

ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE ANXIETY: THE ROLE OF VARIANCE

by  
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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	10
2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety .....	10
2.2 Motivation.....	12
2.3 The Interplay Between Motivation and Foreign Language Anxiety .....	13
2.4 A Possible Explanation for the Diversity of Previous Results .....	16
Chapter 3: Current Study and Methodology .....	17
3.1 Research Questions .....	17
3.2 Predictions and Hypotheses .....	17
3.3 The Method.....	18
3.3.1: Participants and Settings.....	18
3.3.2: Material.....	19
3.4 Procedure .....	20
3.4.1: Software and Analytical Approach .....	21
3.5: Data Preparation .....	21
3.5.1: Initial Data Cleaning .....	21
3.5.2: The Coefficient of Variation (CV).....	21
Chapter 4: Results .....	23
4.1: Initial Analysis and Correlation.....	23
4.2: Distribution Assessment and Normality Test .....	24
4.3: Evaluation of Average Responses .....	24
4.4 Further Examination and Re-arranging Data.....	24
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion .....	26
5.1 Comparing Study Objectives, Hypotheses and Results.....	26
5.2: Implications .....	27
5.3: Limitation and Future Direction .....	27
5.4: Conclusion .....	29
References:.....	30
Appendices:.....	34
Vita:.....	41

## **Abstract**

The interaction between motivation and foreign language anxiety exhibits a complex nature in shaping learning experiences. The current study explores the varying levels of motivation and foreign language anxiety experienced by the learners and identifies whether a significant correlation exists between the two variables. Two contrasting hypotheses were developed in this study. The first hypothesis is that with higher anxiety levels, learners' motivation levels diminish. The second hypothesis is for, a positive correlation between learners' motivation levels and anxiety; thus, where higher motivation levels are associated with higher anxiety levels. A cross-validation method was adopted to address these hypotheses. The University Achievement Bridge Program at the American University of Sharjah serves as the chosen context for this study. The study employed two adapted questionnaires, the Motivation Questionnaire by Gardner in 2004, and the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et al. in 1986. Both questionnaires used a 6-point Likert scale to measure the levels of motivation and anxiety in the context of language learning. A total of 50 participants were initially included; however, the study ultimately included 33 participants because of common issues of withdrawals and incomplete surveys. Participants were randomly categorized into two groups, and each group received the questionnaires in a distinct sequence of elements. Correlation was measured between motivation and anxiety within each group. Results demonstrated a positive correlation between motivation and anxiety, initially indicating higher motivation levels are associated with increased anxiety levels, affirming their interdependence. Participant evaluation mostly centered around responses 3 and 4, reinforcing the importance of considering the role of variance in correlation analysis and understanding the intricate link between the two variables.

**Search Terms: Motivation, Foreign Language Anxiety, Second Language Acquisition**

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Foreign language learning is a highly personal experience, and people can vary in their feelings towards this endeavor. Numerous people find foreign language learning a positive experience, possessing high aspirations and the will to acquire proficiency in many languages. However, not all language learners have these favorable and motivating experiences, and it is important to acknowledge that. This having been said, for some language learners, it is a daunting and highly intimidating experience full of unease and apprehension. Foreign language learning experience becomes particularly intimidating when learners are not only expected to meet predetermined evaluation criteria and follow structured learning methodologies set by educational institutions, but also when they are further required to apply the language they have learned in real-world-context. Turgut and İrgin (2009) conclude that “learning another language can be very difficult and stressful, and having to use the language in the ‘real-world’ can often be very daunting for easily intimidated students” (P. 761).

In addition to language learners’ feelings towards language learning, whether positive or negative, are highly complex and driven by various sources and reasons that vary greatly from one individual to another. According to Boon et al., (2021) in second language learning, students fall into two categories: those who are inherently motivated, and those who are in need for external incentives to be able to start the learning process. Thus, various emotions of fear and enthusiasm accompanying language learning may subsequently impact learners’ levels of achievement. Therefore, this paper sheds light on foreign language anxiety (FLA) and motivation, given their potential and overall impact on students’ learning experiences. I acknowledge the efforts made by previous researchers and the implications provided for successful learning; however, the field is vast and allows for further exploration and innovative approaches.

For a more comprehensive understanding of the key concepts under investigation, it is important to establish clear definitions of the two key terms discussed above, “Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)” and Motivation. First, as defined by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), FLA is “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second or foreign language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning, or the worry and negative emotional

reaction arousal when learning or using a second or foreign language” (p. 284). Additionally, Horwitz et al. (1986) (as cited in Yan & Liang, 2022) conceptualized foreign language anxiety as a “set of emotions, beliefs and behaviors that accompanies foreign language learning, which stems from the distinctive nature of second language acquisition” (p. 128). Second, motivation, as defined by Cook and Artino (2016), is “the process whereby goal-directed activities are initiated and sustained” (p. 623). In other words, motivation is the human internal mechanism that ensures the continuation of activities to achieve specific goals. Thus, after a thorough review of a multitude of definitions given for motivation and foreign language anxiety, it is evident that these psychological constructs behave and contribute differently throughout the second language learning experience. While common definitions may suggest that negative emotions associated with FLA cancel out learners' motivation, and sufficient amount motivation can alleviate FLA adverse impact, this idea may not fully represent their actual mechanism.

Considering the complex nature of FLA and motivation and that provided definitions may not fully reflect the whole scope of their impact, it is valuable to include more diverse views offered by other researchers. The impact of various factors on these psychological constructs can lead to a wide range of effects, differing from positive to negative, which is further influenced by the varying intensities of these factors and the unique experiences of the individuals who exhibit constructs. For instance, Congard et. al (2011) view foreign language anxiety as a warning signal that alerts learners to potential challenges, motivating them to improve their performance. Similarly, Polshkova (2013) argues that anxiety encourages people to actively explore their situation and identify any possible sources of threat, which cannot be achieved in the absence of anxiety. Additionally, Schwarzer (2013) argues for a contrasting perspective on motivation, suggesting that higher levels of motivation accompanying lower levels of anxiety reduce people's aspirations and desires for achievements.

The high discrepancy observed in defining the key variables explored in this study, as well as the influence they have in the language learning experience, highlights a research gap that is worth addressing. That is, the discrepancy found in the role of motivation and anxiety necessitates the need for more research to uncover the complex relationship between motivation and anxiety and emphasizes the high importance of studies investigating this area.



That being said, the current study explores the correlation between these two psychological constructs within an excellent, specific context: the University Achievement Academy Bridge Program (AABP) at the American University of Sharjah, providing valuable insights into how these factors affect foreign language learning. The primary focus of this current study to ascertain whether this correlation is negative or positive. Additionally, this study seeks to identify whether moderate evaluations can help explain the observed correlation. Further, the study explores whether an assessment of evaluation variation can provide clearer understanding of the association between the two variables. Understanding the varying levels of these variables, the type of correlation between them, and its direction helps provide predictive value by revealing how changes in one variable correspond to changes in the other. Over and above, this study is of interest to scholars and educators, as it enables making well-informed decisions for optimizing learners' foreign language learning experiences. In other words, findings from this study can inform decisions related to the adjusting and tailoring the teaching methodologies to help create a motivating language learning environment, especially in institutions like university bridging programs. In addition, the obtained results help provide greater validity to existing studies that have achieved similar results. Furthermore, in the event of obtaining new findings whether in distinct or similar situations and contexts, it considerably helps promote our understanding of the issue and encourages further exploration in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The following review of the literature not only highlights the key findings of existing research, but also helps ensure that this study contributes meaningfully to the field of SLA. Specifically, this existing research and relevant knowledge have helped build a strong foundation for the analysing and discussing the study results.

### **2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)**

Prior studies in SLA research affirm that experiencing foreign language anxiety is prevalent and has negative impacts on the process of acquiring the second/foreign language. For example, as posited by Tobias (1986) FLA weakens language learners' cognitive processing of difficult tasks that rely more on memory. In the same way, as found by Horwitz et al. (1986) students who reported freezing during the oral exams have already learned the material, but their performance does not reflect how much they have learned. In simple terms, there is a clear discrepancy between the effort the learners put into learning and their ability to demonstrate effectively through their language performance, which is influenced by the presence of FLA. In the light of the discrepancies between learners' oral performance and their learning effort, is it worth mentioning that FLA is not limited to students' oral production, but also their overall performance during the language class and their intrinsic willingness to learn all aspects of the language. For example, Horwitz et al. pointed out that FLA covers many dimensions rather than being confined to oral production, as, ultimately, a subset of anxious learners may tend to avoid participation in all course-related work. That is, students experiencing reading anxiety, struggle to understand the course content, and those who experience writing anxiety, hindering their ability to write whether for feeling pressured to write flawlessly and/or struggling to accurately express their ideas through writing.

In addition to the diverse adverse effects of FLA on various aspects of foreign language use, FLA is not always the sole factor in the foreign language learning scene. That is, because of the individual difference and unique contexts, foreign language anxiety may not be the primary reason that hinders students' capacity to use the language. For instance, Coskun (2016) explores possible underlying reasons contributing to the common sentiment in Turkey, where majority of individuals often express that they comprehend the language, however they struggle with speaking the language. Namely, a strong emphasis on grammar rules in Turkish English education, limited exposure to English-speaking countries for extended periods, variances in

word order between Turkish and English, insufficient opportunities for practicing spoken English, and experiencing anxiety when communicating in English. Interestingly, foreign language anxiety was the least marked reason hindering language learners' abilities to speak the language.

In addition to FLA not always being a primary factor hindering learners' language abilities, previous research suggests that FLA itself is a complex issue triggered by various factors. Specifically, advocating the multifaceted nature of this construct with various factors contributing to the onset of anxiety, Young (1990) explores the sources contributing to learners' anxiety when speaking a foreign language. A questionnaire comprising three sections was used. Namely, students were asked to indicate their agreement level with language anxiety-related items, to choose their anxiety level when participating in certain classroom practices, and to identify teacher characteristics that helped alleviate their FLA level. Notably, the study results imply that, in general, for some learners, anxiety does not stem from speaking in a foreign language on its own, instead, it is highly linked to the act of speaking in front of others, which has been identified as a significant underlying source for FLA. Thus, it can be inferred that there is a key distinction between the act of speaking a foreign language and the social context that surrounds the action of speaking. In other words, it implies the importance of acknowledging the psychological and social factors that affect language learning. Furthermore, it puts great emphasis on the role of educators in accommodating the classroom environment in a way that addresses that issue.

Adding to the possible potential factors contributing to the presence of FLA, Salim et al. (2017) explores the interplay between levels of FLA and other specific variables. The authors explored the varying FLA levels experienced by university students, and whether gender and language proficiency variables may impact these FLA levels in any manner. Findings suggest that neither gender nor language proficiency levels influence the level of FLA and, regardless of these variables, every student experiences FLA at a certain level in foreign language classrooms. In other words, FLA can exist irrespective of learners' gender identities or proficiency levels. Findings also affirm the argument that FLA is multifaceted in nature, making it a complex psychological experience driven by a wide range of factors that vary from one individual to another, resulting in gender and level of proficiency not being robust predictors of FLA in certain contexts under specific circumstances. Furthermore, a

conclusion that can be drawn from the results is that while efforts made to explore potential factors aiding in the prediction of these complex psychological constructs can be helpful in many learning situations, these approaches may not be a solution in many other situations. In other words, in dealing with such complex construct like FLA, a one-size-fits-all solution is hard to be applicable considering a multitude of factors that differ among individuals. Thus, this conclusion underscores the importance of adopting tailored and personalized strategies to effectively alleviate the adverse impact of FLA, acknowledging the individual diversity where the language learning takes place.

In addition to personalized strategies in dealing with FLA, IPEK (2009) provides a comprehensive understanding of first and second language acquisition theories. IPEK conducted the study with the objective that this knowledge can help teachers understand every aspect surrounding the language learning experience. Areas of similarity and difference were the focus of the paper; however, the context where the language is learned, whether first or second, was found to play a vital role in the learning outcome. The findings suggested by Salim et al., and IPEK put great emphasis on educators' vital role in understanding language acquisition theories and creating a supportive and less anxiety-provoking environment. This understanding of the learning context, whether it involves first or second language acquisition, is essential in addressing and alleviating foreign language anxiety. Educators can use this knowledge to identify the various circumstances and challenges accompanying the language learning experience, tailoring their teaching methods to reduce anxiety and promote a more positive and effective learning environment for their students.

## **2.2 Motivation**

As highlighted in previous section that foreign language anxiety is highly intricate personal experience accompanies foreign language learning, motivation is another key emotional aspect associated to this process that is worth addressing. An extensive body of research has recognized motivation as a vital affective factor, demonstrating its favourable influence on students' language openness to input and intake. Similar to FLA, motivation exhibits a multi-faceted nature, making it challenging to describe or define. Reiss (2004) claims that, given motivation's multi-faceted and complex nature, it goes beyond having a straightforward explanation.

With the emphasis on the role of motivation as a driving force or catalyst for learners to attain, other previous scholars in the SLA field have also formulated other definitions that further reinforce this concept. Specifically, motivation is hypothesized to be the driving factor that pushes individuals to engage in a certain activity and influences their decision to persist it over time, as well as determines the amount of effort they invest in it (Dörnyei, 2014). That is, motivation influences why humans choose specific directions in life and how much dedication and commitment they put into these directions. Likewise, as per MacIntyre et al., (2001), motivation is the personal quality inferred from a psychological pattern of an underlying behavior related to a particular task. Furthermore, according to Brown (2014), motivation is analogous to an internal force that pushes someone to accomplish a specific task.

In addition to the role of motivation as an underlying force for learners to accomplish learning tasks, some researchers argue that motivation contributes to learners' language learning receptivity. For instance, Seven (2020) argues that motivation controls students' openness to new input and is a pivotal factor in students' attainment, and its absence could hinder their learning process. Simply put, highly motivated students are likely to demonstrate a great willingness to dedicate and invest a substantial amount of their time in learning a foreign language, and they tend to excel in language acquisition more effectively than unmotivated ones. That is, if motivation is lacking, students' achievement cannot be assured solely by a well-designed curriculum or quality education. Despite the diverse perspectives held by previous researchers on motivation, this paper narrows down the definition to underscore its pivotal impact on learners' willingness to achieve their goals.

### **2.3 The Interplay Between Motivation and Foreign Language Anxiety**

Considering the role that FLA and motivation play separately in second language learning, research also indicates that these two factors are closely intertwined in students' experiences with second language learning. More specifically, the correlation between students' motivation, anxiety, and their collective influence on academic attainment has been a subject of interest in a substantial body of research. Understanding how these variables affect learners' achievement is a primary focus of the current study. For example, according to Horwitz (2001), much previous research has affirmed the association between lower anxiety levels and high academic achievement driven by motivation. Correspondent to that, in research by Liu and Chen (2015), the authors conducted a study comparing the varying levels of foreign

language anxiety and motivation among high school learners. Findings suggest a negative association between learners' motivation to learn and the level of foreign language anxiety they experience. In the same way, Alico (2016) in an important exploration of the correlation between the two variables, the results obtained suggested a notable negative correlation where lower anxiety levels are associated with higher motivation. Similarly, Liu (2010) finds that when observing advanced learners in the English proficiency classes over the course of a full academic year, they tend to possess higher levels of motivation that seemed to be linked with lower levels of FLA compared to those in lower proficiency classes. Thus, since the previously provided source has claimed that FLA is linked to language proficiency, the need for further exploration and understanding of the complex interplay between the two variables in various learning contexts among various learning groups is critical.

In addition to the negative correlation between motivation and FLA, some researchers have extended their exploration beyond exploring a mere correlation. That is, prior research has identified a causative negative and statistically significant relationship between FLA and motivation. Namely, a recent study suggests that motivation plays a pivotal role in alleviating the foreign language anxiety experienced by learners (Liu & Huang, 2011). In the same way, when learners feel safe and at ease within a less-anxiety-provoking classroom environment, they will become more motivated to acquire the language (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). To elaborate, an adverse emotional stance experienced by language learners towards language learning may eventually lead to demotivation. Viewed from another angle, highly motivated learners tend to exhibit lower levels of foreign language anxiety, which can be elicited through their test scores and overall performance throughout the learning experience.

The argument for no correlation between motivation and foreign language anxiety has also garnered substantial support from many scholars within the SLA field. Loh et al. (2022) conducted a study exploring the correlation between learners' levels of intrinsic motivation and anxiety during COVID pandemic. In this investigation, the authors first explored the correlation between the two variables in general and did not find any correlation. A further exploration was also conducted to examine the impact of the pandemic, and it was evident that their anxiety, by itself, did not appear to be linked to their level of motivation. Similarly, Bárkányi (2021) studies the role of motivation and anxiety and their interplay among beginner

language speakers. Findings suggest that there is no correlation found between learners' motivation levels and other variables like foreign language anxiety and their self-efficacy. In the same way, Rahimi and Zhang (2018) advocate that foreign language anxiety does not correlate with motivation.

In contrast to claims suggesting negative and no correlation between FLA and motivation, additional differing perspectives have presented an alternative view. That is, some researchers argue for a positive correlation where certain levels of one variable co-exist at specific levels in the other variable. For instance, Luo et al. (2020) aim to explore the dynamics of the correlation between motivation and anxiety within the foreign language context. To identify the type of correlation, Pearson correlation was employed. Results suggest a significant positive correlation was found, indicating that with higher levels of anxiety, whether debilitating or facilitating, motivation levels are also expected to increase. In addition, Strack et al. (2014) argue that adverse emotions and circumstances can help some learners thrive academically, suggesting a positive correlation between anxiety and motivation. Simply put, their adversity serves as a catalyst, promoting their motivation. In a like manner, in a study by Wang et al. (2018), results suggest that students who exhibit high levels of motivation have also experienced higher levels of anxiety, which affirms the hypothesis that motivation and foreign language anxiety can be positively correlated. Likewise, Majali (2020) investigates how anxiety influences learners' motivational levels. Results show that anxiety can positively correlate with motivation if it is experienced at the optimal level that is relative from one learner to another. This emphasis on linking the positive correlation to experiencing motivation at individually relative optimal level sets this study apart. Considering Majali's study findings, it is important to acknowledge that FLA-motivation correlation should be viewed through the lens that accounts for the individualized responses of the learners. Thus, indeed, the correlation between the two variables operates within a spectrum with optimal level that is subjective to each learner.

In sum, as it is evident in the literature review, multiple existing studies in the field of SLA have investigated both FLA and motivation in the presence or absence of several variables in various contexts. Additionally, there are contrasting views about the dynamics of this correlation, which prompt new researchers to engage in further exploration to better understand this complex interplay. Namely, previous research has found positive correlations between motivation and anxiety, negative correlations

between motivation and anxiety, as well as instances where no correlation was observed between motivation and anxiety. Thus, in this paper, I particularly aim to reinvestigate the correlation between these two variables in a diverse context that has not been extensively addressed in the existing SLA research and distinct research circumstances to help provide more in-depth understanding of the correlation.

#### **2.4 A Possible Explanation for the Diversity of Previous Results**

Previous research has produced a wide variety of results as to the association between motivation and anxiety. That is, positive correlations have been found (Majali 2020), negative correlations have been found (Liu and Chen 2015; Liu, 2010), and also no correlation has been found (Loh et al., 2022; Bárkányi 2021). Such diverse results may be explained in a variety of ways through several influencing factors. First, the choice of measurement tools, such as the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) developed by Vallerand et al. (1993) and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich et al. (1991), can significantly impact the results. Second, the demographic composition of the sample population, encompassing distinctions like university enrollment, diverse age groups, gender distribution, and varied cultural backgrounds, may substantially affect the strength and direction of the correlation. Third, the context in which motivation and anxiety are studied, whether in academic, laboratory, or workplace settings, may play a crucial role in shaping the results. Fourth, people can vary in how they experience and express motivation and anxiety, meaning that individual differences could contribute to the mixed findings in the literature. Finally, the timing of measurements could be important as the relationship between motivation and anxiety may change over time or in response to specific events or stressors.

Another approach to assessing these inconsistencies in results could be the influence of moderate scoring and variation. That is, it is possible that many people are neither particularly motivated nor particularly anxious. In such cases, a great many evaluations may gather around evaluations of three or four (on a six Point Likert scale). Were that to be the case, and given enough studies, I may well expect the diversity of findings that are presented in the literature. As such, finding a correlation by itself may not tell the whole story as to the association between motivation and anxiety. Instead, a closer examination of the variations in the evaluations may need to be considered.



### Chapter 3: Current Study and Methodology

In the context of foreign language learning, particularly within the University Achievement Academy Bridge Program (AABP), the research questions addressed in this current study are the following:

#### 3.1 Research Questions

1. Is there a significant correlation between motivation and anxiety, and if so, is the correlation negative or positive?
2. Can predominantly moderate evaluations explain the correlation, or lack of correlation, between motivation and anxiety?
3. Can an assessment of evaluation variation better elucidate the association between motivation and anxiety?

#### 3.2 Predictions and Hypotheses

In this sub-section, I describe the predicted results, outlining the initial expectations before obtaining the actual results. First, it was anticipated that students' motivation scores would vary in relation to FLCAS scores showing negative correlation between the two variables. This prediction is in line with the findings suggested by Liu and Chen (2015) in their comparative study of FLA and motivation among high school students. Likewise, in another study, Liu and Jackson (2008), findings demonstrate that with elevated levels of FLA, learners are less likely to have strong willingness to communicate in the foreign language. Furthermore, in Horwitz et al., (1986), authors first introduced the FLCAS scale and discussed the inverse relationship found between FLA and motivation. Therefore, I anticipated results to affirm as students' FLA increases, their motivation level decreases.

Second, and by contrast, it was anticipated that higher levels of motivation would coexist with higher levels of anxiety, indicating a presumed positive correlation between these two variables. This prediction is in line with the findings suggested by (Luo et al., 2020; Majali 2021) in their exploration of the dynamics between the two variables. The findings indicate a noteworthy positive correlation, suggesting that increased levels of anxiety correspond to higher motivation levels. Thus, in essence, I proposed two hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a notable correlation between motivation and foreign language anxiety, where higher levels of anxiety are linked to diminished levels of motivation.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive correlation between motivation and foreign language anxiety, where motivation levels go up, levels of foreign language anxiety tend to go up as well.

### **3.3 The Method**

This section outlines the integral components of the study methodology. In a dedicated subsection addressing information on participants and settings, describing participant demographics, including details such as numbers, gender distribution, nationalities, and academic programs at the university. Additionally, another subsection includes information on the materials utilized, specifically focusing on the questionnaires adopted for evaluating motivation and anxiety.

**3.3.1 Participants and Setting.** The study population includes 50 ESL participants, comprising 26 males and 24 females who are enrolled in the University Achievement Program. Participants in the study have exclusively represented a diverse range of Arab nationalities, with the most significant proportion coming from the UAE (43.55%), followed by Egypt (19.35%), Jordan (16.13%), Syria (6.45%), Palestine (4.84%), Lebanon (4.84%), and Saudi Arabia (4.84%) (AUS at a Glance, n.d.). The program is specifically tailored to promote their English skills, which helps equip them for a successful university experience as their peers. The choice of this research location was driven by the fact that it is a rich environment to explore two common phenomena in ESL classrooms. In particular, these two psychological constructs have been found to have a high association with second/foreign language acquisition (Liu & Huang, 2011). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that those students in this context have experienced these emotions at varying degrees, making it a suitable choice to study this topic with a high possibility of gaining valuable results.

For more detailed information about the study participants and setting, those students have gone through an initial language proficiency assessment. For all new university students to be fully admitted to the university, they must meet a particular language proficiency or at least a minimum language proficiency level required for university conditional admission. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is the standardized test used to describe students' language proficiency. Accordingly, university students who did not meet the university proficiency requirement and are at the minimum proficiency that qualifies them for conditional enrollment, should enroll in an academy bridge program to help them promote their language skills and meet the university language requirements.

As part of the study implementation process, it was important to consider the aspect of comprehending the questionnaire elements. That is, to ensure that all participants, with their varying proficiency, are at levels that do not hinder their understanding or involvement in the study. Therefore, certain language adaptations to the questionnaire elements were made to ensure complete clarity and comprehensibility. Additionally, other adaptations were made to ensure an alignment with the AUS context and the specific cultural and educational setting of the United Arab Emirates, especially they were first used in various contexts. Examples of these adaptation are as follows:

1. (Original Version) If *Japan* had no contact with English-speaking countries, it would be a great loss.

**Example for adaptation:** If UAE had no contact with English-speaking countries, it would be a great loss.

2. (Original Version) I don't *bother* checking my assignments when I get them back from my English teacher.

**Example for adaption:** I don't usually review my assignments after receiving them back from my English teacher.

**3.3.2 Material.** Two types of surveys were employed and conducted in-class as the selected modality for data collection. Namely, first, Foreign Language Anxiety Scale was used by Horwitz et al. (1986) to determine students' anxiety levels towards English as a foreign language (See Appendix C). Second, Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used by Gardner (2004) to measure students' level of motivation and willingness to learn the English language (See Appendix B). Participants' responses to each statement are between 1-6, indicating their level of agreement toward the statements. The utilization of a six-point scale is notably beneficial and was selected with the objective of reducing participants' inclination to select a neutral option, as commonly seen in a five-point scale. Additionally, the choice of questionnaires was ideal in helping achieve the study objectives, given their high reliability in measuring behaviors, attitudes, and opinions (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2011). Using questionnaires provide a fast, efficient, and inexpensive method to obtain a large amount of data from a sizable sample in less time. Along with the questionnaires' practicality and efficiency, they offer the advantage of using multiple surveys to address various aspects of the study.

### **3.4 The Procedure**

This section outlines the detailed steps followed to implement the research experiment. That is, beginning with obtaining the necessary permission from the university Institutional Review Board (IRB), followed by acquiring approval from the university Achievement Academy Bridge Program (AABP), administering the consent form to the participants, and finally putting the experiment into action. In addition, within the same survey paper, participants confirmed their grasp of the questionnaires' objectives and willingness to participate before completing it, to secure their consent (See Appendix A). Additionally, participants and instructors were all aware the questionnaires were to be answered during class time and should not take more than 30 minutes. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that participants were also aware that participating in the study is entirely voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw their consent and refuse to continue participating. Participants were also assured that their privacy was highly considered, and the information provided was maintained in all published and written data from the study. Ensuring that participants are given their rights and the confidentiality of their collected data, promotes their comfort and fosters more honest answers to the questionnaire elements. Finally, given the rich multicultural environment in the UAE, where this study was conducted the paper included spaces for indicating the nationality and the gender. This part was included with the objective that identifying learners' gender and nationality is undoubtedly helpful to gain more valuable insights into how this correlation may differ according to the demographic segment explored. Although not directly employed in the subsequent analysis, these data points could benefit future research.

Participants were divided into two groups with the objective of exploring the correlation between the two variables separately. The two groups completed identical questionnaires; however, the second group received a randomized version of the questionnaires' elements. This randomization was intended to reduce any potential bias that may arise when relying on a fixed sequence in the survey. Furthermore, all participants went through the same sequence to start with a motivation questionnaire followed by the foreign language questionnaire. The rationale for this approach was to minimize the risk that anxiety may negatively impact their responses when completing the motivation survey.

**3.4.1 Software and Analytical Approach.** Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet is the software used to organize the responses obtained to make a workable dataset of 50 participants.

### **3.5 Data Preparation**

This section details the data preparation, cleaning, and any necessary data manipulation and assumptions made for the analysis.

**3.5.1 Initial Data Cleaning (Assessing the Data Validity).** As may be expected with long surveys of limited obvious participant gain, the attrition rate was high. More specifically, some participants appeared to have entered data without obvious care or attention. For these reasons, the data was carefully studied, and potentially problematic entries were removed. Even though considerable data was lost in this conservative approach, the remaining data is likely to lead to be the most reliable conclusions.

To assess the validity of the participants' responses, I calculated three factors: Number of entries per evaluations, number of blank entries, and most common entry. For number of entries per evaluations, I assessed the distribution of entries for all possible outcomes for the Likert scale. If more than one value had no entries, then the participant data was removed. In total, four participants (8%), fell into this category. For number of blank entries, I assessed how many entries had been left with no evaluation. If more than two entries were blank, then the participant data was removed. In total, six participants (12%), fell into this category. For the most common entry, I assessed the value that appeared most frequently in the evaluations. If more than 50% of entries were for a single value, then the participant data was removed. In total, nine participants (18%), fell into this category. The removal of most common entry was necessary to mitigate the potential influence of bias and lack variability in the dataset. As two participants reached critical values for more than one category of exclusion, a total of 17 participants were ultimately removed from further analysis. As such, 33 participants remained for further analysis.

Between-subjects t-tests were carried out to assess differences between the evaluations obtained from the two versions of the survey. Out of the total 64 questions, only seven (10.938%) showed a notable variance. Consequently, no questions from either version were excluded from the analysis.

**3.5.2 The Coefficient of Variation (CV).** Given that both questionnaires comprise over 30 questions, the coefficient of variation (CV) was required. That is,

CV was used to compress the data for each participant into a single actionable variable. CV is calculated as the  $SD/M$ . This value can be more informative than the mean or standard deviation alone as the CV expresses the variability of the data relative to the mean. By using the CV, the data from the motivation survey and the anxiety survey can be meaningfully compared.

## Chapter 4: Results

### 4.1 Initial Analysis and Correlation

Having calculated the CV for all 33 remaining participants (across both surveys), I used Pearson's Correlations to assesses the association between the primary variables (See Table 1). The result was a significant positive correlation ( $r = .618$ ;  $p < .001$ ). At first blush, the result appears to provide compelling evidence for a positive association between anxiety and motivation. However, given the possible explanation for the diversity of previous results (described above), further examination of the results, especially the means and variance, is necessary.

Table 1: The Coefficient of Variation for the 33 participants

Participant ID	Gender	Motivation			Anxiety		
		Mean	SD	CV	Mean	SD	CV
3	M	3.8	2.091	0.55	4.182	1.758	0.42
4	F	3.767	1.073	0.285	4.394	0.788	0.179
6	M	4.323	1.351	0.313	3.242	1.2	0.37
7	F	3.839	1.463	0.381	3.545	0.971	0.274
8	M	3.613	2.011	0.557	2.788	2.058	0.738
11	M	4.258	1.182	0.278	4	1.25	0.313
12	F	4.516	1.895	0.42	4.152	1.326	0.319
13	M	4.633	1.65	0.356	4.182	1.044	0.25
14	M	4.065	1.504	0.37	3.938	1.413	0.359
15	M	4.29	1.465	0.341	3.97	1.551	0.391
16	M	3.968	1.741	0.439	2.485	1.278	0.514
18	M	3.968	1.722	0.434	2.788	2.043	0.733
21	M	4.613	1.283	0.278	3.727	0.801	0.215
22	M	4.258	1.632	0.383	2.364	1.084	0.459
23	M	4.903	1.274	0.26	4.818	1.402	0.291
24	F	3.935	1.153	0.293	3.606	1.368	0.379
25	M	4.323	1.661	0.384	3.303	0.951	0.288
26	F	3.6	1.905	0.529	3.515	1.734	0.493
27	M	3.516	1.525	0.434	3.242	1.119	0.345
28	M	3.968	1.251	0.315	3.545	0.754	0.213
30	M	4.355	1.226	0.282	3.97	1.159	0.292
33	M	4.161	2.018	0.485	3.697	1.928	0.522
34	M	4.161	1.635	0.393	4.667	1.216	0.261
35	M	2.897	1.448	0.5	3.455	1.523	0.441
38	M	4.71	1.371	0.291	4.242	1.2	0.283
39	M	3.903	1.35	0.346	3.273	1.42	0.434
40	F	4.226	1.875	0.444	4.121	1.516	0.368
42	M	4.419	1.566	0.354	4.121	1.495	0.363

43	M	4.419	1.876	0.424	2.909	1.958	0.673
46	M	4.129	2.094	0.507	3.273	1.925	0.588
47	F	3.871	2.232	0.577	4.515	1.202	0.266
49	M	4.129	1.839	0.445	3.576	1.621	0.453
50	M	3.387	1.944	0.574	2.455	1.804	0.735

Note: CV refers to the Coefficient of Variation

#### 4.2 Distribution Assessment and Normality Test

Prior to the Pearson Correlation analysis, the distribution of the data was assessed using the Anderson-Darling Normality Test. While the Motivation results appeared normally distributed, the Anxiety results were less clear. Accordingly, with three results having Z-scores above 2.0, a Spearman non-parametric correlation was conducted as a precaution. The results confirmed the initial correlation ( $\rho = .596$ ;  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that the analysis is suitable without further modification.

#### 4.3 Evaluation of Average Responses

Turning to the averages of the survey questions themselves, I assessed the distributions of all evaluations for all questions (across both surveys). For Motivation, the average result was 4.065 ( $SD = .964$ ). The most common average was 4, representing 15 of the 31 questions (48.387%). For Anxiety, the average result was 3.697 ( $SD = .467$ ). The most common average was again 4, representing 23 of the 33 questions (69.697%). The result suggests that the overwhelming average response to the survey questions is a value of 4, indicating mild agreement. While such a result does indeed indicate a positive correlation, such an association appears to be largely based on questions that do not elicit a strong response from participants. In other words, rather than claiming that there is a positive correlation between Motivation and Anxiety, it may be more accurate to claim that there is a positive correlation between a wide variety of elements of Motivation and Anxiety, those being the elements for which participants tend to hold relatively mild positions.

#### 4.4 Further Examination and Re-arranging Data

To examine the results more closely, I re-arranged the data for Anxiety to better assess 1) only those participants with the highest mean evaluations ( $n = 16$ ), and 2) only those participants with the lowest mean evaluations ( $n = 16$ ). More specifically, for the re-arranged highest mean assessment evaluation, the first correlation evaluation included all 33 participants; the second correlation evaluation



excluded the highest mean value participant but included the remaining 32 participants. This process continued with the final result being the average correlation of the first 16 participants in the group. For the re-arranged lowest mean assessment evaluation, the same procedure was followed in reverse order. Accordingly, the correlation for highest means was  $r = .706$ , whereas the lowest means average was  $r = .556$ . The same procedure was then followed for Motivation. Accordingly, the correlation for highest means was  $r = .585$ , whereas the lowest means average was  $r = .596$ . Reversing the analysis to exclude the lowest values revealed highly similar results (Anxiety: High = .554; Low = .711; Motivation: High = .596; Low = .581). Although none of the correlations demonstrate statistically significant differences, the result remains intriguing. Indeed, when the data is arranged by means for Anxiety evaluations, the lower half of CV evaluations is significantly higher than the values for the higher half (Low:  $n = 16$ ;  $M = .485$ ; High:  $n = 16$ ;  $M = .318$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Similarly, when the data is arranged by means for Motivation evaluations, the lower half of CV evaluations is significantly higher than the values for the higher half (Low:  $n = 16$ ;  $M = .439$ ; High:  $n = 16$ ;  $M = .355$ ;  $p = .010$ ).

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, the objective was to explore the potential correlation between motivation and foreign language anxiety, aiming to ascertain whether this link was positive or negative. Accordingly, I assessed the relationship and identified how the tendency in participants' responses influence the perceived correlation between the two variables. In addition, the averages of the surveys' questions were assessed showing that all participants' scores in both motivation and foreign language anxiety fall in the middle range. Participants' mild agreement to the surveys' questions have further affirmed the positive correlation observed, however it also suggests that this correlation relied on the elements that did not elicit strong response from the participants. Additionally, I used the coefficient variation to compare the lower half of variation responses to the higher half. Furthermore, I explored if the differences or the similarities in how the participants rated their feelings had any impact on understanding how motivation and anxiety may be connected.

In sum, the results suggest that the association between Anxiety and Motivation is complex. More specifically, the results suggest that both means and correlations may be misleading. That is, a more careful analysis of specific questions needs to be considered, and perhaps a greater focus on those questions that least reflect moderate responses could be useful. The results also suggest that variance in evaluations could reveal a greater understanding of the association. Some results are in the direction of anxiety producing greater variance than motivation, possibly suggesting that Anxiety evaluations have a greater impact on the relationship than Motivation. However, the (ultimately) relatively low participant levels means that such an interpretation should be treated with caution.

### 5.1 Comparing Study Objectives, Hypotheses and Results

Taken as a whole, the correlation observed in the results is in line with the second hypothesis. In addition, to further facilitate the interpretation of the results, the following points outline the predetermined objectives and the obtained results in a comprehensive comparison manner:

1. **Objective 1 and Result 1:** The first objective was to identify if there is a correlation between motivation and FLA and to figure out if this link is positive or negative. Study results suggested a significant positive correlation between the two variables.

2. **Objective 2 and Result 2:** The second objective was to explore whether predominantly moderate evaluation can help better explain the correlation or lack of correlation between motivation and FLA. Study results suggested that, with majority of the survey elements being moderately rated, the type of correlation observed is likely to be between the elements, which evoke mild responses from the participants.
3. **Objective 3 and Result 3:** The third objective was to explore whether assessing the variation can help better understand the association between motivation and FLA. Results suggest that participants with lower average ratings for motivation and FLA, exhibit greater consistency in their evaluations. Therefore, the observed variation in the assessment implies that the correlation between motivation and anxiety was influenced by the consistency in their evaluations, which is based on the strength of their feelings.

## **5.2 Implications**

The results signify the complex interplay between FLA and motivation in the foreign language context. Additionally, the results suggest that the observed positive correlation is primarily linked to elements for which participants expressed neutral opinions rather than reflecting a strong relationship between the two explored variables. A more nuanced understanding of these complex dynamics is crucial. Therefore, understanding the subtle nuances between motivation and anxiety can undoubtedly aid educators and practitioners in tailoring more effective strategies to address these elements in language learning environments.

## **5.3 Limitation and Future Research**

The current study acknowledges potential limitations that require addressing. Through the inconclusive results obtained, it becomes apparent that some potential limitations have contributed to these outcomes; however, they provide intriguing grounds for future research. First, the small sample size raising concerns about the potential impact of common situations, such as unusual responses, incomplete questionnaires, or the survey not being taken seriously by only a few participants, on the results. As such, future research should consider a larger and more diverse sample to minimize the impact of common unfavourable situations that often accompany survey research. Second, the lengthy questionnaire also needs to be considered, which presumably led to a large number of data points being excluded. Future

research should address this issue by streamlining the questionnaire length that can help reduce excluded data points. Third, the study primarily relied on self-report questionnaires to collect the data. While self-report measures have been provided for their effectiveness in many previous studies, they may also introduce potential risks of response bias. Therefore, future research should consider complementing the survey questions with a qualitative component, which would help make deeper insights and enhance the comprehensibility of the survey data.

In addition to the previous three limitation, a fourth limitation is found with an observed small variance in participants' scores. Namely, there is a possibility that the primary variables are not the only factors impacting the correlation. For example, a case in point, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2000) consider the multi-faceted nature of a psychological concept like motivation. That is, they categorize learning motivation into 'motivation for success' and failure avoidance'. Accordingly, they found a positive correlation between motivation for failure avoidance and high anxiety; however, motivation for success was found to be negatively correlated with low anxiety levels. Incorporating other factors or variables advocates for the notion of the multifaceted nature of these psychological factors and may help uncover hidden influences, which consequently leads to a better understanding of the correlation found between the two variables. Therefore, an improved approach to data collection and validation is needed.

Finally, a fifth limitation is that the study has focused solely on the correlation between motivation and FLA not considering the demographic factors. Drawing from existing research, there is an anticipated linkage between learners' gender and nationality with observed FLA levels suggest a need for further exploration. For instance, Gerencheal (2016) explores the differing levels of FLA between male and female students within the foreign language context. Study results suggest that female students reported higher anxiety levels than male students. Similarly, Bećirović (2017) explores the impact of learners' gender and their motivation to learn a foreign language. Results suggest a statistically significant relationship between gender and motivation was found, showing that female learners are more motivated towards learning the foreign language compared to their male peers. Thus, future research should consider incorporating these elements for further exploring the significant impact of gender and nationality on the levels of FLA and motivation.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Despite the limitations, the current study provides crucial insights. That is, the observed association between foreign language anxiety and motivation. Results highlight the importance of exercising caution against exclusive reliance on means and correlation, suggesting the necessity for further analysis of the specific questions that deviate from the moderate responses. Furthermore, the variance observed also offers valuable insights that the relationship between the two variables is not straightforward, suggesting that other variables beyond the scope of this study influencing the relationship. This emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive approach in future research.

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## Appendix A

### Statement of Consent

My signature indicates that I have read the above information and that my questions have been answered. I understand that even after signing this form I may withdraw from the study at any time. I consent to participate in the study.

By checking this box I understand and consent to participate in this study.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

AMTP scale that is conducted by RC Gardner (2004)

This questionnaire is prepared to collect information about your motivational level in English language learning. After reading each statement, please circle the number that appeals to you most. Note that 1 is the lowest score and means “strongly disagree,” whereas 6 is the highest score and means “strongly agree.” There are no right or wrong answers for the items in this questionnaire. Thanks for your contribution.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by selecting a number from 1 to 6 on a scale where 1 represents strong disagreement and 6 represents strong agreement.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

(Ex.) If you strongly agree with the following statement, write this:

Reading is my favorite leisure activity.	1 2 3 4 5 <b>6</b>
1. I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. My parents try to help me to learn English.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my English class	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I look forward to going to class because my English teacher is so good.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Learning English is really great.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. If UAE had no contact with English-speaking countries, it would be a great loss.	1 2 3 4 5 6

8.	Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	I find English language class motivating.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I would get nervous if I had to speak English to a native speaker.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Studying foreign languages in general is not enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	I prioritize understanding all the English I come across, whether written or spoken.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	A teacher role is important in motivating students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Knowing English isn't really an important goal in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	I hate English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	I feel very much at ease when I have to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	I would rather spend more time in my English language class and less in other classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in many foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	I don't usually review my assignments after receiving them back from my English teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	I feel confident when asked to speak in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	Among all my teachers, my English teacher stands out as the most effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6

26. I really enjoy learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Most native English speakers are so friendly and easy to get along with, we are fortunate to have them as friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. If it were up to me, I would spend all of my time learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. I think my English class is engaging.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Appendix C

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) conducted by Horwitz et al,  
(1986)

This questionnaire is prepared to collect information about your level of anxiety of the English language that you experience in classroom atmosphere. After reading each statement, please circle the number which appeals to you most. There are no right or wrong answers for the items in this questionnaire. Thanks for your contribution.

1.	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2.	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3.	I get nervous when I know I'm going to be called on in language class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4.	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5.	I would be open to taking additional foreign language classes.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6.	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7.	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8.	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10.	I worry about the consequences of failing to learn English language.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11.	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12.	In language class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	1 2 3 4 5 6

14.	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	I get upset when I don't understand what part of the language that the teacher is correcting	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	I often feel like not going to my language class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	I feel nervous when I'm going to be called on in language class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	I feel very shy about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	Language class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	I feel more nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules that I have to learn to speak a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language	1	2	3	4	5	6

32.	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	1	2	3	4	5	6



### **Vita**

Mary Boktor, was born in 1992 in Cairo, Egypt. She received her education in middle-class Governmental schools until the secondary level. In 2015, she successfully graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Languages and Translation. Despite initially pursuing a career in translation and gaining valuable experience in the field, her deep passion for teaching led her to explore opportunities in various teaching centers and schools.

In 2018, Ms. Boktor took a vital step in her career by relocating to the United Arab Emirates. She committed herself to this passion by obtaining a certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) from Cambridge in 2019. Subsequently, in 2021, Ms. Boktor commenced her Master's journey in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the American University of Sharjah.