writing, listening and reading, as well as grammar. The class also aims to develop students' understanding of contemporary Chinese culture.

The university also offers first-year Chinese language classes for Chinese heritage speakers with a basic knowledge of the Chinese language (CHN148 Chinese for Heritage learners I). However, this study focused specifically on students who had completed most of their primary and secondary education in Australia and who had not grown up speaking any varieties of Chinese at home. This was because the exclusion criteria for the study included any students that were heritage speakers of Chinese. The study was primarily interested in non-heritage speakers of Chinese who had little to no knowledge of the Chinese language because the issues are likely to be different for non-heritage speakers and heritage speakers.

The lack of studies on FLA in an Australian context meant that this group of participants were the most appropriate source of data. By excluding participants who had not completed the majority of their primary and secondary education in Australia, it would exclude any international students studying abroad in Australia, as well as any students who had spent most of their time growing up overseas. It would also guarantee that the participants would be native speakers of English. More specifically, the participants would speak English as their first language/dominant language for the purpose of formal education. There are already existing studies on Chinese heritage speakers in regards to FLA (Luo, 2015). Therefore, it felt appropriate to exclude these students in the study in order to focus on those students who had little prior exposure to the Chinese language.

A total of three participants agreed to participate in the study (two males and one female), aged between 19 and 20 years of age (the recruitment process is described in detail in the following section). The participants all came from different university major backgrounds including marketing, statistics, and archaeology. One of the participants was also enrolled in a degree with a Chinese major. All of the students were monolingual speakers of English with no other ability to speak or understand another language fluently. For one of the participants this was their first exposure to the Chinese language. The other two participants had been introduced to Chinese prior to enrolling in the university introductory course. One of these participants had been enrolled in an external Mandarin school for approximately one year, while the other had been exposed to Chinese language classes during one year of high school. The demographic information on the participants can be seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3-1. Demographic Information of Participants

Participant No.	Pseudonym	Age	University Major	Languages other than English	Time spent learning Chinese	Contexts learning Chinese
1	KYLE	19	Chinese	None	3 months	Macquarie University
2	CHARLIE	20	Archaeology	None	1 year and 4 months	Macquarie University High School
3	CLAIRE	19	Marketing and Statistics	None	1 year and 4 months	Macquarie University External Mandarin School

3.6. Procedure

Prior to commencing the data collection, ethics approval was firstly obtained from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 5). The study was granted ethics approval in mid-May 2018. After this approval was granted, the recruitment stage could begin. The recruitment of participants was achieved by firstly contacting the head of the Chinese studies department at Macquarie University and requesting permission to visit the Chinese language classes. With permission approved, the appropriate lecturers were informed about the upcoming visit from the researcher. During week 12 of the semester, a total of three first-year Chinese language classes were informed about the study as a collective group. During the short presentation, the students were told about the scope of the study, including their role as a participant. Each student in the class was also given a recruitment flyer that included details and information about the study, as well as contact details of the researcher. The students were asked to contact the researcher by email if they were interested in participating in the study.

Once informed of the study, the first-year Chinese language students interested in participating, and whom felt that they fit the criteria, responded to the recruitment flyers and the researcher's classroom presentation by contacting the researcher by email. A total of four students contacted the researcher, expressing their interest in the study. Through email correspondence, the researcher organized a suitable time and date to meet with each of the participants for a one-on-one semi-structured interview. However, during this time one of the students dropped out. The other three participants each organized a meeting time that suited them around their examination schedule.

In the next phase, the researcher met with each participant individually to collect the data for the study. During the data collection phase, each participant completed background questionnaires, the FLCAS, and semi-structured interviews. The meetings took place in a soundproof audio recording room on the Macquarie University campus. Each interview began with some general conversation in order to create rapport with the participants. Each participant then completed a background questionnaire and the FLCAS prior to the interview. Once the background questionnaire and the FLCAS were complete, the researcher began the interview. The participants were asked a serious of questions, 11 in total, that were organized prior to the interview. The semi-structured format of the interviews allowed for further questioning and probes when needed, in order to elicit more information from the participants. The interviews were recorded on two different devices (a laptop and a handheld device) to ensure accuracy and reliability of what was said during the interview, as well as for transcription. Each of the interviews conducted took approximately 20 minutes.

3.7. Data Analysis

Once all of that data had been collected from the participants using the background questionnaires, the FLCAS, and the semi-structured interviews, the participants' demographic information was collected from the background questionnaires and entered into a digital graph for ease of access (see Appendix 4). Then, the transcription of the interview data took place.

The semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data in this study. The interviews aimed to collect in-depth information about the participant's awareness of FLA and the possible affects it might have on their language learning. Specifically, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to address the following research question:

1) In what ways are the participants (Australian language students learning Mandarin) aware of foreign language anxiety and how it might affect their learning?

Due to the small number of participants, software was not used to automatically transcribe the data. However, a software called 'Express Scribe Transcription' was used to aid the transcription process. This software was used to slow down the speed of the recordings in order to accurately transcribe each utterance and pause made during the interview. The transcription was completed by the researcher, along with the aid of 'Express Scribe Transcription'. Once an accurate transcription of each interview was made, the participants' real names were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

After the completion of the transcriptions, the data was pre-coded. Pre-coding the data involved highlighting any participant quotes that appeared worthy of attention. The data was then analyzed using two cycles of coding. The first cycle coding method used was 'descriptive coding'. This type of coding "summarizes a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (Saldana, 2016, p.76). Descriptive coding is essential groundwork for second cycle coding and further analysis and interpretation (Saldana, 2016). The descriptive codes created were used as indications of what was being spoken about in the interview. In the first cycle of coding, a total of 25 different codes were created. The list of these codes was written in an inventory (see Appendix 6) including the purpose of each code. Examples of some of the first cycle codes include 'speed', 'teacher', 'motivation', 'class', 'involvement', 'tests'.

The second cycle of coding method used was 'pattern coding'. Pattern coding is used to highlight and develop any emerging themes within the data. Smaller themes that emerged within the first cycle of coding which show commonality, are grouped together to create major themes (Saldana, 2016). The first cycle codes were assessed for commonality and then assigned an appropriate pattern code. After this process, the initial first cycle codes were minimized to six different codes: 'Individual learner differences', 'friendship', 'learning Chinese', 'Chinese language class', 'keeping up' and 'class involvement'. These pattern codes were also recorded in an inventory (see Appendix 6).

With the demographic information recorded and the transcriptions complete, the analysis of the participants' responses to the FLCAS was undertaken. An analysis of the data from the FLCAS questionnaires determined each participant's overall level of anxiety. This information would directly answer the second research question: To what extent do the participants experience FLA? The 5-point Likert-scale on the FLCAS was used to determine the participant's scores. The FLCAS questionnaire consists of 33 questions: 24 positively-worded questions and 9 negatively-worded questions. The 24 positively-worded questions were scored by the participants from 5 to 1 (with 5 being strongly agree). The remaining 9 negatively-worded questions were reversed and scored 1 to 5 (with 5 being strongly disagree) (Horwitz et al., 1986). The total number of scores were summed for each of the participant's FLCAS questionnaire. The scores were then divided by 33 (the total number of questions), which gave each of the participants an average score. This average score would determine each individual participant's level of anxiety. The participants were characterized as having high level anxiety if their average score was 4 and above, medium level anxiety around 3, and low level anxiety if their average was below 3 (Horwitz, 2008).

4. Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1. Introduction

The interrelated goals of this study were to discover if the participants were aware of FLA and how it might affect their language learning, and to find out how and to what extent they experienced FLA. This chapter analyses the data collected throughout the study. Firstly, it will present and analyze the results found from the FLCAS. Then, the chapter will present the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

4.2. Results from the FLCAS

The FLCAS was distributed and completed by all three of the participants during their meeting with the researcher. A breakdown of the responses to the FLCAS questionnaire are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4-1. Participants' Responses to the FLCAS

	Item	Kyle	Claire	Charlie
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	5	3	2
2	**I don't worry about making mistakes in my language class.**	4	2	3
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to called on in language class.	3	4	3
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	4	4	4
5	**It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.**	3	3	1

6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	4	4	3
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	3	5	3
8	**I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.**	4	3	2
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3	5	2
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	4	3	1
11	**I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.**	3	3	1
12	In language class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.	2	4	2
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3	3	2
14	**I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.**	2	5	4
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2	3	4
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	4	4	2
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	2	3	2
18	**I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.**	4	2	2
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3	3	2
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	2	4	2
21	The more I study for a language test, the more	2	3	1

	confused I get.			
22	**I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.**	2	4	2
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	3	4	2
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3	3	2
25	Language class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	4	3	2
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	4	4	1
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3	4	2
28	**When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.**	3	2	2
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3	2	2
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak a foreign language.	4	4	1
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	2	2	2
32	**I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.**	3	4	2
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2	4	2

5= Strongly agree; 4= Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly disagree.

Negatively-worded questions were reversed and scored 1 to 5 (negatively-worded questions are presented in bold).

The participants' levels of anxiety were determined using a method proposed by Horwitz et al (1986). The results from the FLCAS showed that the participants' scores on the FLCAS ranged from 70 to 102, with a mean of 95. The participants' scores are presented below in Table 4.2.

Table 4-2. Participants' Scores on the FLCAS

	Total Score	Average Score
Kyle	102	3.09
Claire	113	3.42
Charlie	70	2.12

As represented in Table 4.2, the participants' average scores ranged from 2.12 to 3.42. The participant with the lowest average score was Charlie, with 2.12. According to the system of Horwitz (2008), having an average score of below 3 classifies Charlie as having low-level anxiety. Kyle's average score was 3.09. With a score of around 3, this classifies Kyle as having medium-level anxiety. Claire also received an average score of around 3. Her score of 3.42, classifies her as having medium-level anxiety, and the highest level of anxiety among the group. A comparison of the participants' average scores from the FLCAS are displayed below in Figure 4.1
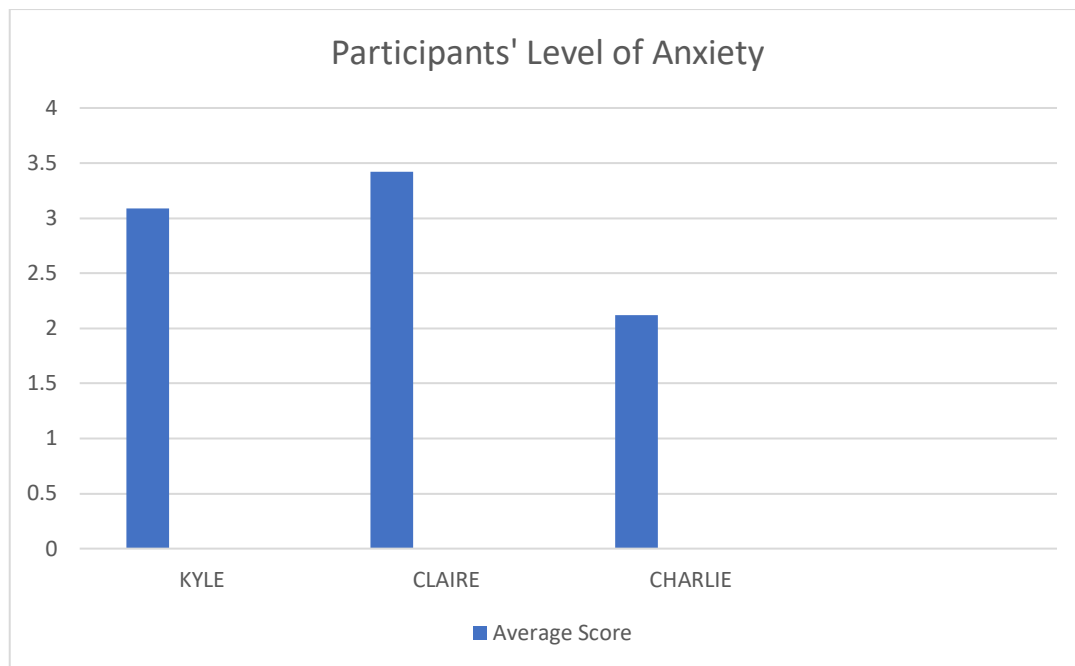
Figure 4-1. Participants' Average FLCAS Scores

4.3. Awareness of FLA

The analysis of the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants were unfamiliar with the term 'FLA'. When asked explicitly if they had heard of the concept of FLA, each of the participants responded with 'no'. Their responses further indicated that the participants were unfamiliar with the concept of FLA, and had not heard of it prior to their participation in the study.

Charlie: Is it an organization thing or is it just like a term?

Kyle: So, what exactly do you mean by foreign anxiety?

Claire: Well not like together, like anxiety as a topic and then foreign language as a topic. But I've never really heard anyone say like "that's a type of anxiety".

Interestingly, however, when asked explicitly about how FLA might affect language learning, the participants were able to articulate the possible effects that FLA can have on language learning. The participants reported that FLA could have both positive and negative effects on language learning. As described by the participants, the positive effects of anxiety were that anxiety could sometimes be motivating in a way that it could encourage and motivate the student to increase their effort in their language learning. The negative effects of anxiety described by the participants included a possible impact upon willingness to communicate in the TL, as well as just an overall negative impact upon the individual. This suggests that they did in fact have an intuitive conceptualization of what FLA was even though they had not been introduced to the term before.

> Claire: Anxiety can be viewed as positive and negative, it depends on the, I guess the level of anxiety. So, enough anxiety to push you to overcome your fear (...) it could be like I need to push myself, practice a lot more, build my confidence. (…) or it could go the other way, you could end up like a train wreck, and just like cry with your tutor.

> Kyle: (…) Makes me motivated sort of to try and keep up with it. (…) I feel like it is more of a negative.

> Charlie: I definitely think it stops one of the most important things which is talking to (…) native speakers. If you've got the anxiety then I don't think – well it's harder to speak to them and I think that's one of the most important things for learning the language (…).

When asked about whether they felt that FLA affected them personally, the participants reflected that FLA could affect them under certain circumstances and situations. For Claire, she explained that anxiety could affect her "in different moments". Kyle felt that the amount

of pressure he experienced and the struggle to balance university classes could sometimes cause anxiety. For Charlie, he expressed that FLA could affect him sometimes when speaking in the TL.

> Claire: There are moments where I'm faced with like a challenge or whatever, or in like parts of the lesson in class it just goes too fast and I just don't understand.

> Kyle: It only does because of the pressure that I feel sometimes and especially with like trying to keep up with other subjects at uni.

> Charlie: Actually, maybe I will feel anxious or worried to say something to someone. But generally, I just go through it, I just got to motivate myself a little bit first.

4.4. Emerging Themes

The following sections present the themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data. Section 4.5 will present the theme 'the role of friendship'. Section 4.6, 'feelings about Chinese language class', focuses on the participants' anticipatory attitudes and feelings about the Chinese language class. Then in section 4.7, several themes are presented in relation to Chinese language learning including speaking, answering questions, and preparation. Sections 4.8 and 4.9 discuss the emerging themes of 'keeping up' and 'speed', while these themes slightly overlap with section 4.6 and 4.7, they have been given their own sections because of their prominence throughout the data. Finally, Section 4.10 presents the theme of Chinese language teachers. These themes give insight into how the participants experienced, and were aware of FLA.

4.5. The Role of Friendship

An interesting theme that emerged from the analysis of the interviews was friendship. The participants discussed how friendship played a role in their language learning, and even in the ability to make them feel more or less anxious. The participants highlighted both negative and positive aspects of having friends in their Chinese language class. The positive aspects of having friends included motivating each other, feeling more relaxed and comfortable during class, being able to relate to other students, and an overall more enjoyable classroom atmosphere. For two of the participants, making new friends was (in Kyle's words) "the highlight of the semester".

> Kyle: Make new friends, which was - that was enjoyable. Yeah create, (.) create new bonds and stuff.

> Claire: I think for me, yeah, one it would be the friends, so that would be a win.

Originally, Claire had been enrolled in a Chinese language unit specifically for background speakers. Claire explained that she did not know any of the other people in the class and felt that all of the students were a lot more advanced than her. However, once changing to a unit for non-Chinese background speakers, she felt more comfortable that her classmates could relate to her and were at a similar language level. An interesting point made by Claire was that having friends in her Chinese language class made her feel less anxious.

> Claire: Everybody else could relate to me like "aw this is so hard, what's she talking about?" kind of thing. (…) I think in that context if there's other people around me who are in the same boat, I feel pretty chill. (…) Because in class I'm pretty chill and I have friends there, which also relieves the anxiety.

Despite some positive effects of having friends in the language class, the participants also expressed negative aspects. These included getting distracted, talking about things unrelated to Chinese or language learning, and not participating in the class as much. The responses demonstrated that sitting with friends in class could result in the possibility of heightened anxiety, if it meant that students were not paying attention during class as a result of socializing.

> Claire: Those people help me get through it, but at the same time can distract me and make me anxious. (…) There are times when like if the lesson goes too fast or I'm being distracted by my friends and I look up like "aw crap, like I don't even know what she's talking about anymore".

The comments made by Charlie built on what was said by Claire in regards to students being distracted by their friends. He remarked that students sitting at the back "didn't seem like they're trying as hard" because they would socialize about things unrelated to the class. Charlie suggested that the teacher could change the seating arrangement, so that students can "sit with the randoms". He commented that "the changing of the social group might help" students contribute and pay more attention to in class. Charlie also linked sitting with friends to the possibility of increased anxiety. When asked what factors contributed to students feeling nervous in class, Charlie responded "obviously, who they make friends with, where they're sitting". The responses showed that students sitting with their friends, while making them feel more comfortable and relaxed, would only benefit them in terms of reduced anxiety if they would not get distracted by each other.

> Charlie: I think you need to have at least one friend who's motivated to do the work and to tell them to speak up and so they all get an equal chance. (…) Cause if all your

friends are not active and you know participating that way then (…) you need to sit with someone else.

Despite both positive and negative aspects being highlighted by Claire and Charlie, Kyle only expressed positive aspects of having friends in the Chinese language class. He remarked that "everyone started grouping up together creating those bonds, so that creates that more enjoyable atmosphere then for themselves as well".

4.6. Feelings about Chinese Language Class

The participants each had different anticipatory attitudes and feelings towards attending their Chinese language class. Charlie's response did not demonstrate any major feelings. He commented that before class he usually felt "pretty good". The only remark made about the class was its location on the university campus. This was also reflected in the FLCAS where he disagreed with Item 17 'I often feel like not going to my language class' and agreed with Item 28 'When I'm on my way to language class I feel very sure and relaxed'. It was clear through his responses that Charlie was eager and relaxed before attending Chinese language class.

> Charlie: Yeah there's no, no issue with get – with the class. It's just its far away. (…). Yeah, I'm always keen for Chinese class.

For Kyle, he commented that if he had studied prior to his next class, he would go in feeling good. However, he explained that earlier in the semester when he was not studying for his Chinese class, he would go into class feeling "really nervous". Kyle responded neutrally to

Item 28 'When I'm on my way to language class I feel very sure and relaxed'. Kyle also disagreed with Item 17 'I often feel like not going to my language class'. This reflected that despite feeling nervous and pressured before some classes, he still wanted to attend.

> Kyle: Late in the semester, I came to class and I still felt pressure and nervous, sometimes you just - yeah because I know that you know that the teachers going to ask questions and stuff.

Claire's response demonstrated that she was quite relaxed before class, knowing that each lesson would not be the same as the last. Claire agreed with item 28, that on her way to class she felt very sure and relaxed. Claire also responded neutrally to item 17. Her interview response indicated that being put on the spot and class presentations during class made her feel anxious. However, because those situations would not happen every single lesson, she did not feel anxious before every class.

> Claire: I feel like that class isn't as confronting to make me anxious every time I go. Cause it's not like they'll put you on the spot every single time or you have to do a presentation. It's just them trying to teach you something.

4.7. Chinese Language Learning Situations and Tasks

Throughout the interviews, the participants discussed the effects of FLA both in regards to themselves, and other students in their language class. It was clear from the responses that certain situations and tasks related to classroom practice were anxiety provoking for some of the participants. These are illustrated in the following sub-sections.

4.7.1 Claire's Experience

Claire was required to have an interview with the convener prior to her enrollment in the unit because of her background. Claire's parents came from Hong Kong and Vietnam. The teacher suggested that on the basis of being from a Chinese family, Claire enroll into a Chinese for heritage students class. Claire explained to the teacher that her parents did not speak Mandarin and that the class would not be suitable for her. However, her Chinese teacher was persistent because Claire had been exposed to some Cantonese in her family home. It was clear from Claire's story that the class made her overwhelmed, being amongst students who were already able to introduce themselves in Mandarin on the first day. Claire felt that "the average level of knowledge was a lot higher" than what she knew and explained to her teacher that she struggled to keep up. After speaking with her teacher again, Claire finally convinced her that the class was unsuitable for her after "breaking down" in tears.

> Claire: I was like "I don't even understand any of this, and you expect me to like keep up with these people? (…)". Everybody else knew what it was cause they all grew up with those kinds of characters. (…) I literally stay up till 2am in the morning just for class trying to get my homework done and I understood none of it.

After another discussion with her teacher, Claire was able to move into the beginners' class for non-background speakers where she felt a lot more comfortable. Despite having the same Chinese language teacher, Claire felt that the teaching style and students were more suitable for her own level.

> Claire: It was just full of people who had like no idea about Mandarin and it was just a very basic step by step kind of teaching style in that environment. So, it was just better for me I think.

4.7.2 Speaking Chinese

The FLCAS responses revealed that the participants were sometimes anxious speaking Chinese during class. It appeared that Charlie was the least anxious when it came to speaking Chinese in class. Claire also appeared to be fairly relaxed about speaking the TL in class. It appeared that Kyle was the most anxious. For example, Item 1 'I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class', Kyle strongly agreed, Claire was neutral, Charlie disagreed. Both Kyle and Claire responded neutrally to Item 24 'I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students' and Charlie disagreed. Kyle's response to Item 1 and his interview responses suggested that he second guesses his own ability and level in relation to external expectations with speaking Chinese. All three of the participants selected disagree on Item 31 'I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language'.

> Claire: (…) I'm okay with standing up in front of other people and saying things.

> Kyle: (…). I feel a bit behind where I want to be. (…) Expectations were a bit higher of knowing how to speak to different sentences. (…) It's sort of hard to think about what key words go where.

Group oral presentations or 'role plays' were a compulsory component of the Chinese language class and contributed to the participants' overall grade. Role play involved working in small groups in order to prepare a dialogue to be performed in front of the class. Claire suggested that role play was an aspect of the class that caused differing levels of anxiety. Claire explained that during role play situations, each group of students usually consists of a couple of confident students who are "really chill with role play" and one other person who is "super quiet".

However, Claire expressed that she had no issues with role play during class. She commented "I'm okay with standing up in front of other people and saying things". Through her own observation in class, Claire found that some classmates seemed to "get really nervous" and would appear to be heavily impacted by anxiety.

> Claire: There's that one person who is super quiet, doesn't say anything, can't even move in front of everybody, stage freight. (…). He was anxious in like every single lesson, he would literally talk so quiet, like every time he tried to pronounce something, especially in the roleplaying things or like responding to the teacher. (…) He looked like he was shaking.

Outside the language classroom context, the participants may have been faced with opportunities to speak with native speakers of Chinese. Speaking Chinese with native speakers proved to be more anxiety-provoking for the participants. For example, Item 14 'I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers', Claire strongly disagreed, Charlie disagreed and Kyle agreed. On Item 32 'I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language', Claire disagreed, Charlie agreed and Kyle was neutral.

These responses suggest that Claire would be the most nervous when talking to native speakers, despite being comfortable speaking Chinese during class. Despite responding that he would be nervous speaking with native speakers, Charlie's comments revealed that his nervousness would not stand in his way. Charlie explained that he took the opportunity to speak Chinese with a native speaker during an online game. His comments implied that regardless of any degree of nervousness, he was still willing to try. This links with the idea that FLA is not necessarily an inhibiting factor.

Charlie: Randomly on a game [laughing] I just saw some guy and I - he was speaking English and then I replied in Chinese, saying I was Australian and this is - I can speak a little bit of Chinese studying at university. (…) I still think I'd try (…) I don't think it would be an issue.

4.7.3 Answering Questions

It was clear that answering questions during class made some of the participants feel anxious. This was particularly so for Kyle, who commented that going to class knowing that the teacher could ask him a question made him "nervous". Interestingly, Kyle disagreed with the statement: 'I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance' (Item 33). However, Kyle disagreed with 'I don't worry about making mistakes in my language class' (Item 2). This perhaps indicates that Kyle was more worried about what his peers might think if he answers a question incorrectly in class. His interview response indicated that the inability to answer a question correctly is (for him) an unfavourable situation. To other items on the FLCAS related to this topic, Kyle responded neutrally (Items 3, 9, 27).

Kyle: You don't want to be the one that's letting down the class, or you know, the embarrassment of the class.

Claire's interview and FLCAS responses reflected that being called on during class to answer questions could cause her anxiety. Her interview response indicated that even if she had prepared an answer in her head, the situation of being put on the spot could trigger anxiety, and as a result she would forget what it was that she wanted to say. Her worry towards answering questions was also reflected in her FLCAS responses. Claire agreed with the statement 'I tremble when I know that I'm going to called on in language class' (Item 3), 'I get nervous and

confused when I am speaking in my language class' (Item 27) and definitely agreed to 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class' (Item 9).

> Claire: I kind of find it hard too sometimes when she puts you on the spot. Like sometimes if I know exactly what to say it just like hits me and I'm like wait, I don't even understand anymore.

In contrast to Claire, answering questions was not an issue for Charlie, who commented that answering a question and getting it correct was an aspect of the class that he really enjoyed. Unlike Claire, Charlie disagreed with Items 9 and 27 on the FLCAS. However, Charlie responded neutrally to Item 3, an item that Claire had agreed with. It is possible that this neutral response from Charlie means that sometimes he may 'tremble' when he knows he will be called on during class. On the FLCAS, Charlie disagreed with the statement 'it embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class' (Item 13) and 'I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class' (Item 20). These responses further reflect that answering questions was not anxiety-provoking for Charlie.

> Charlie: For me if I do get something right then you know I feel like I'm doing correctly and I'll feel more motivated speaking it. (…) I also sort of actually like doing tests too and finding out the results on how I did.

Interestingly, all of the participants reported that they were aware other students in the class seemed to be anxious when answering questions. Charlie commented that many of the students were "pretty reserved" when the teacher asked a question and that "almost most of the time no one would answer".

Charlie: Definitely the anxiety thing, they're scared you know? Someone asks you a question you're not ready for in an educational class (…) everyone's going to get a little worried. (…). It wasn't that people didn't know the answer a lot of the time, but yeah they were too afraid to say it.

Claire: I think for my friends they usually don't ask the teacher questions mainly because they're not bothered or just like the answers probably wrong.

Kyle: She (the teacher) just went really quick (…) I think she asked a question, everyone in the class was just dead silent. So, it was, yeah you could tell that everyone was sort of overwhelmed.

Charlie and Claire both shared the view that students were most likely worried about answering the questions incorrectly and as a result, chose not to answer any questions. It is possible that those students were doubting their own ability to answer a question correctly due to some level of anxiety. Kyle's response indicated that students also did not answer questions due to confusion and overwhelm during class. Kyle explained that students' feeling of overwhelm stemmed from the teacher speaking too quickly for the students to follow.

4.7.4 Preparation

Another interesting theme that emerged from the data analysis was 'preparation for class'. The responses revealed that 'preparation' had the ability to make the participants feel anxious. For Kyle, his responses implied that it was a lack of preparation that made him feel anxious. Kyle explained that studying prior to class had the ability to make him more relaxed and at times when he did not study he would feel nervous. However, his FLCAS responses indicated that he would still feel anxious even if he had prepared for class. Both Kyle and Claire 'agreed'

with Item 16 'Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it'. It appeared that speaking in class without preparation made Claire feel more anxious than Kyle, judging by their responses on the FLCAS. Item 9 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class', Claire selected 'definitely agree' while Kyle was neutral. Interestingly, Claire's responses highlighted that in addition to a *lack of preparation,* the *task of preparing* also made her feel anxious. This was demonstrated by her interview response and response on Item 22 'I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class'. Claire disagreed with this statement, while Kyle 'agreed'.

> Claire: (…) Preparation for the actual context of the Chinese language class is a little bit scary. (…). We have to prepare something before class, that may be like kind of gets my heart a little pumping. But, as long as I prepare the night before then I'm fine.

In contrast, it was clear that Charlie did not feel anxious about lack of preparation or the task of preparing for Chinese class. Not only did Charlie not mention preparation at all in his interview, his responses on the FLCAS also confirmed his relaxed attitude. Charlie disagreed with Items 16 and 9, and agreed with Item 22.

4.8. Keeping Up

The emerging theme 'keeping up' focuses specifically on the idea of struggling with the amount of content provided in the class, along with other commitments outside of the Chinese language class. Two of the participants expressed some dissatisfaction with the way their Chinese language unit was structured. The amount of content to be learned was overwhelming for the participants who felt that there was too much to learn in such a short amount of time. Throughout the semester, the participants were required to complete textbook work, weekly

quizzes on vocabulary and grammar, as well as assignments. The workload given to the participants each week in regards to preparation before class, homework, weekly quizzes and assignments made the participants feel both pressured and overwhelmed.

> Kyle: So, there is a lot of pressure to stay up to it and at creates the anxiety sort of. (…) You have times where you stay on top of one week and then the next week comes along and because they're going really fast paced you have to learn all these other words. (…) It's hard to stay on top of. (…) There's so much to get through. (…) To manage all the subjects and units in university and trying to keep up with the pace they set is sort of the most difficult part that I'm not a big fan of.

> Claire: I have work, responsibilities, other subjects to study for. (…) I think, like in a sense it's the university's like way of structuring the unit (…) I think it's the unit that is more like pushing that pressure on, like how the unit guide it set out for example.

It was clear that Kyle felt he was struggling to keep up with the class. In order to help with his Chinese language learning, Kyle mentioned that he found outside help from a Chinese language tutor. Kyle's response on the FLCAS were consistent with his comments made about keeping up with the language class. He 'agreed' with Item 25 ('language class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind'), Item 10 ('I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class') and Item 30 ('I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak a foreign language').

Claire's responses reflected similar worry in regards to keeping up class. However, her responses indicated that she was less worried than Kyle. Like Kyle, Claire agreed with Item 30, but she responded neutrally to Items 10 and 25. Once again, Charlie's low-level anxiety

was reflected through his responses on the FLCAS. Charlie made no comments regarding the amount of work required for the class, or his concern for keeping up. He selected 'strongly disagree' on Items 30 and 10, and 'disagree' on Item 25. This is a major contrast with the other two participants, who flagged keeping up as a major issue that could potentially heighten their anxiety.

4.9. Speed

The speed of the class proved to be a problem for two of the participants and other students in their class. This was reflected by their frequent use of the word "overwhelming". For Kyle, the speed of the teacher talking caused him to feel both confused and overwhelmed. He also mentioned a time where the teacher asked the class a question but because she spoke too quickly everyone remained "dead silent". Claire's issue with the speed of the class was in relation to how quickly the teacher went through the content. While Claire and Kyle both expressed dissatisfaction with the speed of the class, there was no concern expressed by Charlie. Once again, Charlie's responses are quite different from Claire's and Kyle's. This highlights an emerging pattern between the participants as many of the factors that caused anxiety for Claire and Kyle were not expressed by Charlie.

> Kyle: I think the class is pretty good except for just the speed of it. She goes a bit too fast and you can't depict what, where you put all the words and it's a bit confusing. As I said the speed (…) there are a few other students that are like a bit overwhelmed. (…) It's like they keep on drilling it and it is sort of, I guess, confusing sometimes after an hour because you need a bit of a break. (…) Towards the second half of the class it just gets a bit overwhelming sometimes.

Claire: I think maybe the formatting of the presentation slides. Some of the slides are really clustered and it just looks like a lot of information. Sometimes it can be a little overwhelming. Especially, to keep up with like her clicking really fast past the presentation slides.

4.10.   Chinese Language Teachers

With the exception of the 'speed' issues discussed above, the participants were not overly anxious as a result of their Chinese language teacher. In fact, on the FLCAS, the responses to 'I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting' (item 15), 'I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make' (item 19), 'I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says' (item 29), and 'I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance' (item 33), showed that all three of the participants selected either the neutral response or disagree. The exceptions were Item 33 where Claire agreed, and Item 15 where Charlie agreed. One view shared by all of the participants was on Item 4 'It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language' where they all selected 'agree'. Despite this shared view, when asked how the teacher could improve the classes in order to help reduce anxiety, the participants each demonstrated different views. Kyle's suggestions were made directly in relation to the teaching style, Claire's comments were related to the structure of the course and Charlie's suggestions regarding seating in class.

Kyle: (…) Slow down (…) get us all more involved (…) trying to understand the question and then explain, well put in what order we put all the words in.

Claire: I feel like for the teachers, it's not necessarily a suggestion about their teaching style but more about the classes and the unit guide.

Charlie: It's like one of those situations where one day the teacher just moves all the desks together (…) I don't know that –that could help [with students speaking up in class, answering questions, and not getting distracted by their friends].

One view shared by the participants was that the Chinese language teachers were approachable, helpful and supportive. The participants commented that they could ask lots of questions during seminars and tutorials. Claire and Charlie also believed that the teacher played a major role in the atmosphere of the Chinese language class. For Kyle, the helpful nature on the Chinese language teachers even made him feel more relaxed during class.

Charlie: (…) The atmosphere depends on the teacher. (…) well depends what type of teacher you got (…) Well also its subjective I guess, if it's a good teacher to you you'll be happier and that's another happy person in the atmosphere (…).

Claire: (…) I think, a key like person to create atmosphere is the teacher.

Kyle: (…) So the feelings of being nervous aren't there because you know the teachers (…) they help you a lot.

5. Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1. Introduction

The findings outlined in Chapter four are discussed in more detail in this chapter. Chapter five begins in Section 5.2 with a discussion of the findings in relation to the participant's awareness of FLA. Section 5.3 includes a discussion of beneficial versus inhibitory anxiety. Finally, the chapter will conclude in Section 5.4, where a discussion of the various classroom-related tasks and situations that provoked anxiety is presented.

5.2. Students' Awareness of FLA

An apparent paradox emerged in regards to the participants' awareness of FLA. The data analysis revealed that all three of the participants were not aware of FLA as a discrete concept or term. However, it should be noted that they did seem to be aware of its existence in regards to their own language learning experiences. It was also clear that the participants were aware of the effects that FLA can have on language learning. A possible explanation for such a contradiction may be that the participants were aware of the existence of FLA as a result of their own feelings and experiences, despite never having been explicitly informed about FLA. This contradiction appears to be consistent with the findings of Tran et al (2013). Their study found a strong degree of awareness of FLA, with FLA being widely recognized among the participants. Interestingly, all 18 of the participants that were interviewed had been 'aware' of the existence of FLA prior to their participation. However, this 'awareness' was examined in terms of the participants' perceived existence of FLA, as opposed to their awareness of the concept of FLA (Tran et al., 2013). To be clear, the majority of the participants believed in or were aware of the existence of FLA. This raises the need for a clear distinction about what is

meant by 'awareness' in future studies. Such a distinction can distinguish whether students are aware of the concept of FLA, as opposed to the general feelings associated with anxiety. The reasons why this is a relevant distinction with practical implications are discussed in Section 6.3.

In the present study, the participants were aware of the existence of FLA as demonstrated by their responses, stories and shared experiences, but were unaware of FLA as a concept. Similarly, in a study by Von Wörde (2003), they found that some of the participants were unaware of FLA. Other participants were unsure, but were aware of a general feeling of uneasiness. This suggests that these participants were also aware of the existence of FLA, but not the actual term itself. Their study also found the participants to use terms such as 'frustration', 'nervous', and 'anxious' interchangeably (Von Wörde, 2003). Such terms were also apparent in the present study, where participants used 'scared', 'nervous', 'worried' and 'anxious' interchangeably during their interviews.

The lack of awareness of FLA as a discrete concept among language learners is supported by Mostafavi & Vahdany (2016), who argue that many language learners seem to be unaware of the impact that affective factors (such as anxiety) can have on language learning. In their study, the experimental group was given explicit instruction on different strategies that could be used to help with affective factors. The use of these strategies helped to control the participants' levels of anxiety and as a result, their oral proficiency improved in the TL. The explicit instruction of affective strategies, although not directly related to the present study, helped the participants realize that they needed to be more aware of affective factors, such as anxiety. In the current study, the participants were also not explicitly aware of the impact that an affective

filter, such as anxiety, can have on language learning. However, if they were informed and given instruction on different strategies, they might too be able to use these to control their level of anxiety.

5.3. Beneficial vs Inhibitory Anxiety

In the present study, the participants cited both facilitative and debilitative effects of FLA. While there were very few positive effects described by the participants, two of the participants felt that a certain degree of anxiety could motivate and push the learner to increase their effort in relation to their language learning. This correlates with the concept of 'beneficial anxiety'. The idea that anxiety can be beneficial is certainly not a new one. The sentiments expressed by Kyle and Claire, that anxiety can sometimes play a positive role in language learning, has also been supported by other scholars. In fact 40 years ago, Scovel (1978) explained that anxiety had the ability to motivate language learners to "fight" the new learning task. The view that anxiety can be beneficial/facilitative is also supported in more recent literature. Anxiety is said to have the ability to push the learner to confront new tasks and can promote language learning (Chang, 2012). As discussed in Chapter 2, Krashen (2008) also supports this idea, arguing that FLA is useful because in many cases it acts as a warning to let the learner know that they are "violating, or about to violate, the principles of language acquisition and performance" (p.19). In other words, FLA lets the learner know that the fear they feel in regards to speaking and understanding, is a result of a lack of ability (Krashen, 2008). The opinions shared by two of the participants align with the claims made by Chang (2008) and Krashen (2008) that anxiety can be facilitative as it can push and motivate the individual when it comes to language learning. In Subekti (2018), language teachers also supported the idea of facilitative anxiety, suggesting that anxiety might be needed in order for learners to keep learning. Dewaele &

MacIntyre (2014) add that while a facilitating form of FLA is possible, "such effects have been inconsistent and difficult to find in the literature" (p.239). Despite the idea that FLA can be positive, not all of the participants expressed positive effects of FLA. In fact, Charlie made no comments about how FLA could have positive effects on language learning. However, it is interesting to note that Charlie revealed that despite any level of nervousness, he would still speak with a native speaker of the TL. This builds on the issue of whether or not anxiety is necessarily an inhibiting factor.

The participants mostly discussed the negative effects of FLA on language learning, revealing that they seemed to have an unfavorable attitude towards FLA. The negative effects of FLA as described by Charlie was that FLA could prevent interaction between the learner and native speakers. Kyle mentioned that he thought FLA was "more of a negative" and Claire added that a certain level of anxiety could make the learner "end up like a train wreck and just cry". These sorts of responses align with the claims made by Horwitz et al (1986) regarding students' negative emotional responses to language learning.

5.4. Classroom-Related Anxiety

The study found that FLA was aroused by a number of factors, including several classroom-related situations and tasks. The speed of the class proved to arouse anxiety for two of the participants. This was apparent by the use of terms such as "too fast" and "really fast" which were matched with terms like "confusing" and "overwhelming". Kyle felt that the teacher spoke too quickly, and as a result often felt confused and overwhelmed. Kyle also commented that he felt pressured by the teacher to keep up with the speed of the class, and that contributed to his anxiety. These types of feelings were also found in a study by Von Wörde (2003). Many

participants complained about the "speed" of their teacher, commenting that their teacher spoke too quickly. The participants demonstrated that this caused them to feel anxious because they could not comprehend what was being said. In her study, many of the participants felt that the speed caused an inability to keep up and complained that the amount of material to be covered in a single semester was excessive. The current study, also builds on the idea that speed and the amount of content to be learned can contribute to FLA. Claire shared a similar attitude to Kyle, commenting that the teacher went through the content too quickly. Both Kyle and Claire also made several complaints about the amount of content to be learned across the semester. It was clear that juggling the requirements for their Chinese language class with other priorities, had the ability to contribute to the participants' anxiety. These responses raise the question of how FLA might interact with other factors outside the language classroom (e.g. other university classes, work, hobbies). This suggests it might be significant to investigate FLA outside the language classroom to see how these factors affect FLA in language students.

One skill-specific factor that seemed to provoke anxiety in the participants was speaking Chinese. In the present study, it appeared that the thought of communicating with native speakers could make the participants feel worried. Claire and Charlie's responses on the FLCAS reflected that they would both be nervous talking with native speakers. This reflects what Horwitz et al (1986) described as 'communication apprehension'. Research has consistently shown that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking skill for language students (Zhang & Zhong, 2012). Other elements of 'speaking' that seemed to stimulate anxiety were 'being put on the spot' and answering questions. Both Kyle and Claire expressed that such situations made them feel worried, nervous and confused. Similarly, in the study by Von Wörde (2003), some participants felt that being called on in class was anxiety-provoking. Aydin (2008) also reported that anxiety was aroused by communication apprehension with native

speakers, teachers, teachers' questions and peers. The current study also found anxiety to be aroused by communication apprehension with native speakers, teachers and teachers' questions, but not so much with peers. However, this was certainly not the case for Charlie who focused on the experience of answering questions correctly (rather than incorrectly) and the effect it had on his motivation.

An interesting relationship between preparation and anxiety emerged from this study. Preparation appeared to play a role in invoking anxiety for Kyle and Claire, however not for Charlie. For Kyle, it was a lack of preparation that was anxiety-provoking. There are several studies that have found unpreparedness for class to cause anxiety (Aydin, 2008). In an earlier study, Young (1990) found that learners had consistently higher levels of anxiety in response to three general areas, among these were 'preparedness'. A large majority of the participants in their study felt more relaxed when they came to class prepared by studying the night before.

In Mejia (2014), a lack of preparation was among several stressors that made students feel nervous and anxious. Marwan (2007) also found that a lack of preparation was a major cause of anxiety for lower intermediate and upper intermediate students. The findings from the current study also support the idea that a lack of preparedness can cause anxiety. However, for Claire, it was the *process of preparing* that made her feel both overwhelmed and anxious. The process of preparing and possible links to FLA are not explicitly outlined in the literature. It is possible that research has overlooked this area because it has focused on a lack of preparation. It is also possible that studies that have used the FLCAS have focused more on a lack of preparation because of certain items related to this area, for example Item 9 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class', Item 16 'even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it' and Item 33 'I get nervous when the

language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance'. Therefore, this raises the question of how the process of preparing can interact with FLA.

Another interesting theme was the role that friends played in language learning. The participants expressed both positive and negative aspects of having friends in their language class. The negative aspects of having friends included getting distracted by each other and not paying attention to the teacher as a result of socialising generally. These negative aspects had the potential to increase anxiety, but was more likely to be an isolated phenomenon that occurred at particular moments in class. Having friends in the language classroom seemed to have a more pervasive effect that could lower anxiety. The participants expressed that having friends in class meant supporting one another and sharing common feelings. This concept was also supported in earlier study (Samimy & Rardin, 1994) on community language learning (CLL). The study found that the CLL experience (a learner-centred approach to language learning), helped lessen FLA in the majority of students as a result of group support and unity. The study also found the CLL experience to enhance student motivation and change in attitude toward the language being learned (Samimy & Rardin, 1994). Similarly, another study by Von Wörde (2003), found a sense of community, communality and connectedness to be a common theme. Those students who had no friends in class felt both alone and more self-conscious. Some students in their study mentioned that structured group work and study groups reduced their anxiety (Von Wörde, 2003). The idea that peers could help reduce anxiety was also supported in Subekti (2018) where both teachers and students commented that working in groups with peers made the learners feel less anxious. In the present study, the role of friendship was clearly a major factor in the overall classroom atmosphere. Claire appeared to enjoy the sense of communality and community because everyone could relate to each other in the language class. The relationships she created and the ability to have friends in class also

"relieved" her anxiety. Kyle also commented that creating new friendships in his Chinese class was the "highlight" of his semester.

6. Chapter Six – Conclusion

6.1. Overview

This chapter will conclude the present study. Firstly, Section 6.2 will summarize the key findings in direct response to the research questions. Then, in Section 6.3, there is a discussion of the implications for pedagogy. Section 6.4 then presents the limitations of the study along with some recommendations for future research directions.

6.2. Key Findings and New Insights

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1) In what ways are the participants (Australian language students learning Mandarin) aware of foreign language anxiety and how it might affect their learning?

2) How and to what extent, do the participants experience FLA?

Given the important role of FLA and its known effects on language learning, it was expected that the participants may have been aware of FLA. In direct response to research question one, the results indicated an apparent paradox with respect to the participants' awareness of FLA. The participants were not aware of FLA as a concept as demonstrated by their interview responses. However, on another level they appeared to be aware of the existence of FLA and the ways in which it can affect language learning. This was as a result of their own experiences and feelings of uneasiness during certain language learning situations and tasks. This is significant because although the participants had clearly never been explicitly informed about FLA as a discrete term, they were able to articulate the positive and negative effects that it can

have on language learning. Therefore, this suggests that the participants had an intuitive conceptualization of FLA, despite never being explicitly informed about the term.

It is valuable for language learners to be aware of FLA as a concept because they can understand why they might experience feelings of nervousness, worry, and apprehension during their language class. They can also understand what might be causing their fear of communicating, fear of negative evaluation and fear of tests when it comes to language learning. Such an understanding is important so that students are not left in the dark about the types of experiences they may be encountering. Developing language students' knowledge of the concept of FLA means that they can understand how it works. FLA can then be normalized and as a result, language students may feel more comfortable to know that FLA affects many language students across many language learning contexts. Such knowledge may encourage language students to try out different strategies to help work with FLA, or reduce it where possible.

In direct response to research question two, the results from the FLCAS showed that each of the participants were affected by FLA at different levels. Two of the participants (Kyle and Claire) were characterized as having medium-level anxiety, while one of the participants (Charlie) was characterized as having low-level anxiety. The analysis of the interviews revealed that the participants experienced FLA in different ways and felt that FLA had a mostly negative effect on language learning. Several factors were described by the participants to have the capacity to make them feel anxious. These included keeping up, the speed of the class, answering questions and speaking with native speakers. Charlie, who was classified as having low-level anxiety, did not express similar concerns. In fact, Charlie made no comments about

many of these factors that were shared by the other participants. However, speaking Chinese with native Chinese speakers, seemed to be anxiety provoking for all of three of the participants. Given the possible opportunity to speak with a native speaker outside of the classroom, Charlie's responses indicated that speaking with a native speaker could make him feel nervous, however this would not stop him from doing so.

One particularly interesting theme that arose from this study was the role that preparation played in contributing to anxiety. A *lack of preparation* proved to cause anxiety for Kyle, who explained that not being prepared for his Chinese language class could make him feel nervous. A lack of preparation and its link with anxiety has been discussed in some studies. However, this study found that the *process of preparing* before class also made one of the participants (Claire) feel anxious. This finding is significant because studies have focused on a lack of preparation and its effect on FLA, as opposed to the actual task of preparing and how this can affect language students' FLA.

Another interesting factor that emerged was the role of friendship and its relationship with FLA. The participants demonstrated how having friends in class could either provoke or lessen their anxiety. Charlie and Claire both expressed similar opinions that if students spent too much time socializing with their friends, they could get distracted and this could potentially heighten anxiety. However, the presence of friends in class appeared to have a more pervasive effect that could lower anxiety as it could make the students feel more relaxed and comfortable during class time. For both Claire and Kyle, making new friends was one of their favourite aspects of the Chinese language class. The role of friendship and its relationship with FLA is a significant finding because previous studies have not focused explicitly on the way friendship interacts

with FLA in language learning contexts. The interview responses provided a kind of nuanced dynamic picture of the association between these factors and the experiences of anxiety for the participants. This is valuable as the responses on the FLCAS alone would not have done so.

Although the findings of this study do not represent the views and feelings of all Australian language learners of Chinese, they do give some insight into language learners awareness of FLA and their experiences of the issue. Some tentative recommendations for pedagogy and further research can thus be made on the basis of the findings.

6.3. Implications for Pedagogy

A large majority of research has demonstrated that FLA can have mostly negative effects on language learning. Considering that it is the learner who is at the centre of the language learning process, it is important that learners are aware of the factors that may hinder their achievement and performance in the TL. This highlights a need for greater awareness of FLA in language classrooms. Specifically, this 'awareness' should include awareness of FLA as a concept commonly associated with FLL, as opposed to just awareness as the capacity to discuss their feelings of anxiety. If students are aware of FLA as a phenomenon, and aware that it is a near-universal part of learning another language, this paves the way for it to be normalized. Language students can then have the opportunity to understand how their language learning is affected. As a result, students can then take steps towards understanding how to work with FLA. However, students who remain unaware of FLA as a factor that affects language learning may continue to suffer the consequences of FLA without understanding exactly how this anxiety is affecting them.

Language teachers should use their supportive and guiding role to increase awareness of FLA in the language classroom. For example, language teachers could start a class discussion about FLA to get students thinking and talking about the issue. Teachers could also introduce the concept of FLA and briefly explain to the students what it is, and how it can affect language learners/learning. They may also highlight some strategies and skills that students can try in order to cope with FLA. An increased awareness of FLA means a better understanding of the issue and this could be advantageous for both language students and teachers. If students are able to work with FLA, such knowledge could be helpful for minimizing FLA, which could also result in a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere. The ability to minimize FLA may improve language achievement, retention and learner motivation (Von Wörde, 2003). However, if teachers are to increase awareness of FLA, they need to be aware of the issue themselves. Therefore, knowledge of FLA should be spread among language teachers both before and during their training processes (Aydin, 2008).

Anxiety is a factor that cannot be eliminated from language learning contexts completely, but some strategies can help minimize FLA. In the present study, it was suggested that FLA could be reduced if the language teacher slowed down, both in relation to the speed that they were talking, and the speed to which they were going through the content. Therefore, language teachers should check in with their students to make sure that they are going at a pace where students are still able to follow. They should also make sure that students have understood before moving on to anything new. One participant suggested that anxiety could be reduced if there were changes made to the way the unit was structured in regards to homework, assessments and assignments. While individual language teachers may not be in a position to make changes to the requirements for a university Chinese language class and the amount of content covered each semester, it might be helpful for language teachers to offer more support

and guidance for students. For example, giving students clear guidelines about what preparation should be done before the next class. Since the *process of preparing* was found to be related to anxiety, it might be helpful if language teachers advise students on how to approach preparation in a manageable way. Considering the participants demonstrated that meeting and making new friends was an enjoyable part of their Chinese class that could help lessen anxiety, language teachers might wish to encourage students to work in small groups both inside and outside of class to create a more relaxed atmosphere.

6.4. Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of this study was the small number of participants. The recruitment of more participants was welcomed. However, it was three participants that agreed to be involved in the study. Given that this was a small-scale study with a short timeframe, this sample size was sufficient in order to gain an in-depth understanding into the participants' views and perspectives of FLA. However, because of the small sample size in this study, the results cannot be generalized to the whole population of Australian language learners of Chinese, although the findings do suggest new themes that can be investigated further. Future studies should use larger sample of students in order to generate more data and a better representation of the population of language learners of Chinese in an Australian context. The data instruments used in this study could also be considered a limitation. This study used background questionnaires, the FLCAS, and semi-structured interviews. However, future qualitative studies could also make use of journals and even class observation for data collection in order to gain additional insight into language learners' awareness and understanding of FLA. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of this study may be considered a limitation. Given the short time frame in which this research needed to be completed, a cross-sectional study was considered

appropriate. Future research on FLA should make use of more longitudinal comparative studies in order to investigate how FLA may change over time in language learners of Chinese in Australia.

This study has provided some insight into Australian language learners of Chinese and their awareness of FLA and how it might affect their language learning, how they experienced FLA, and to what extent they experienced it. However, many questions have arisen from this study. Most of these questions surround language learners' awareness of FLA. Are the majority of Australian language learners of Chinese aware, or unaware of FLA? Are they only aware of the effects of FLA as a result of their own experiences in the language classroom or have they been informed about the phenomenon? Although FLA has received a lot of attention in the fields of SLA and SLE, awareness of language learners' FLA continues to be an under-researched area. Future research should continue to investigate student awareness of FLA. More specifically it should investigate larger groups of language learners and their awareness of FLA. It is also of interest to investigate the role that friendship plays in FLA. Is it possible (as the present study suggests) that friendship can lessen FLA in language students? Future research may wish to investigate the role of friendship in language classrooms and FLA in order to gain a better understanding.

Finally, there is a lack of studies being replicated in different cultural contexts among learners of foreign languages other than English. Therefore, future researchers should investigate FLA in different cultural contexts. In particular, it is notable that in contexts such as Australia, very few studies have been conducted focusing on learners of languages other than English. Foreign language learning in the Australian context is important, especially in regards to Chinese

language learning, as intercultural communication plays a major role in Australia's relationship

with other countries.

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APPENDICES

1. APPENDIX 1: Background Questionnaire

Please complete the following questions:

1) Name:

2) What is your age?

3) What languages (other than English) do you speak and/or understand?

4) What is your university major?

5) How long have you been learning Chinese? (e.g. 3 months)

6) In what contexts have you studied Chinese now and in the past? (e.g. private lessons, high school classes, university classes, etc.)

2. APPENDIX 2: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 70*(2), 125-132.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

17. I often feel like not going to my language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

                                        nor disagree

21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

                                        nor disagree

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

                                        nor disagree

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

                                        nor disagree

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

                                        nor disagree

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

                                        nor disagree

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

nor disagree

3. APPENDIX 3: Interview Questions

1. Prior to being involved in this study, had you ever heard about the concept of Foreign Language Anxiety?

2. How do you think foreign language anxiety might affect language learning in either positive or negative ways?

3. Do you think foreign language anxiety affects you? If so, in what ways?

4. How do you usually feel before attending your Chinese class?

5. Does your feeling change throughout the course of the class, or does it usually remain quite stable?

6. Can you tell me about some things you enjoy about your Chinese language classes, and why you enjoy them?

7. Could you tell me about any aspects of your Chinese language classes that you dislike, or do not enjoy?

8. How would you describe your Chinese ability?

9. Do you feel you are progressing in line with your expectations?

10. Many factors can contribute to creating a particular classroom atmosphere. Could you tell me about the typical atmosphere in your Chinese Classes? What are the factors that create this classroom atmosphere, and how does it affect the way you feel during the class?

11. In what ways do you think your teacher (or teachers in general) could improve the classes in order to help reduce anxiety?

4. APPENDIX 4: Demographic Information

Table 3.1: Demographic Information of Participants

	Pseudonym	Age	University Major	Languages other than English	Time spent learning Chinese	Contexts learning Chinese
1	KYLE	19	Chinese	None	3 months	Macquarie University
2	CHARLIE	20	Archaeology	None	1 year and 4 months	Macquarie University High School
3	CLAIRE	19	Marketing and Statistics	None	1 year and 4 months	Macquarie University External Mandarin School

5. APPENDIX 5: Ethics Approval

RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201800250)(Con/Met)

FHS Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au>

Wed, May 16, 2018 10:28 AM

To: Peter Roger <peter.roger@mq.edu.au>

Cc: Ms April Law <April.law@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr Roger,

Re: "Foreign Language Anxiety: A study of Australian language students of Chinese" (5201800250)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 16th May 2018. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Peter Roger

Ms April Law

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

 2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 16th May 2019

Progress Report 2 Due: 16th May 2020

Progress Report 3 Due: 16th May 2021

Progress Report 4 Due: 16th May 2022

Final Report Due: 16th May 2023

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/post-approval

https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources/research-ethics

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released

until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Naomi Sweller Chair

Faculty of Human Sciences   Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

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FHS Ethics Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics

C5C-17 Wallys Walk L3 Macquarie University, NSW 2109, Australia

T: +61 2 9850 4197

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/

6. APPENDIX 6: First and Second Cycle Codes

First Cycle Codes
1. FLA
2. Speed
3. Teacher
4. Anxiety
5. Motivation
6. Keeping up
7. Preparation
8. Class
9. Friends
10. Learning Chinese
11. Involvement
12. Confidence
13. Asking questions
14. Tests
15. Being right
16. Speaking Chinese
17. Enrolling
18. Being put on the spot
19. Getting to class
20. Workload
21. Language ability
22. Feelings
23. Beliefs
24. Language learning
25. Changing of social group

Second Cycle Codes

1 FLA	
4 Anxiety	
5 Motivation	**CODE 1**
12 Confidence	**Individual Learner Differences**
22 Feelings	
23 Beliefs	

9 Friends	**CODE 2**
25 Changing of social group	**Friendship**

10 Learning Chinese	
16 Speaking Chinese	**CODE 3**
21 Language ability	**Learning Chinese**
24 Language learning	
14 Tests	

8 Class	
18 Being put on the spot	
19 Getting to class	**CODE 4**
3 Teacher	**Chinese Language Class**
7 Preparation	
17 Enrolling	

2 Speed	**CODE 5**
6 Keeping up	**Keeping Up**
20 Workload	

11 Involvement	**CODE 6**
13 Asking questions	**Class Involvement**
15 Being right	

7. Appendix 7: Participant Information and Consent Form

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

Department of Linguistics

Faculty of Human Science

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109

Phone: (02) 9850 9650

Email: peter.roger@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr Peter Roger

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Foreign Language Anxiety: A study of Australian language students of Chinese

You are invited to participate in a study of foreign language anxiety (FLA). The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of Australian language students learning Chinese in relation to foreign language anxiety. It aims to investigate the extent to which participants experience FLA and how they understand FLA in relation to their own foreign language learning.

The study is being conducted by April Law (email: april.law@students.mq.edu.au) as a student research project to meet the requirements of a Master of Research (MRes) degree under the supervision of Dr Peter Roger of the Department of Linguistics (tel: (02) 9850 9650, email: peter.roger@mq.edu.au). If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete the following:

A background questionnaire: This will consist of short questions that will ask you your name, age, university major, languages that you speak and/or understand, and for how long (and in what ways) you have been learning Chinese. This will take no more than 5 minutes to complete.

The foreign language anxiety scale (FLCAS): The FLCAS is a self-assessment of anxiety experienced in different language-learning situations. It consists of 33 statements about communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The statements are responded to by using a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, etc). This will take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

A semi-structured interview: The 30-minute semi-structured interview will be conducted in a quiet area on-campus at Macquarie University. You will be asked a series of questions about your experiences in your Chinese language class. The discussion will be audio-recorded to obtain an accurate record of what was said so that it can be later transcribed.

Participants in the study will be offered a gift card to the value of $20 in return for the time spent participating in this study.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Dr Peter Roger and April Law will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by contacting April Law via email (april.law@students.mq.edu.au).

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, *(participant's name)* have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:___

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: Date:__

Investigator's Name:

(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: Date:__

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.