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Volume 35, Issue 4, December 2007, Pages 487-508

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# Anxiety and non-anxiety in a distance language learning environment: The distance factor as a modifying influence

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2007.05.001>

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## Abstract

Foreign language anxiety in classroom-based language learning has a long history of research, but there are fewer studies examining this particular phenomenon with respect to the distance language learner. The isolated context and the physical absence of tutor and peers suggest that FL anxiety might be intensified in a distance setting. A longitudinal study using questionnaires, think-aloud protocols and one-to-one telephone interviews with students enrolled on a distance lower-intermediate French course at The Open University (UK) set out to test this hypothesis and to explore the nature of language anxiety in a distance learning environment and the strategies students use to cope with it. The findings indicated that although there were areas in which distance language learners shared aspects of anxiety with face-to-face learners, the distance factor could be causally linked to some marked differences with regard to the nature and

extent of language anxiety. Moreover, there was evidence that the distance language learning setting may be associated with absence of anxiety for some learners, a finding that merits further investigation.



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## Keywords

Distance language learning; Affect; Language anxiety; Strategies

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