The Relationship between Shyness, Willingness to Communicate, and Foreign Language Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a psychological phenomenon which may be a barrier to learning a foreign language. It is characterized by uncomfortable feelings of nervousness and tension while using a foreign language in every aspect (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) or attending the foreign language classroom. Traits such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, lack of self-esteem, shyness, and a low level of willingness to communicate have been identified as potential causes of foreign language anxiety. The main objective of this thesis was to examine the level of shyness, willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety among future teachers and to find if there is a relationship between foreign language anxiety and two traits: the level of shyness and willingness to communicate. The sample included 71 participants. The participants were first, third, fourth, and fifth-year students enrolled in one of the study programmes at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb: the Primary Teacher Education with English or German Language (study programme 835) and the Primary Teacher Education (study programme 903). The participants were asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire which was divided into four parts: general information, *the McCroskey Shyness Scale, the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale, and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*. The first part was used to collect general information about the participants. The second part measured their level of shyness, the third part measured the level of willingness to communicate and the last part measured their level of foreign language anxiety. For calculating the correlation between the variables, Spearman's rho test was used. The results indicate that there is no relationship between shyness and willingness to communicate nor foreign language anxiety and shyness, but there is a correlation between foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate.

Key words: foreign language anxiety, shyness, willingness to communicate

SAŽETAK

Strah od stranoga jezika psihološki je fenomen koji može ometati učenje stranoga jezika. Karakterizira ga neugodan osjećaj nervoze i napetosti prilikom korištenja svake od četiriju jezičnih djelatnosti (govorenje, slušanje, čitanje i pisanje) te prilikom prisustvovanja na satima stranoga jezika. Uzroci straha od stranoga jezika su osobine poput straha od komunikacije, straha od negativne evaluacije, manjak samopoštovanja te niska spremnost na komunikaciju. Glavni cilj ovoga rada bio je istražiti sramežljivost, spremnost na komunikaciju i strah od stranoga jezika među budućim učiteljima i učiteljicama te otkriti postoji li veza između i straha od stranoga jezika i sramežljivosti te postoji li veza između straha od stranoga jezika i spremnosti na komunikaciju. Uzorak se sastojao od 71 ispitanika. Ispitanici su studenti prve, treće i četvrte godine Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu koji pohađaju jedan od sljedećih programa: Učiteljski studij s engleskim/njemačkim jezikom (program 835) i Učiteljski studij (program 903). Sudionicima je poslan online upitnik koji je bio anoniman te se sastojao od četiri dijela: opće informacije, *the McCroskey Shyness Scale*, *the Willingness to Communicate* (WTC) *Scale* i *the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*. Prvim su dijelom prikupljene opće informacije o ispitanicima. Drugim su dijelom prikupljeni podatci o sramežljivosti ispitanika, trećim o njihovoj spremnosti na komunikaciju, a posljednjim dijelom upitnika prikupljeni su podatci o razini straha od stranoga jezika. Kako bismo izračunali korelacije među varijablama koristili smo Spearman's rho test. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da ne postoji korelacija između sramežljivosti i spremnosti na komunikaciju niti sramežljivosti i straha od stranoga jezika ali postoji korelacija između spremnosti na komunikaciju i straha od stranoga jezika.

Ključne riječi: strah od stranoga jezika, sramežljivost, spremnost na komunikaciju

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the course of their education, many students have had some negative experiences which may be barriers to learning a foreign language. Some students overcome the barriers and, despite difficulties, they continue to learn and use their second language. Nevertheless, some students cannot overcome the barriers and they are likely to develop foreign language anxiety (FLA). FLA is characterized by uncomfortable feelings such as nervousness, tension, apprehension etc. while listening, writing, reading, or/and speaking in a foreign language. Horwitz et al. (1986) described character traits which may cause FLA such as communication apprehension (which is a type of shyness), test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, and this thesis will focus on shyness.

Shyness is one of the character traits which is believed to be among the causes of foreign language anxiety due to the fact that shyness occurs in communication situations and people use foreign languages in order to communicate. A type of shyness which occurs in interaction with other people has been named *fearful shyness* by Buss (1997 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). A shy person is usually fearful, tends to talk less and experiences uncomfortable feelings in communication or unknown situations (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982 as cited in McCroskey et al., 1985, p. 5).

Some people tend to initiate communication in various situations. A probability that someone would initiate communication in different social situations is called willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre, 2007), and this thesis will focus on WTC in the second language. One's willingness to communicate in L2 depends on a combination of variables such as personality, L2 self-confidence, interpersonal communication etc. (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

The first aim of this thesis was to examine the relationship between shyness and foreign language anxiety, and the second one was to examine the relationship between willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. The second chapter describes some of the causes of FLA, FLA and the four language skills, gives an insight into studies on foreign language anxiety in Croatia, and explains how to overcome foreign language anxiety. The third chapter includes general facts about one of the causes of FLA – shyness, and the following chapter (chapter 4) focuses on willingness to communicate in the second language. The fifth and sixth chapters describe the research – aims, hypotheses, participants, instruments, procedure, results, and the discussion of the results. The last chapter of the thesis (chapter 7) summarises the most important research findings.

2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a psychological phenomenon which has been researched extensively since 1980s (Trang, 2011). There has been a great number of studies investigating this topic, though it could not be referred to as a new topic. Almost all students have felt anxiety in a learning context at some point during their education. "Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure" (American Psychological Association, Anxiety, n.d., para. 1). One type of anxiety which is experienced by students learning a foreign language is foreign language anxiety. Therefore, foreign language teachers need to be aware that it is one of the most common language learning barriers, which must be researched and understood so that it could be eliminated from the language learning process, or at least reduced. In order to understand the phenomenon, it is important to understand different approaches to and explanations of foreign language anxiety.

Foreign language anxiety "can be seen as a manifestation of different types of anxiety, such as communication apprehension, test anxiety or apprehensiveness as a personality trait" (Mihaljević Djigunović & Legac, 2009, p. 328). Those students who are apprehensive may feel tension or fear while listening, speaking, or learning a foreign language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović & Legac, 2009). Communication apprehension occurs when a person cannot speak in front of a larger group of people, listen, or learn a spoken message due to feelings of tension (Horwitz et al., 1986). Some students have test anxiety because they have a fear of failure and they want to get a perfect score on a test. Therefore, they may find that "anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). In addition, fear of negative evaluation can appear in any situation in which a person is evaluated (e.g., a presentation, speaking in front of others, during interview etc.) (Horwitz et al., 1986). Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 125) identified foreign language anxiety "as a conceptually distinct variable in foreign language learning", that is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).

According to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), there are four language anxiety components: cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological. The cognitive component refers to a feeling of inability to perform something well in a social context due to lack of self-esteem (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). "The emotional component implies feelings of unease,

discomfort and tension, whereas the behavioural component includes clumsiness, restraint and disturbances in gesture and speech" (Puškar, 2013, p. 81). Finally, physiological component includes high-blood pressure, sweating etc. (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002; Puškar, 2013). All of the components may occur while using the four basic language skills in a classroom. The following chapters describe language anxiety and each language skill.

2.1 Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

In the foreign language classroom, students may have negative experiences, which causes the development of foreign language anxiety (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1989). According to this view, students who have better developed language skills, have fewer negative experiences and thus their foreign language anxiety may gradually disappear (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1989; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). The foreign language classroom requires speaking in a foreign language most of the time. It may be an issue for some of the students because of their character traits (such as lack of self-esteem and willingness to take risks) (Oxford, 1990 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

Horwitz (1983) (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) has created the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Although it may be used to test anxiety in general, the scale mainly refers to speaking anxiety in the foreign language classroom (e.g. *I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class*; *I don't worry about making mistakes in language class*; *I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class* etc.). Therefore, researchers usually modify the scale if they want to conduct research about speaking anxiety. For instance, Luo (2014) took eight items from the FLCAS in order to measure language speaking anxiety among the participants who attended Chinese language courses. Her results "indicate that speaking Chinese is more anxiety-provoking than learning Chinese in general" (Luo, 2014, p. 107). Luo (2014) claims that the cause of speaking anxiety among the students is their lack of exposure to the Chinese language. This was also confirmed by Desrochers and Gardner (1981 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) who detected reduced anxiety after the students' trip to France where they had an opportunity to speak to native speakers. Horwitz et al. (1986) claimed that speaking and listening are the greatest challenges for foreign language learners. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on foreign language listening anxiety.

2.2 Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

The most important aim of foreign language classrooms is enabling students to communicate in a foreign language. Interaction includes receiving and responding to spoken language, and it is one of the main competencies according to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). Hamouda (2013, as cited in Adnan et al., 2019, p. 202) defined listening comprehension as "the understanding of what the listener has heard and their ability to re-explain the text with the correct meaning". However, some students may have issues with listening comprehension. Roberts (1986, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) concluded that mild nervousness and excitement may have a positive impact on listening comprehension, whereas too much or too little nervousness may lower the listening quality. Wheeless (1975 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002, p. 53) defined listening anxiety as "fear of misinterpreting, inadequately processing, and/or not being able to adjust psychologically to messages produced by others." Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 126) explained that students who have listening anxiety have "difficulties discriminating the sounds and structures of a target language message."

Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) found that majority of students from Croatia have listening anxiety due to the fact that they have problems understanding a person who is speaking English. It was also found that the students who have a negative self-concept, have higher listening anxiety. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) highlights the importance of teachers. Teachers can discuss listening anxiety with their students, create a positive atmosphere in their classrooms, and give feedback in order to reduce listening anxiety among students. Furthermore, it is important to give students pre-listening tasks so as to introduce a topic. Therefore, students would have less problems with listening comprehension (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

Annisa et al. (2020, p. 515) investigated the relationship between students' listening anxiety and listening comprehension at Universitas Negeri Padang, and they found out that listening comprehension and listening anxiety do "not necessarily affect each other". On the other hand, Elkhafaifi (2005, as cited in Annisa et al., 2020) found that students with higher listening anxiety have more listening comprehension issues than those students who have lower listening anxiety. Zhai (2015, p. 42) came to a similar conclusion - "the stronger anxiety the students experience, the worse listening achievements they make." Adnan et al. (2019) also researched the relationship between listening comprehension and listening anxiety. They found

"that high anxiety blocks the processing of listening anxiety", and that higher anxiety results in lower listening comprehension (Adnan et al., 2019, p. 204). It has also been found that listening anxiety is closely related to the level of education, i.e. a higher level of cognitive abilities decreases listening anxiety (Wheeless et al., 1997 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

Zhai (2015) explained some sources of listening anxiety. Firstly, the students, who are aware that they have not developed listening skills, lack confidence. Secondly, some students are not able to use listening strategies properly. The third source is related to the characteristics of listening comprehension. Zhai (2015, p. 43) described listening comprehension as "a complex process, which does not exist in space, but only stays in a short time", and it is also important to emphasize that, in the classroom, students cannot control an audio recording (e.g. slow it down or rewind it) or a speaker. Zhai (2015) explains that students are thinking about parts which they do not understand and therefore they miss other content. Not being able to use listening strategies properly is related to the characteristics of listening materials which "include speed, pronunciation, acoustic conditions, length of listening materials, the level of vocabulary and the topic of the materials" (Yuan, 2006, as cited in Zhai, 2015). Students tend to be demotivated if an audio recording is too fast or too long. In addition, anxiety occurs if an audio recording is unclear, or they are listening to a speaker who uses an accent which they do not hear often (Zhai, 2015). Finally, some students have a fear of negative evaluation and those students who have listening anxiety may feel inferior to other students while communicating in a foreign language (Zhai, 2015).

Pan (2016) suggested methods of reducing listening anxiety in EFL classrooms. Teachers should "overcome listeners' psychological barrier" (Pan, 2016, p. 14) by increasing students' motivation and self-confidence. They should be aware that listening anxiety is "a common psychological phenomenon, not just one individual behaviour" (Pan, 2016, p. 14). Furthermore, it is important for teachers not to correct every mistake. Secondly, teachers must carefully choose a listening material. They should also expose students to colloquial English and use slower audio recordings for the beginners (Pan, 2016). Pan (2016) highlights that active atmosphere in a classroom also has an impact on reducing listening anxiety. Teachers can create it by using pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities such as: a discussion, role playing, debate etc. Finally, according to Pan (2016, p. 15), some researchers have found that using listening strategies can improve comprehension. Students should use listening strategies such as: predicting a topic, spotting the main idea or the signal word, taking notes etc. (Pan, 2016).

2.3 Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

There is a bulk of research which focuses on reading anxiety in a mother tongue. Nevertheless, reading anxiety also occurs in the process of second language acquisition and therefore it should be researched more (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Before 1999, most research related to language anxiety focused on listening and speaking anxiety. Saito et al. (1999) claim that Horwitz's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale also focused only on listening and speaking anxiety since 20 out of 33 questions are related to these two language skills (Saito et al., 1999). Reading may not be considered to evoke high anxiety because "it is done privately with unlimited opportunity for reflection and reconsideration" (Saito et al., 1999, p. 202), and a reader does not always have to communicate directly with a teacher or someone else who may be more competent than her or him. However, sometimes, readers have to read before others and it may cause them to feel anxious. Reading anxiety may therefore be defined as an unpleasant feeling which may occur while reading and is caused by a fear of disapproval from others (Zbornik, 2001, as cited in Muhlis, 2017).

Saito et al. (1999) identified "unfamiliar scripts and writing systems and unfamiliar cultural material" as causes of reading anxiety (Saito et al., 1999, p. 203). For instance, in the English language, sounds and symbols are not equivalent, which can increase students' feeling of incompetence. Secondly, lack of cultural competence may affect learners' ability to construct a meaningful message (Saito et al., 1999). Berg (1993 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) conducted research in which she examined reading anxiety among advanced students and concluded that reading anxiety occurs among these students due to the fact that some students lack cultural competence. Saito et al. (1999) conducted research among students whose mother tongue was English and they focused on reading anxiety in Russian, Japanese, and French, the languages in which the writing systems differ from each other. In order to measure reading anxiety among students, Saito et al. (1999) created the *Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale*. They have found that foreign language reading anxiety is discernibly different from foreign language anxiety. Secondly, they have found that the level of reading anxiety depends on the target language. The students who read in Japanese had the highest level of reading anxiety and the students who read in Russian did not show significant anxiety (Saito et al., 1999). They explained that the students were not familiar with Japanese "non-Roman writing system as well as the foreign cultural content" (Saito et al., 1999, p. 212). In contrast, Zhao et al. (2009), who examined reading anxiety among English-speaking students who learned

Chinese, found a strong correlation between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language anxiety. In addition, they found that "students who had not been to China had a significantly higher level of FL reading anxiety than those who had been to China to study Chinese" (Zhao et al., 2009, p. 771). Zhao et al. (2009) also found that one of the sources of reading anxiety were unfamiliar topics. Thus, they concluded that teachers can reduce sources of reading anxiety among their students by explaining the topic before reading activities. Furthermore, students tend to worry about comprehension and therefore translate every word in a text instead of analysing parts of the text in order to get the main idea (Zhao et al., 2009). The last source of reading anxiety which Zhao et al. (2009) highlighted is unfamiliar script. The Chinese language writing system is complex and students may find it discouraging (Zhao et al., 2009).

Ahmad et al. (2013, pp. 91-92) described causes of foreign language anxiety and categorised them as: "Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Caused by Personal Factors" and "Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Caused by Text Features". "Worry about Reading Effects" (Ahmad et al., 2013, p. 91) is a personal factor which is related to the feeling of nervousness while reading in front of teacher and other students. Frequently, the student who reads out loud does not know the main idea of a text because he or she focuses on reading something well (Ahmad et al., 2013). The second personal factor is called "Afraid of Making Errors" (Ahmad et al., 2013, p. 91). Students, who do not have self-confidence, have a fear of making errors and therefore hesitate to read in front of class. According to Ahmad et al. (2013), text features which cause foreign language reading anxiety are: unfamiliar culture, unfamiliar topic, and unknown vocabulary. Students may have anxiety due to unfamiliar words which disable them from understanding some ideas. In order to avoid that, teachers can use pre-teaching vocabulary strategy. Muhlis (2017) investigated 32 high school students from Indonesia who were learning English. She found out that "half of the students experience reading anxiety" (Muhlis, 2017, p. 41) because of unknown vocabulary, which was identified as the main source of reading anxiety among students (Muhlis, 2017). Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) concluded that development of foreign language reading anxiety does not depend only on the teacher, but also on learner's language learning motivation, reading proficiency in the mother tongue, and foreign language proficiency level. Research conducted in Croatia confirmed that motivation, willingness to take risks, self-concept, the ability to learn the English language, and foreign language anxiety affect foreign language reading anxiety (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). If a learner lacks motivation, he or she has a higher level of reading anxiety.

Also, if a student has a negative self-concept, he or she will have a higher level of anxiety. Finally, a learner with a higher level of reading anxiety may be afraid of negative evaluation and therefore he or she will not take risks in a foreign language classroom (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Therefore, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) proposed that teachers should use strategies similar to those which reduce listening anxiety, i.e., they should prepare pre-reading activities in order to introduce a topic, choose texts which are appropriate for learner's level and they should not ask students to read an unknown text out loud.

2.4 Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

Since writing is often required in foreign language classrooms, it may cause writing anxiety among students. Second or foreign language writing anxiety is "a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing" (Hassan, 2001 as cited in Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). Some students may feel anxious because they have a fear of negative evaluation and therefore avoid writing activities by truanting from lessons (Daly & Miller, 1975). In order to identify students with writing apprehension, Daly and Miller (1975) have created the "Second language writing apprehension test". It is a "reliable and valid instrument for the measurement of writing apprehension" (Daly & Miller, 1975, p. 248) which consists of twenty-six statements about writing.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2015) identified issues with English structure as some of the causes of writing apprehension among students. They reported problems such as: incompetence to connect parts of text logically, unimproved grammar skills, and poor vocabulary (Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015). In addition, some students have writing apprehension due to their "negative attitude toward writing" (Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015, p. 539), and they claim that it is easier to express their ideas in their mother tongue than in English. Also, students reported that they have "a fear of negative evaluation" (Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015, p. 540), while some reported that they lack experience of writing in English. They construct ideas in their mother tongue and use Google translation to write in English (Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015).

Cheng (2002) has identified the following factors as causes of foreign language writing anxiety: lack of self-confidence, negative attitudes toward writing, and undeveloped writing skills. According to Cheng (2002, p. 652), teachers play an important role in reducing writing

anxiety among students, and they should help students to develop writing skills and to "learn to face difficulties, or even failures, without losing self-confidence". Cheng (2002) proposes that teachers should create positive attitudes towards writing by giving writing tasks which do not have to be evaluated.

Kostić-Bobanović (2016) conducted a longitudinal study whose aim was to investigate whether the level of writing apprehension may be affected by learner's gender and educational level. Students, whose mother tongue is Croatian, took one questionnaire when they enrolled the university, and the second one two years later. Even though previous research (Daly & Miller, 1975 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) proved that female learners have a lower level of writing anxiety, Kostić-Bobanović (2016) found no relationship between learner's gender and writing apprehension. However, the students had a lower level of writing anxiety in their third year of studies, which may have been because they had been taught some writing strategies since their enrolment (Kostić-Bobanović, 2016).

In contrast to some proposals, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) claims that giving extra writing tasks may have a negative effect on students who have writing apprehension. Instead, teachers should introduce writing strategies and give feedback which contains a brief description of strengths and weaknesses of the student's text (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Teacher's feedback is important because students may use it to write notes about their mistakes in order not to make them again. In addition, students may make a plan and brainstorm before writing in order to organize their thoughts well (Cobourne & Shellenbarger, 2019).

2.5 Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety in Croatia

The primary aim of the studies on foreign language anxiety in Croatia has been to identify sources of foreign language anxiety among students who are learning English as a foreign language (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). In her study, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) interviewed 392 students from Zagreb, and some of the main sources of anxiety she identified were negative self-concept, characteristics of the English language, a demanding teacher, speaking in front of other people, mistakes which may occur while using the language, comprehension problems, and evaluation. As mentioned, one of the aspects investigated by Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) was a connection between self-concept and foreign language anxiety. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology (https://www.apa.org/), self-concept

is "one's description and evaluation of oneself, including psychological and physical characteristics, qualities, skills, roles and so forth." The research has shown that those students who perceive themselves as good learners of English, have a lower level of anxiety. Based on research results, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) proposes that teachers need to help students improve their self-concept. In order to increase self-confidence among students, teachers should enable self-evaluation in their classrooms so that students can be aware of their progress. Furthermore, it is important that teachers find and highlight both positive and negative aspects of student's work in order to avoid over-criticism (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

According to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), willingness to cooperate, motivation, and willingness to take risks are further characteristics which can improve learning a foreign language. Willingness to cooperate is a learner's tendency to work in pairs or groups and to communicate with teacher and other students, and willingness to take risks is a learner's tendency to form complex ideas or sentences even though some mistakes may occur (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) found that learners who have a high level of anxiety are not motivated and they do not take risks in foreign language classrooms. She concluded that teachers should not force students to cooperate and take risks. Instead, if they want to reduce their students' anxiety, teachers should create a safe and positive atmosphere in their classrooms (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) also wanted to ascertain if age was related to FL anxiety. Research involving teenagers showed that the majority of teenagers were shy, lacked self-confidence and they felt anxiety during oral and writing exams (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). The research found that some students reported comprehension issues, especially when the teacher spoke too fast, and it was confirmed that these issues increased with age (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). In the research, one teenager reported that he felt anxiety because, in order to speak English well, he had to learn a great number of grammar rules and words. Vocabulary was found to be an issue for more advanced learners of English as a foreign language. On the other hand, another study showed that younger learners had positive self-concept and a lower level of language anxiety (Mihaljević Djigunović, 1993 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Finally, age differences were also found with respect to pronunciation and writing as causes of foreign language anxiety. Pronunciation caused foreign language anxiety among younger students and adults while writing caused anxiety among younger learners (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

In addition to the previously mentioned factors, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) investigated the role of teachers. Demanding and strict teachers have been found to cause anxiety among students. Some students reported fear of using language in foreign language classrooms because when they make language mistakes, some teachers may get angry or nervous. Some students reported comprehension issues, especially if a teacher speaks too fast. They do not understand what their teacher is saying and they cannot participate in the learning process. Moreover, many students said they hesitate to express their ideas and thoughts in English in front of other students because they are afraid of being mocked (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). This also emphasizes the teachers' role in the classroom because, as mentioned earlier, if they manage to create a friendly and supportive classroom atmosphere peer pressure will no longer be an issue.

Listening, writing, and reading anxiety have also been investigated among Croatian students learning English as a foreign language, as described in the previous chapters.

2.6 Overcoming Foreign Language Anxiety

Although foreign language anxiety is seen as a barrier to learning and using a foreign language, teachers and students can use strategies and activities in order to reduce anxiety. One of the main aims of strategies and activities is to increase students' motivation and confidence. In addition to some that have already been mentioned, here are additional suggestions for helping students overcome FL anxiety. These suggestions stem from the work of Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009), who base their proposals on the investigation of the sources of FLA. Firstly, students should have control over project work because then they are not passive, and they use a foreign language in a meaningful context. Secondly, teachers should establish a supportive atmosphere in which students can ask questions and make mistakes without any consequences. Language mistakes do not have to be corrected at the moment of speaking or reading. Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) highlight that teachers should not use verbal praise too often because then students conclude that their expectations are not high. Instead, teachers can use gestures (e.g. nodding) in order to praise a student. Students' grades and scores should be their private feedback, i.e. teachers should not share them in front of everyone (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). In order not to perceive language mistakes as a source of embarrassment, students can write examples of language mistakes which occur and discuss them in terms of logical thinking, humour, originality etc. (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009, p. 42) suggested that students use portfolios in order "to evaluate their progress". Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggested writing a learning diary in which students can describe their feelings about a certain aspect of language learning. In that way, students can identify sources of their anxiety and learn strategies which can help them overcome anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 131) also suggested "relaxation exercises, advice on effective language learning strategies, behavioral contracting, and journal keeping." Foss and Reitzel (1988) introduced a therapy which reduces student's irrational beliefs related to foreign language anxiety. The therapy is based on discussing student's attitudes towards foreign language anxiety. "If these beliefs can be recognized, students can learn to interpret such situations in more realistic ways and thus may choose to approach rather than avoid situations demanding conversation" (Foss & Reitzel, 1988, p. 445). Students can also discuss issues among themselves and help each other. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) introduced an activity in which students write letters about their learning issues. After that, students discuss and reply to their peers who have anxiety. The aim of the activity is to activate students to discuss foreign language anxiety and to make sure that they are aware that they are not alone and that other students may have similar feelings towards learning a foreign language.

Many studies have confirmed the benefits of bilingualism. "Bilingualism can result in higher verbal and non-verbal intelligence" (Peal & Lambert, 1962 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović & Legac, 2009, p. 330). In the study conducted by Mihaljević Djigunović and Legac (2009), the authors expected that bilingual students would have lower level of foreign language anxiety and better comprehension skills. The results confirmed their hypothesis as monolingual Croatian learners of English as a foreign language did report a higher level of language anxiety than bilingual learners. Furthermore, bilingual learners had better results in listening comprehension (Mihaljević Djigunović & Legac, 2009). Mihaljević Djigunović and Legac (2009) concluded that

> bilingual learners, compared to monolinguals, are at advantage thanks to being exposed to more languages. Their extensive experience in using two languages in everyday life can be assumed to prevent or reduce FL anxiety and, perhaps, also contribute to the development of linguistic self-confidence. (p. 343)

As already mentioned, teachers have an important role in reducing foreign language anxiety. Nevertheless, learners can also reduce it by themselves. They should be aware that listening and reading comprehension tasks do not require understanding of all the words. Moreover, if they need to express something in a foreign language, they should explain it by

using words that they understand or describe it (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Frequently, students who have a higher level of foreign language anxiety, are not aware how much they have already achieved and how much they know. Foreign language learners should set language learning goals and write expectations and aims that they have already achieved in order to increase their self-confidence (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). After they have set their learning goals, with the help of their teachers, students need to find appropriate learning style and strategies.

Researchers have thus far distinguished several learning styles. The most popular model of learning styles, the VARK model, was created by Fleming and Mills (1992). "The acronym VARK stands for Visual, Aural, Read/write, and Kinesthetic sensory modalities that are used for learning information" (VARK Learn Limited, n.d.). Visual learners prefer drawings, flashcards, pictures, and everything that they can observe. In foreign language classroom, according to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), those students should take notes and have a script of an audio in order to understand the material better. "Aural learners are good listeners who normally learn best through verbal presentations like lectures and speeches" (Time4Learning, n. d.). They prefer listening comprehension tasks and learning out loud (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Learners who prefer reading and writing are similar to visual learners. As the name suggests, they prefer reading and writing. Everything that is written needs to be arranged well. While learning a language, they should use dictionaries, write down words and definitions, grammar rules etc. and read it (VARK Learn Limited, n.d.). Kinaesthetic learners, in order to activate their memory, need to be active and take notes while studying (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Helping their learners become aware of learning styles, identifying their preferred style and showing them how to make the most of it, the teacher can help their learners become more successful language learners and thus indirectly help them reduce and/or control their FL anxiety.

Learning strategies, which have been defined as "actions taken by second and foreign language learners to control and improve their own learning" (Oxford, 1990, as cited in Stoynoff, 1993), also play an important role in foreign language learning. Learning strategies which can reduce foreign language anxiety will be mentioned in the following text (Oxford, 1990 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Memorizing strategies are used to make logical connection between words and memorize them, to revise a material which students have learnt etc. Cognitive strategies enable students' deeper understanding of the material. Students can translate, use background knowledge, analyse the material etc. "Compensation strategies refer

to the learner finding synonyms from the context of the reading and relying on non-verbal communication, such as gestures, to communicate meaning when the exact meaning of a statement is not understood" (Oxford, 1990, as cited in Shakarami et al., 2017). Some students prefer to learn and discuss the material with other students or their teacher. Those students use social strategies. Finally, affective strategies refer to using meditation, humour, listening to music etc. in order to increase learner's motivation and self-confidence. Oxford (1990, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) has created a questionnaire which can help students to identify learning strategies which they usually use and to learn about other strategies which they can apply in the future in order to increase their proficiency and lower the level of foreign language anxiety.

In addition to reducing foreign language anxiety among students, teachers should be aware of aspects contributing to foreign language anxiety. Shyness, a personality trait which may cause foreign language anxiety, will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. SHYNESS

A great number of studies have focused on shyness as a source of communication apprehension (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). McCroskey and Richmond (1982 as cited in McCroskey et al., 1985, p. 5) defined shyness as "the tendency to be timid, reserved, and most specifically, talk less."

Buss (1997 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) distinguished two types of shyness: *fearful shyness* and *self-conscious shyness*. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) explains that *fearful shyness* is the type of shyness which occurs when an individual is in interaction with other people. A source of the second type of shyness is individual's awareness that he or she is a part of a social group which has an opportunity to judge the individual. Blushing is the most common outcome of that type of shyness (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

Buss (1997 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) described *privacy violation* and *conspicuousness* as causes of shyness. *Privacy violation* includes violation of social, personal, and intimate space. *Conspicuousness* may be felt if an individual has some unique qualities in a social group. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) explained that being treated as the best or the worst student in a class may cause shyness. Furthermore, rudeness and insulting by others, especially in a foreign language classroom, are also frequent sources of shyness.

Ordulj and Grabar (2014) conducted research in which they examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety and shyness among Croatian students learning Italian in foreign language schools. They concluded that the students, although they reported a positive atmosphere in the schools, experienced foreign language anxiety and that shy students had a higher level of foreign language anxiety (Ordulj & Grabar, 2014).

Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggested therapies which can reduce individual's shyness, of which two will be mentioned here. The first therapy, called *systematic desensitization* includes three steps. "First, you'll learn muscle relaxation techniques. Then, you'll create a list of your fears, ranking them in terms of intensity. Finally, you'll begin exposing yourself to what you fear" (Raypole, 2019). In this therapy, shyness is treated as fear, which means that a shy individual would make a list of situations that make him or her shy. *Flooding* is a similar therapy which does not include relaxation and writing a list, but rather includes direct exposure to situations that cause fear or shyness (Bufford, 1999).

The next chapter will deal with another possible cause of foreign language anxiety – willingness or unwillingness to communicate.

4. WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

A great number of people do not feel comfortable speaking with another person whereas others tend to start a conversation in every situation. McCroskey (1985, p. 3) claims that "this variability in talking behavior is rooted in a personality variable which we call *Willingness to Communicate*." McCroskey (1985) highlights that a situation in which communication occurs and personal traits have an impact on one's willingness to communicate. Situation factors are interlocutor's appearance, status, a person's feelings, conversation topic, etc. Personal factors which have an impact on willingness to communicate, according to McCroskey (1985), are *unwillingness to communicate*, *predispositions toward verbal behaviour*, and *shyness*. Burgoon (1976 as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) defined unwillingness to communicate as avoidance of face-to-face communication. MacIntyre (2007, p. 564) defined willingness to communicate (WTC) "as the probability of speaking when free to do so." WTC has also been explained as a concept which describes psychological processes which occur at the moment when a person should communicate with another person (MacIntyre, 2007).

Mihaljević Djigunović (2004) focused on the relationship between foreign language anxiety and WTC. Nevertheless, she concluded that there is no relationship between the two variables. She proposed that "a possible explanation may lie in the positive connection between language use anxiety and communication apprehension, which may be taken as a consequence (or, possibly, a cause) of unwillingness to communicate" (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2004, p. 209). MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 545) provided "an account of the linguistic, communicative, and social psychological variables that might affect one's willingness to communicate." They also focused on WTC in the second language and designed a pyramid-shaped model (Figure 1) which contains layers. The layers represent variables that have an impact on WTC. At the bottom of the pyramid, the authors presented *the societal and individual context* layer, which refers to social impact on a person. For instance, the social context in which a child is raised may promote intolerance towards foreign ethnic groups and therefore influence the child's attitude toward foreign languages. Furthermore, one's personality has an impact on the level of motivation for learning a foreign language. MacIntyre (2007, p. 567) claims that "the individual has little influence over these factors, and generally, he or she plays a somewhat indirect role

in language behaviour." The next layer represents a person's *affective-cognitive context,* and it is inevitable for a person's determination to speak in a foreign language (MacIntyre, 2007). Layer IV represents variables which "ultimately lead to state self-confidence and a desire to interact with a particular person" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 550). The remaining layers represent communication which occurs at the specific moment. In that moment, a combination of variables from layers IV, V, and VI may contribute to a person's willingness or unwillingness to communicate (MacIntyre, 2007).

Figure 1.

Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547)
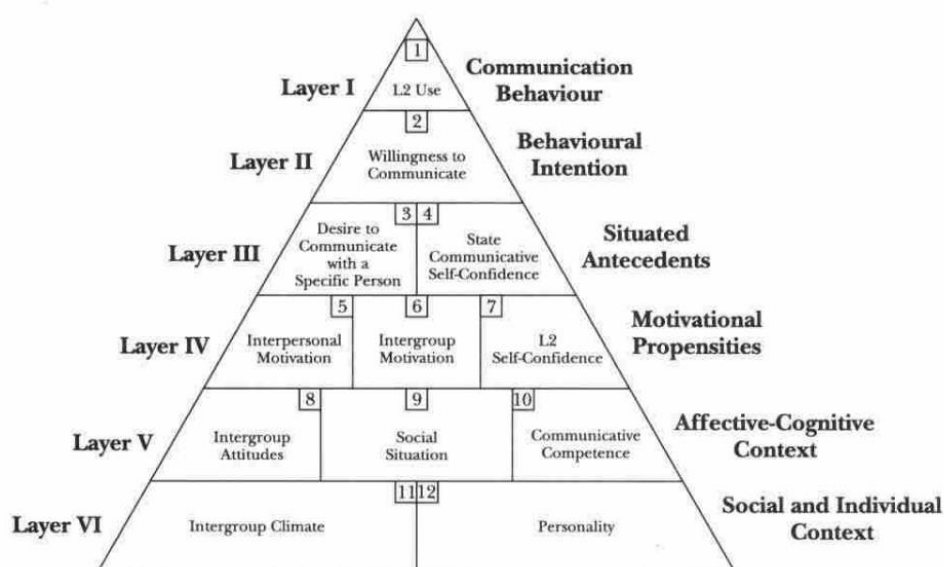
McCroskey et al. (1977) explained that individual's personality has an impact on WTC. They found that individuals who hesitate to communicate with others have low self-esteem. In addition, social group in which communication occurs also plays a significant role regarding individual's WTC. Individuals often think that they are not accepted in a social group (McCroskey et al., 1977). Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) claims that an individual analyses possible communicative outcomes and a social group. If the group does not fulfil individual's expectations, he or she has low self-esteem and therefore they tend to avoid situations in which communication occurs (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

The theoretical section briefly described foreign language anxiety, shyness, and willingness to communicate. The main objective of the thesis is to describe the relationship between foreign language anxiety and shyness and willingness to communicate. The research is described in the next chapter.

5. RESEARCH

The research, which was conducted in April 2021, focused on the possible relationship between shyness and willingness to communicate on the one hand and foreign language anxiety on the other. This chapter focuses on the research aim and hypotheses, participants and research instruments, and discusses the results of the research.

5.1 Research aims and hypotheses

The first aim of the research was to examine the level of shyness, willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety among future teachers. The second aim was to find if there is a relationship between the level of shyness, willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety.

Two hypotheses were set:

1. Participants who have higher results on the shyness scale will report a higher level of foreign language anxiety.
2. Participants who are less willing to communicate in L1 will report a higher level of foreign language anxiety than the participants who are willing to communicate.

5.2 Participants

The research included a sample of 71 participants, students who attended first, third, fourth, and fifth year of studies at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb. The students are enrolled in one of the study programmes at the faculty: Primary and English/German Teacher Education (study programme 835) and Primary Teacher Education – modules Croatian Language, Information Technology, Art, and Educational Sciences (study programme 903). After obtaining their degree, the students will become primary school teachers, and the students enrolled in the Primary and English/German Teacher Education study programme will also be English/German language teachers. As shown in Figure 2, the majority of the participants attend the Primary and English/German Teacher Education study programme (N=46), and the majority are female (N=63).

Figure 2.

Distribution of participants according to gender and study programme
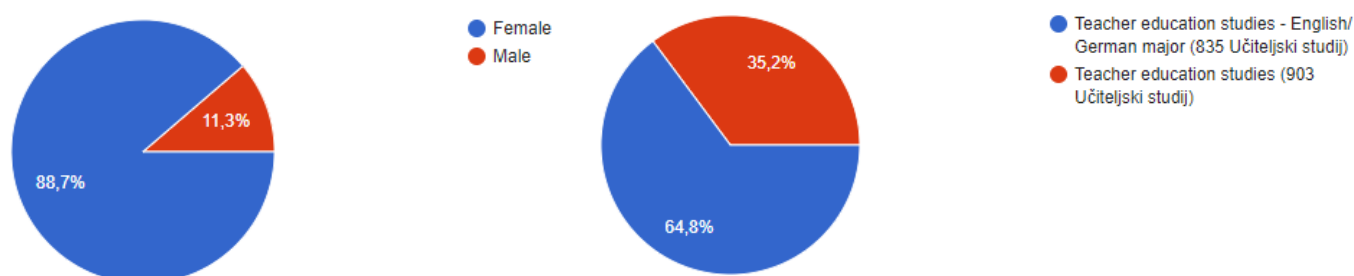
The participants' age range was between 21 and 25 years, and the average age was 22.7 years (SD=1.1). There were 37 students in their 5th year of studies, 13 students in the 4th 20 students in the 3rd, and 1 student in the 1st year of studies. The average number of years of learning English in primary and secondary school was 11.97 years (SD=2.45). Participants' average English grade in primary school was 4.86 (SD=0.42) while in secondary school it was 4.59 (SD=0.62). A great number of participants reported no learning English outside school (N=52) while the rest (N=19) reported an average of 4.26 years. All of the participants are exposed to English outside college with the majority (N=32) being exposed to English more than 10 hours per week. There were 16 participants who are exposed to English outside college up to 10 hours, and 23 who reported a weekly exposure of 5 hours. The participants assessed their knowledge of English with 4.25 (SD=0.77) as an average grade. The majority of the participants have learnt an additional foreign language (N=64), but they graded their knowledge of the second foreign language with 2.68 (SD=1.02).

5.3 Research instruments and procedure

The research was conducted in accordance with the recommended ethical principles. The information, which the participants shared in the study, is protected as the research was completely anonymous. The participants could choose whether they want to participate in the study, and they could withdraw at any time without any consequences.

The participants were given an anonymous online questionnaire which was divided into four parts. The first part of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) collected general information about the participants such as their age, gender, field and year of studies, level of English etc.

The second part of the questionnaire (Appendix 2) was the *McCroskey Shyness Scale* (http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/shyness.htm), which measured the level of shyness among the participants. This scale contained fourteen statements, and the participants reported whether each statement applies to them or not by marking whether they: strongly agree (1), disagree (2), are neutral (3), agree (4), or strongly agree (5) with each statement. In order to obtain the participants' level of shyness, it was necessary to complete the following steps:

Step 1: Add the scores for items 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12.

Step 2: Add the scores for items 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 14.

Step 3: Complete the following formula: Shyness = 42 plus Total of Step 1 minus Total of Step 2.

The following part of the questionnaire (Appendix 3) was the *Willingness to Communicate* (WTC) *Scale* (http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/WTC.htm), which was designed by McCroskey and Richmond (1987). It measured the participants' willingness to initiate communication. The scale included twenty situations in which a person might choose whether he or she wants or does not want to communicate. Below each statement, the participants wrote the percentage which indicates how many times they would choose to communicate in the given situation (e.g. *Talk with a service station attendant*.). If a participant wrote 0% below a statement, that meant that he or she would never initiate communication in that situation. If a participant, on the other hand, wrote 100%, that meant that the person would always initiate communication in the situation. To measure students' willingness to communicate, sub scores could also be calculated in addition to the total number indicating their willingness to communicate (for this result, the results for three sub categories - stranger, acquaintance, and friend were added and divided by 3). Besides these sub categories, the results were also obtained for the following: group discussion, meetings, interpersonal communication and public appearance.

The last part of the questionnaire was the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS), designed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The questionnaire measured the level of self-reported foreign language anxiety among the participants. This part of the questionnaire contained thirty-three statements which the participants were supposed to mark on a five-point Likert-type scale depending on whether they strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), are neutral (3), agree (4), or strongly agree (5) with the statement. In order to calculate the participants' foreign language anxiety, it was necessary to "reverse" the points for statements 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22,

28, and 32. After that, the scores for each item were summed. All scores were in the range of 33-165 with the higher scores indicating greater anxiety.

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the research according to the three scales that were used (shyness, willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety). The presentation of results is threefold: 1) total scores for all participants, 2) scores according to the year of studies and 3) scores according to the study programme.

6.1 Shyness and willingness to communicate

Figure 3 shows the level of shyness among the participants. Scores above 52 indicate a high level of shyness, scores below 32 indicate a low level of shyness, and scores between 32 and 52 indicate a moderate level of shyness. As illustrated, the majority of the participants (n=40) reported a moderate level of shyness, with a rather small number of the participants (n=8) reporting a high level, and the rest (n=23) reporting a low level of shyness. The highest level of shyness which was reported among the participants was 67 and the lowest level of shyness was 15.

Figure 3.

The level of shyness
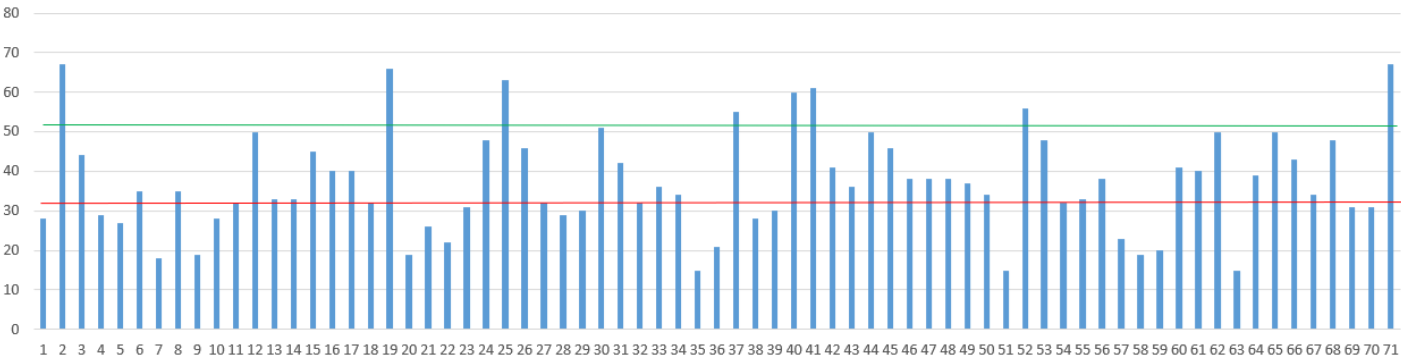
The following figures show the analysis of participants' level of shyness according to their study programme (903 or 835).

Figure 4.

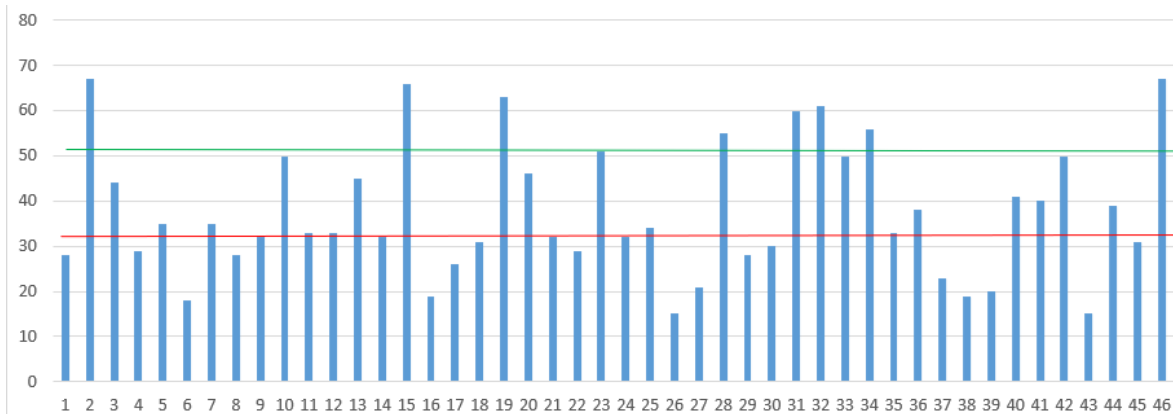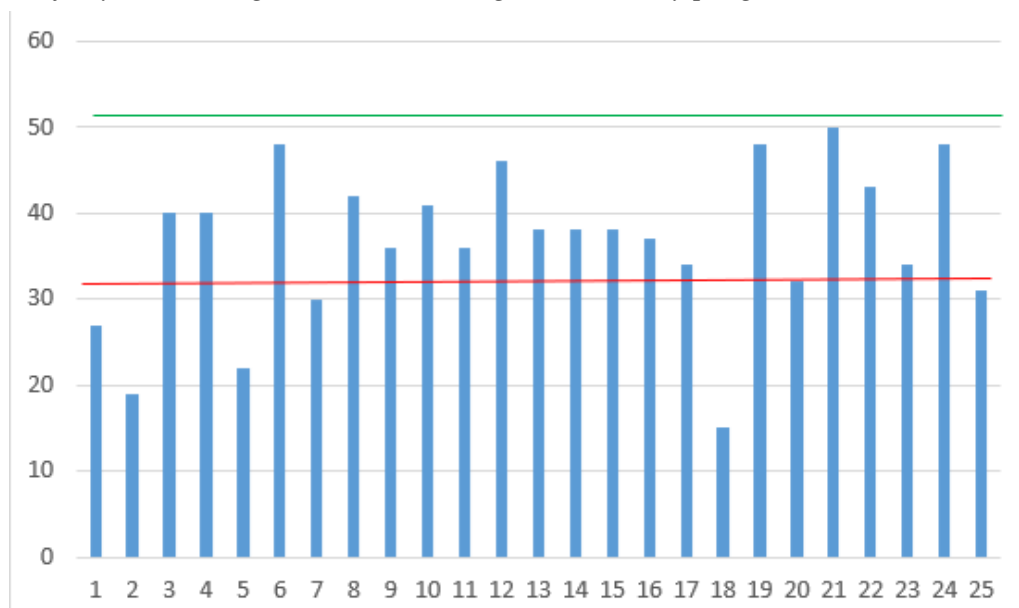*The level of shyness among the students attending the 835 study programme*

Figure 4 shows the level of shyness among the students attending the 835 study programme at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb. Only a few of the students (n=8) reported a high level of shyness, 17 students reported a low level of shyness, and 21 students reported a moderate level of shyness.

Figure 5.

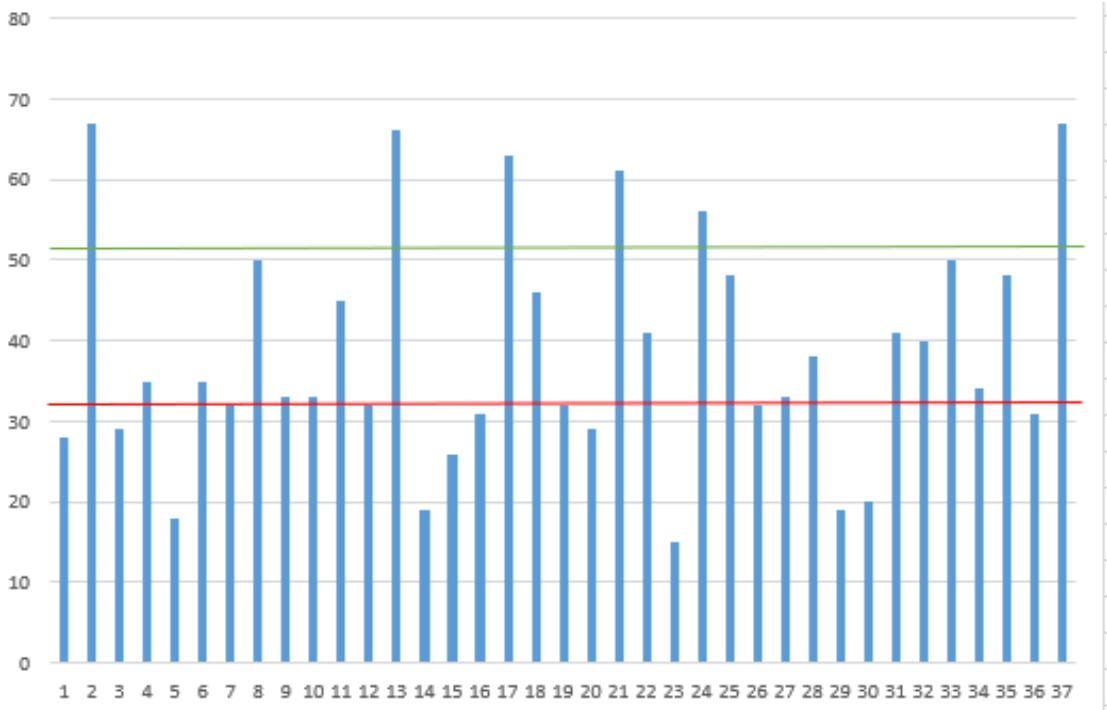*The level of shyness among students attending the 903 study programme*

As presented in Figure 5, there were no students, among those attending the 903 study programme, who reported a high level of shyness whereas n=19 students reported a moderate level of shyness, and n=6 students reported a low level of shyness.

If we compare the level of shyness among students attending the two study programmes, we can see that 36.96% (n=17) of the students attending the 835 study programme, reported a low level of shyness compared to 24% (n=6) of the students enrolled in the 903 study programme. None of the students in the 903 study programme reported high levels of shyness compared to 17.39% (n=8) of the students in the 835 study programme. The results indicate that 45.65% (n=21) of the students attending the 835 programme reported a moderate level of shyness compared to 76% (n=19) of the students attending the 903 programme.

Figures 6, 7, and 8 show a comparison of the level of shyness according to the participants' year of studies.

Figure 6.

The level of shyness among 5th-year university students

As shown in Figure 6, most of the 5th-year university students (n=20) reported a moderate level of shyness, 6 students reported a high level of shyness and 11 students reported a low level of shyness.

Figure 7.

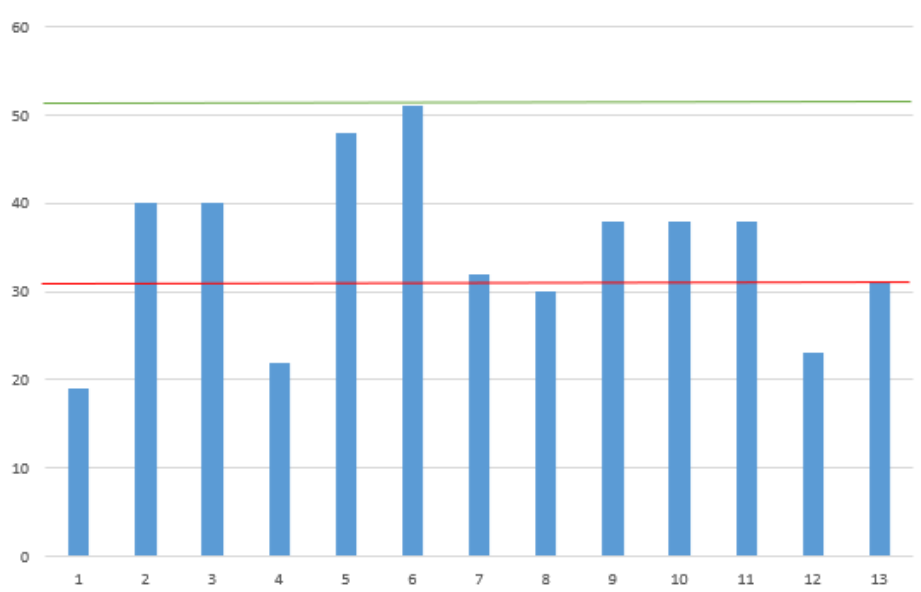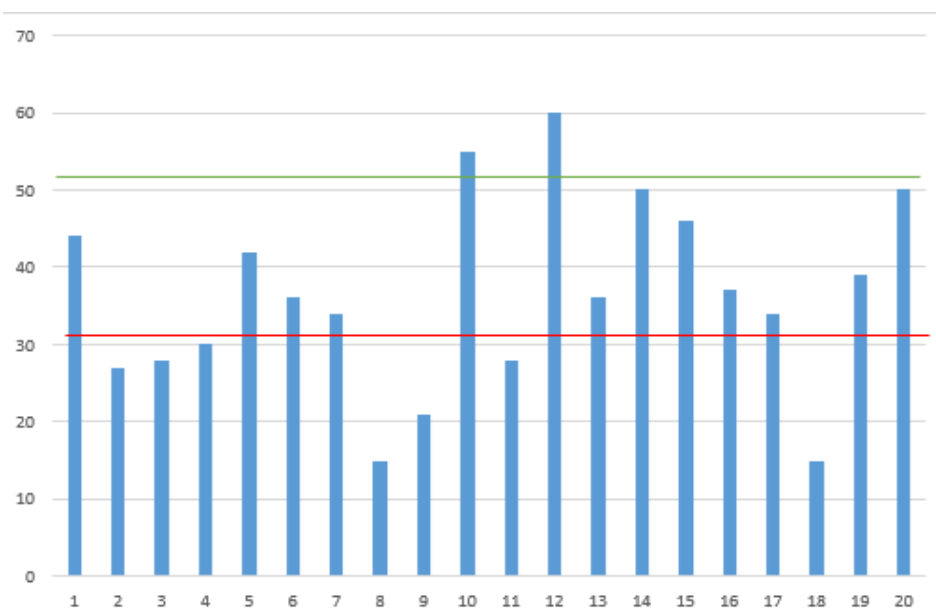*The level of shyness among 4ᵗʰ-year university students*

Figure 7 presents the level of shyness among 4th-year university students. There were no 4ᵗʰ-year university students who reported a high level of shyness. Most of the students (n=8) reported a moderate level of shyness and n=5 students reported a low level of shyness.

Figure 8.

The level of shyness among 3ʳᵈ-year university students

As presented in Figure 8, the minority of 3rd-year university students (n=2) reported a low level of shyness, the majority (n=11) reported a moderate level of shyness and n=7 students reported a low level of shyness.

If we compare the level of shyness according to the participants' year of studies, we can see that 16.22 % (n=6) of 5th-year students, and 10% (n=2) of 3rd-year students reported a high level of shyness. There are no 4th-year participants who reported a high level of shyness. The results indicate that among the students enrolled in the 3rd, 4th and 5th years of studies there is not much difference regarding their moderate (55%, 61.54%, and 54.05%, respectively) and low level of shyness (35%, 38.46%, and 29.73%, respectively). Moreover, these results are not quite what we expected them to be. Namely, the 5th-year students, who are in their final year of studies, were expected to report the lowest level of shyness because they have had the most experience in 'being in the spotlight'. In other words, they have had the most experience in being in a situation where they have had to overcome their shyness when teaching primary school students and giving presentations in front of their colleagues, mentors, and teachers.

The following analysis refers to students' willingness to communicate. Figure 9 shows the participants' levels of willingness to communicate. Scores above 82 indicate a high level of willingness to communicate and scores below 52 indicate a low level. The majority of the participants (n=37) reported moderate willingness to communicate, the minority of the participants (n=8) reported a high level and the rest (n=26) reported a low level of willingness to communicate. The highest score which was reported is 95 and the lowest score is 16.3. Since the teaching profession requires frequent communication with students, parents, other teachers etc., it is surprising that a fairly high percentage of the participants reported moderate to low willingness to communicate.

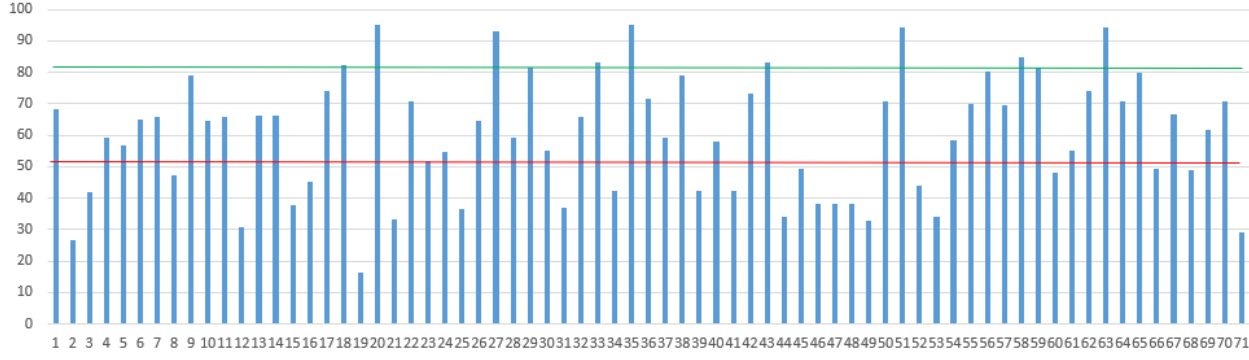**Figure 9.**

Willingness to communicate

Figure 10.

The level of willingness to communicate among students attending the 835 study programme

The figure above shows the level of willingness to communicate among students attending the 835 study programme. The majority of the students (n=25) reported a moderate level of willingness to communicate, a few (n=5) reported a high level of willingness to communicate and the rest (n=16) reported a low level of willingness to communicate.
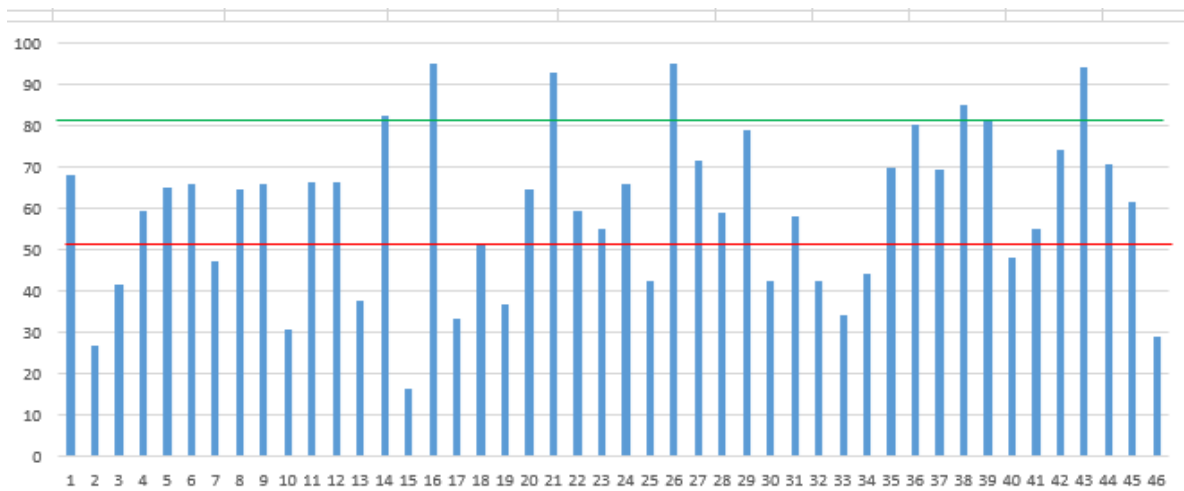
Figure 11.

The level of willingness to communicate among students attending the 903 study programme
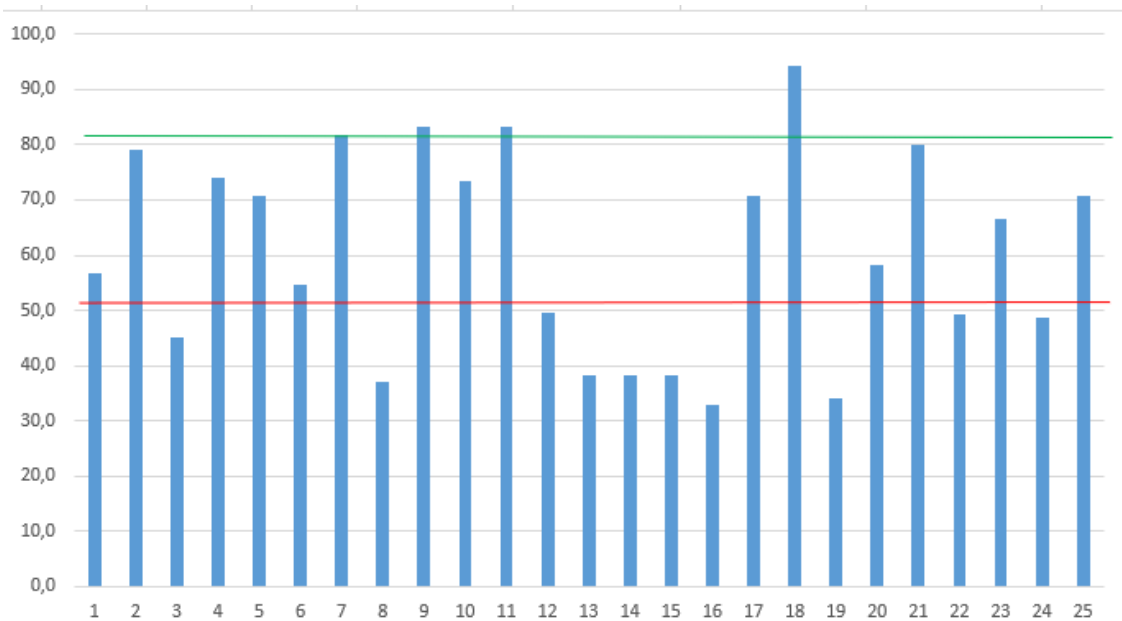
The figure shows that, among students attending the 903 study programme, the greatest number (n=12) reported a moderate level of willingness to communicate, only few (n=3) have a high level of willingness to communicate and the others (n=10) reported low willingness to communicate.

The results do not indicate much difference between the students attending the 903 study programme (40% low and 48% moderate willingness to communicate) and the students attending the 835 study programme (35% low and 54% moderate willingness to communicate). In both cases, the majority of the students have a moderate to low level of willingness to communicate.

Figures 12, 13, and 14 show the level of willingness to communicate among the students attending each year of studies.

Figure 12.

Willingness to communicate among 5th-year university students
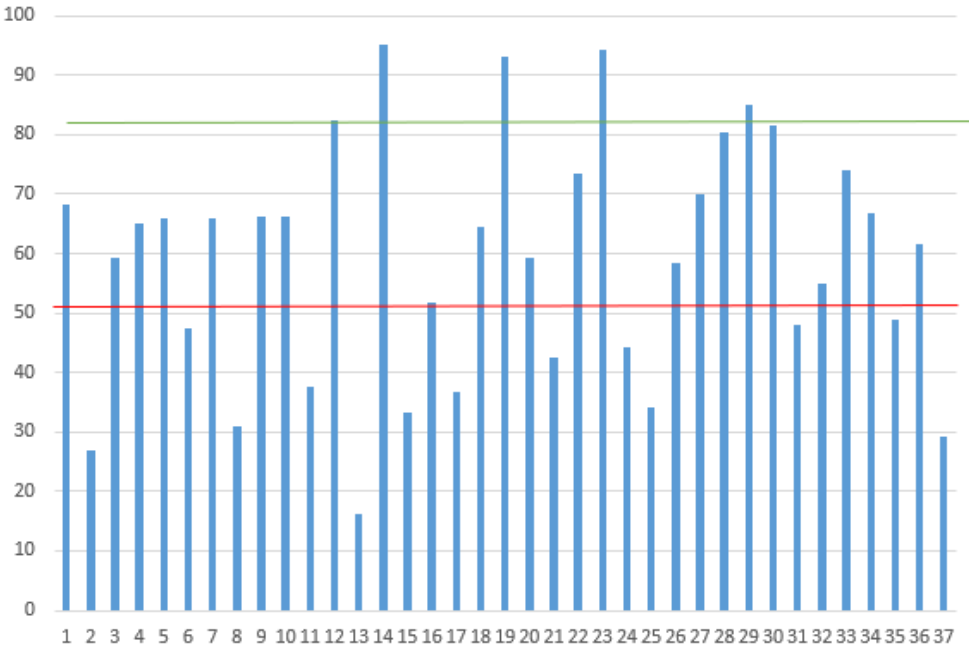
Figure 13.

Willingness to communicate among 4th-year university students
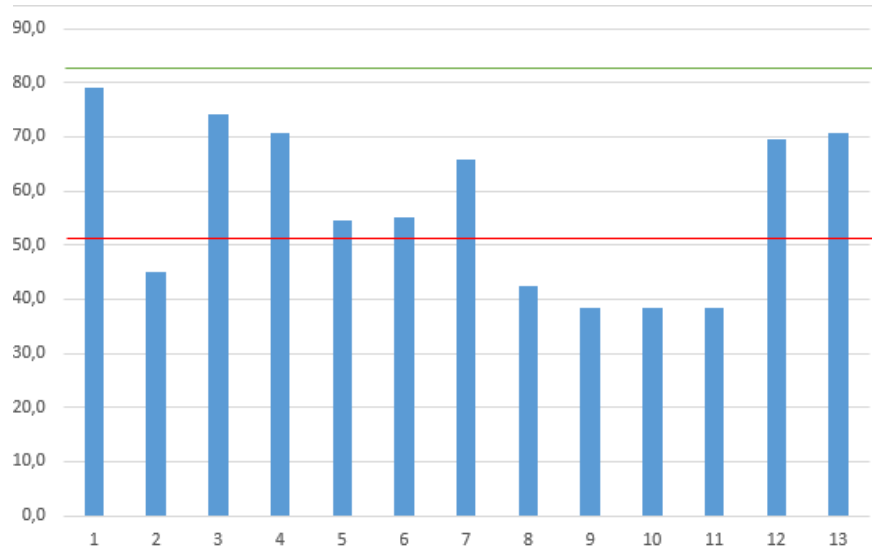
Figure 14.

Willingness to communicate among 3rd-year university students
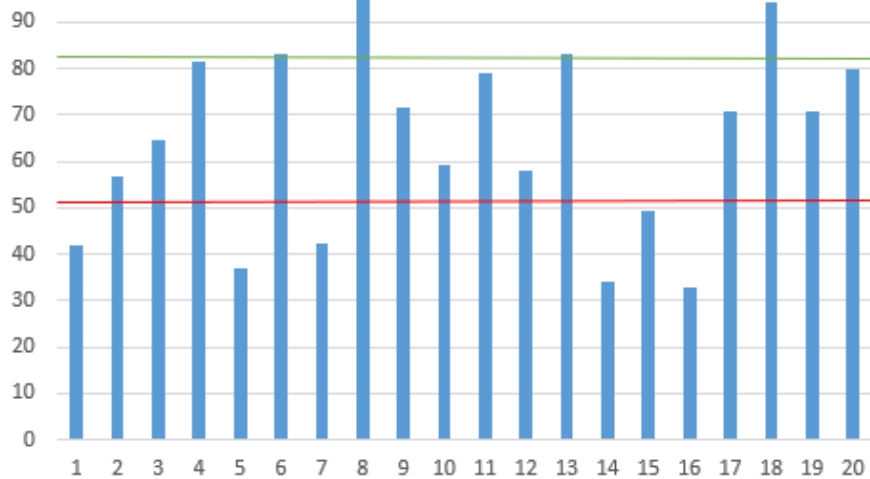
Figures 12, 13 and 14 show that a small number of students enrolled in the 5th (n=4) and 3rd year (n=4) of studies and none of the 3rd-year students reported a high level of willingness to communicate. When we compared their moderate and low level of willingness to communicate, we did not find much difference between 5th-year university students (37.84% low and 51.35% moderate willingness to communicate), 4th-year university students (38.46% low and 61.54% moderate willingness to communicate), and 3rd-year university students (30% low and 50% moderate willingness to communicate).

When the two scales (*the McCroskey Shyness Scale and the Willingness to Communicate Scale*) are compared, it may be observed that the majority of the participants have a moderate level of shyness and willingness to communicate (Mo=2). Within the total sample of 71 participants, a moderate level of shyness was measured among 40 participants and a moderate level of willingness to communicate was measured among 37 participants.

6.2 Foreign Language Anxiety Scale

Figure 15 presents the results of the foreign language anxiety scale. The results which are lower than 76 indicate a low level of foreign language anxiety, the results between 76 and 119 indicate a moderate level of anxiety, and the results which are 120 or above indicate a high level of foreign language anxiety.

Figure 15.

The results of the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale
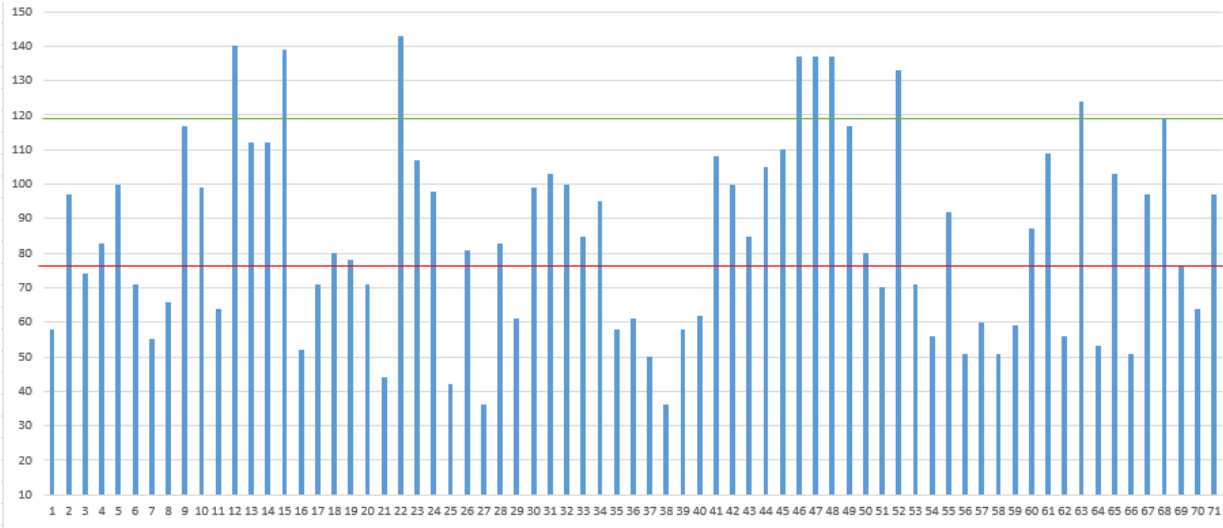
The results show that the minority of the participants (11.27%, n=8) have a high level of foreign language anxiety. Other participants reported a low (42.25%, n=30) or a moderate level of anxiety (46.48%, n=33). The highest level of anxiety which was reported was 143, and the lowest was 36.

In the next analysis, foreign language anxiety level was compared according to the study programme in which the students are enrolled.

Figure 16.

Foreign language anxiety among the students attending the 835 study programme
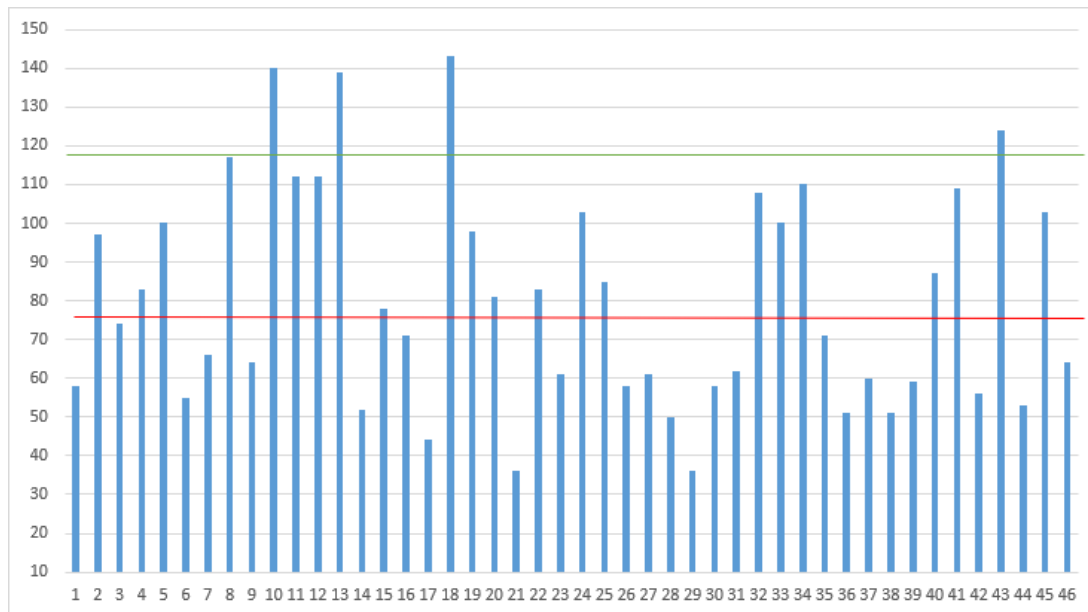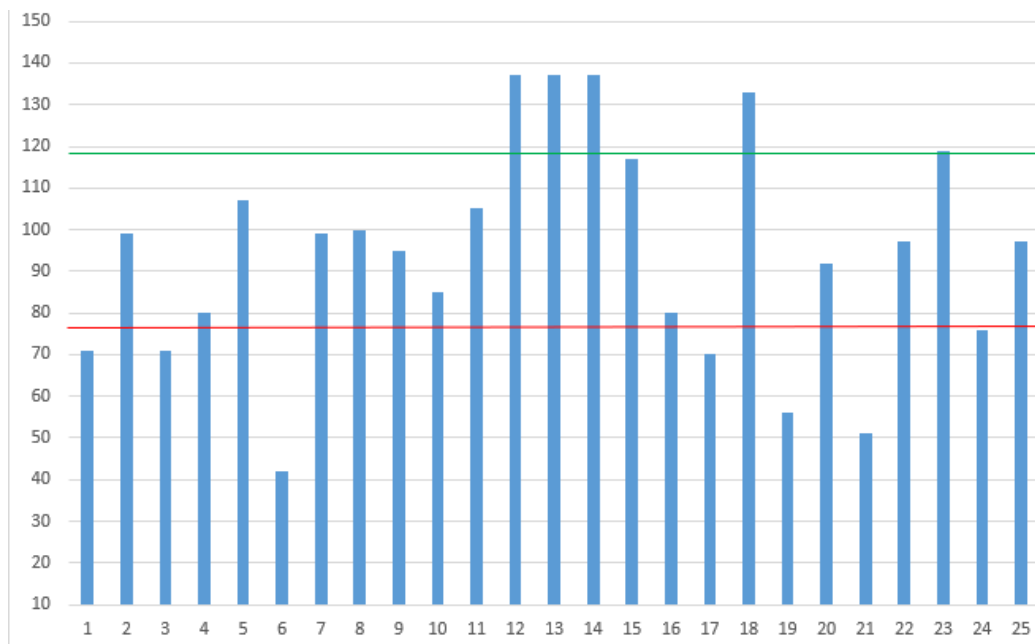

Figure 17.

Foreign language anxiety among the students attending the 903 study programme

Programme 835 (English/German major) includes listening to lectures and studying approximately four courses per semester in a foreign language (English or German). As

expected, the analysis showed that only a few of the participants attending this study programme reported a high level of language anxiety (8.7%, n=4), the majority reported a low level of language anxiety (52.17%, n=24), and the others have a moderate level of anxiety (39.13%, n=18). On the other hand, the percentage of students attending the 903 study programme who reported a high level of foreign language anxiety was somewhat higher compared to the students attending the 835 study programme (16%, n=4). The majority of the students enrolled in the 903 study programme reported a moderate level of language anxiety (60%, n=15) while the other participants (24%, n=6) have a low level of foreign language anxiety.

Furthermore, we analysed the statements which most of the students disagreed with. The greatest number of students strongly disagreed with the following statements, indicating a low level of anxiety:

5. *During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.* (M=1.82, n=35)

21. *The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.* (M=1.65, n=42)

25. *Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.* (M=1.96, n=35)

26. *I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.* (M=2.2, n=31)

31. *I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.* (M=2.27, n=32)

The statements present situations or aspects which do not cause problems for the participants while learning a foreign language. There is no statement which stands out from the rest and which may indicate a high level of foreign language anxiety among most of the participants.

6.3 Correlations between FLA, shyness and willingness to communicate

One of the aims of the research was to calculate a possible correlation between shyness and foreign language anxiety. The correlation was calculated with the Spearman's rho test and the result showed no correlation between shyness and foreign language anxiety. In other words, the students who reported higher level of shyness do not experience higher level of foreign language anxiety. These results are not in accordance with those obtained in Ordulj and Grabar's (2014) research that was mentioned above. However, Bashosh et al. (2013), who compared shyness and foreign language anxiety among 60 undergraduates studying English, also found no significant relationship between shyness and foreign language anxiety.

Spearman's rho test was also used to calculate the possible correlation between willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety, and the results showed a statistically significant correlation between the two variables (Figure 18). In other words, the participants who reported a high level of willingness to communicate, also reported a low level of foreign language anxiety and the participants with a low level of willingness to communicate reported a high level of language anxiety.

Figure 18.

Correlations between willingness to communicate and FLA

Correlations

			FLCAS Code 1- niski strah (<76) 2 srednji strah (76-119) 3 visoki strah (>119)	Shyness 3- Scores above 52 high level 2 Scores between 32 and 52 moderate 1 Scores below 32 low level	Willingness code 1 mala <52 2 srednja 52-83 3 velika > 83
Spearman's rho	FLCAS Code 1- niski strah (<76) 2 srednji strah (76-119) 3 visoki strah (>119)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.207	-.249*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.083	.036
		N	71	71	71
	Shyness 3- Scores above 52 high level 2 Scores between 32 and 52 moderate 1 Scores below 32 low level	Correlation Coefficient	.207	1.000	-.416**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.	.000
		N	71	71	71
	Willingness code 1 mala <52 2 srednja 52-83 3 velika >83	Correlation Coefficient	-.249*	-.416**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.000	.
		N	71	71	71

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. CONCLUSION

The results showed that the majority of the students who participated in this research have a moderate level of shyness and only a few have a high level of shyness. A possible explanation of this result is that students who chose teaching as their future job are mainly extroverts. The results have also shown that the students attending the 835 study programme experience higher level of shyness than the students attending the 903 study programme, which we cannot explain only based on the obtained results. Furthermore, the 5th year students reported higher level of shyness that the students in lower years of studies, which was not expected.

The results of the *Willingness to Communicate Scale* were also somewhat unexpected since only a minority of the participants reported they would initiate communication in every situation, which is not really in compliance with the nature of their future job. Moreover, the participants reported similar levels of willingness to communicate regardless of the programme they are attending or the year of their studies.

The results of the third questionnaire, which measured foreign language anxiety among the participants, showed that most of the students have a moderate or a low level of foreign language anxiety. Participants studying at the Department of Primary and English/German Teacher Education (835 study programme) mainly reported a low level of FLA, whereas most of the students studying at the Department of Primary Teacher Education reported a moderate level of FLA. These results are not very surprising since the students attending the 835 study programme are exposed to the foreign language significantly more and on a regular basis which, according to Mihaljević Djigunović and Legac (2009), may prevent and reduce FL anxiety.

The results of the research confirmed one of the two proposed hypotheses - participants who are less willing to communicate in L1 will experience a higher level of language anxiety than the participants who are willing to communicate in L1. The other hypothesis (*Participants who have higher results on the shyness scale will report a higher level of foreign language anxiety*) was not confirmed. A possible explanation might be the fact that, based on the results, only a very small number of participants reported experiencing a high level of shyness.

Finally, it should be taken into account that there are some limitations to this research. Firstly, the sample size was small and convenient, which does not allow generalising the results. Secondly, the participants were given questionnaires in English without testing their language

proficiency, which might have caused a lack of understanding of some questions among the participants. Therefore, further studies might take these limitations into consideration.

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9. APPENDICES
Appendix 1

General information

1. How old are you?

   _____

2. What is your gender?

   Female

   Male

3. What are you studying?

   Teacher education studies - English/German major (835 Učiteljski studij)

   Teacher education studies (903 Učiteljski studij)

4. What is your current year of studies?

   1st

   2nd

   3rd

   4th

   5th

5. Have you been learning English while in primary and secondary school? For how long?

   _____

6. What was your average English grade in primary school?

   2

   3

   4

   5

7. What was your average English grade in secondary school?

   2

   3

   4

   5

8. Have you been learning English outside school (foreign language school, private lessons....)? For how long?

   _____

9. How many hours PER WEEK are you exposed to English outside college (music, films, reading, the Internet, communication....)?

not at all

up to 5 hours

up to 10 hours

more than 10 hours

10. Which grade would you use to assess your knowledge of English?

1

2

3

4

5

11. Have you learned an additional foreign language?

_____

12. Which one? How long?

_____

13. How would you assess your proficiency in this foreign language?

1

2

3

4

5

Appendix 2

The McCroskey Shyness Scale

Below are fourteen statements that people sometimes make about themselves. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

1. I am a shy person.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

2. Other people think I talk a lot.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

3. I am a very talkative person.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

4. Other people think I am shy.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

5. I talk a lot.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

6. I tend to be very quiet in class.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

7. I don't talk much.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

8. I talk more than most people.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

9. I am a quiet person.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

10. I talk more in a small group (3-6) than others do.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

11. Most people talk more than I do.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

12. Other people think I am very quiet.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

13. I talk more in class than most people do.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

14. Most people are more shy than I am.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

Appendix 3

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale

Below are 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Presume you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentage (%) of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Indicate in the space what percent of the time you would choose to communicate. (0 = Never to 100 = Always)

1. Talk with a service station attendant.

   _____

2. Talk with a physician.

   _____

3. Present a talk to a group of strangers.

   _____

4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.

   _____

5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.

   _____

6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.

   _____

7. Talk with a police officer.

   _____

8. Talk in a small group of strangers.

   _____

9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.

   _____

10. Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.

   _____

11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.

   _____

12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.

   _____

13. Talk with a secretary.

   _____

14. Present a talk to a group of friends.

   _____

15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.

   _____

16. Talk with a garbage collector.

   _____

17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.

   _____

18. Talk with a spouse (or girl/boyfriend).

   _____

19. Talk in a small group of friends.

   _____

20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

   _____

Appendix 4

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

Below are thirty-three statements that people sometimes make about themselves. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

    Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

10. Izjava o izvornosti diplomskog rada

Izjava kojom ja, Helena Prugovečki, studentica integriranog preddiplomskog i diplomskog sveučilišnog studija primarnog obrazovanja s engleskim jezikom Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu izjavljujem da sam diplomski rad pod nazivom *The Relationship between Shyness, Willingness to Communicate, and Foreign Language Anxiety* napisala samostalno, uz pomoć stručne literature, vlastitog znanja i uz mentorstvo izv. prof. dr. sc. Marije Andrake i doc. dr. sc. Alenke Mikulec.

Helena Prugovečki

Zagreb, srpanj, 2021.

_____

(vlastoručni potpis studenta)