



| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety of Turkish EFL Teachers

Türk İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Yabancı Dil Öğretimi Kaygısı

Yasemin Cansel İskender¹, Merve Savaşçı²

Keywords

- Teaching anxiety
- EFL teacher
- EFL teacher anxiety

Anahtar Kelimeler

- Öğretim kaygısı;
- Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretmeni
- Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretmeni Kaygısı

Received/Başvuru Tarihi
14.03.2023

Accepted / Kabul Tarihi
09.06.2023

Abstract

The purpose of this mixed-method cross-sectional study was twofold: (1) to investigate whether Turkish EFL teachers experience foreign language teaching anxiety, and if so, (2) to identify whether the level of anxiety varies in relation to their individual characteristics, namely gender, their years of experience, school type and grade level they teach at. Participants were a total sample of 94 Turkish in-service EFL teachers working at primary, secondary, and high school levels in public and private schools. Data came from Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed by running descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon-signed rank, Friedman, and Kruskal Wallis H tests, whereas qualitative data were content analysed. Findings indicated that teachers have a low level of teaching anxiety regarding teaching a particular language skill, worrying about target language performance, making mistakes, and being compared to fellow teachers. On the other hand, learners' short attention span, as well as lack of interest and engagement, are among the anxiety-arousing factors. Moreover, weekly teaching loads and the incompatibility of books and the curriculum engender anxiety among teachers. Findings also showed foreign language teaching anxiety varies according to gender, type of school, and school level, whereas it does not vary according to years of teaching experience. The study discusses the implications for in-service teacher training.

Öz

Bu karma yöntemli kesitsel çalışmanın amacı iki yönlüdür: (1) Türk İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yabancı dil öğretiminde kaygı yaşayıp yaşamadıklarını araştırmak ve eğer varsa, (2) kaygı düzeylerinin cinsiyet, deneyim yılları, okul türü ve öğretmenlik yaptıkları sınıf düzeyi gibi bireysel özelliklerine göre değişip değişmediğini belirlemektir. Katılımcılar, devlet ve özel okullarda ilkokul, ortaokul ve lise düzeyinde görev yapan toplam 94 Türk hizmet içi İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, Yabancı Dil Öğretim Kaygısı Ölçeği (FLTAS) ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden elde edilmiştir. Nicel veriler betimsel istatistikler, frekans analizi, Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon işaretli sıralar, Friedman ve Kruskal Wallis H testleri kullanılarak analiz edilirken, nitel veriler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Bulgular, öğretmenlerin belirli bir dil becerisini öğretme, hedef dil performansı hakkında endişelenme, hata yapma ve diğer öğretmenlerle karşılaştırılma konularında düşük düzeyde öğretim kaygısı yaşadıklarını göstermektedir. Öte yandan, öğrencilerin dikkat sürelerinin kısa olması, ilgi ve katılım eksikliği kaygı uyandıran faktörler arasındadır. Ayrıca, haftalık ders yükü ve kitaplarla müfredatın uyumsuzluğu da öğretmenler arasında kaygı yaratmaktadır. Bulgular ayrıca yabancı dil öğretimi kaygısının cinsiyete, okul türüne ve okul seviyesine göre değiştiğini, ancak öğretmenlik deneyimine göre değişmediğini göstermektedir. Çalışma, hizmet içi öğretmen eğitimi için çıkarımları tartışmaktadır.

¹ Corresponded Author, Master's Student, Sakarya University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Sakarya, TÜRKİYE; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5519-0046>

² Assist. Prof. Dr., Sakarya University, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education, Sakarya, TÜRKİYE; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4906-3630>

INTRODUCTION

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Affective factors are considered to play an important role in second/foreign language (L2) teaching processes as much as they do in learning processes, and among the most common affective factors affecting these processes is anxiety. In Freud's words, anxiety is felt as "an unpleasant affective (emotional) state or condition characterized by subjective feelings of chronic apprehension," and all that is covered by the word "nervousness" (1924, p. 79). Citing Spielberger (1983), Horwitz et al. (1986) define anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system" (p. 125) from a general perspective. However, within the specific context of language learning and teaching, there are several certain types of anxiety that have been reported to affect learning and teaching processes considerably. One such type is foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Horwitz et al., 1986). Horwitz et al. (1986) described foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). When the literature is reviewed, it becomes evident that studies on foreign language anxiety have tended to focus on the anxiety of language learners (e.g., Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986) within this context, whereas anxiety experienced by teachers has received far less attention. In fact, it was indicated more than two decades ago that not only foreign language learners but also teachers, in particular non-native foreign language teachers, experience anxiety (Horwitz, 1996). Horwitz (1996) described this particular situation as foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) and it has also been established that such anxiety experienced by teachers can adversely affect not only their personal and professional lives, but also students' lives and learning experiences. Specifically speaking, such anxiety could affect their instructional choices and performance (Aydın & Ustuk, 2020; Horwitz, 1996); effectiveness (Horwitz, 1996; İpek, 2016; Williams, 1991); self-confidence (Horwitz, 1996); job satisfaction (Horwitz, 1996); well-being (Horwitz, 1996; İpek, 2006); and classroom practice, student learning, students' emotions (Fraschini & Park, 2021). Teachers might experience fear or frustration (Kim & Kim, 2004), too. Suffice it to say, FLTA can be characterized as an "occupational hazard" (Kim & Kim, 2004, p. 165). Indeed, as Al-Mashikhi (2009) puts it, "Anxiety is like radiation; beneficial if controlled and directed, but extremely harmful if left unchecked" (p. 35). Accordingly, considering "how central teachers' wellbeing is to their ability to teach to their full potential" (MacIntyre et al., 2019, p. 27), investigating factors evoking anxiety among foreign language teachers deserves more attention.

In other words, given the considerable effect of teachers on learners and learning processes, there should be much more room to focus on teaching anxiety because learner anxiety is strongly affected by teacher anxiety as well. As also reported in a long list of studies, such anxiety could affect the "quality of teaching, learning, and assessment" (MacIntyre, 2016, p. 8). In other words, teachers' well-being and healthy state of mind could affect teaching quality and learner success. As Stevick (1980) maintains, "Success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" (p. 4). Nevertheless, despite its significance, FLTA was investigated mostly among pre-service teachers, especially in the Turkish context (e.g., Güngör & Yaylı, 2012; Han & Takkaç-Tulgar, 2019; Merç, 2011; Tüfekçi-Can, 2018, Tüm, 2019), whereas that experienced by in-service (or practicing) foreign language teachers has received scant attention and been handled only in a few studies from different foreign language teaching contexts and educational levels (e.g., Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Dişli, 2020; Eren, 2020; İpek, 2006; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2004; Öztürk, 2016). Moreover, as put forward by Aydın (2016), even in those limited number of studies, FLTA has been handled from a narrow perspective as most studies associated anxiety either with teachers being non-native speakers of the foreign language they teach or the fact that they experience it due to generic situations regarding the profession. Therefore, he called for a more holistic approach to understanding FLTA. As also indicated in a fairly recent study, Goetze (2023) argued for the significance of further research on FLTA. Accordingly, to expand research on the current literature, this study aims to investigate the foreign language teaching anxiety experienced by teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) specifically from a wider perspective. Although the recent realm for research in the literature has recently tended to focus on positive psychology and the emotions of teachers, negative emotions such as FLTA still have the potential to negatively affect foreign language education processes. After all, the aim of positive psychology is "not to avoid negative emotions" (Norrish & Vella-Brodrick, 2009, p. 276). Indeed, positive and negative emotions have different functions (MacIntyre, 2016).

Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety (FLTA)

Teaching anxiety or teacher anxiety, as stated earlier, is distinct from anxiety in the general sense. It can be defined as "teachers' sense of panic and tension which resulted from their lack of control over both the internal and external teaching environment and teaching events" (Liu et al., 2022, p. 2). As a matter of fact, in the field of language education, foreign language teachers "may not only experience teaching anxiety but also foreign language anxiety" (İpek, 2016, p. 96). Horwitz (1996) was the first to coin the term, who also pointed out that FLTA of non-native ESL/EFL teachers must be recognized, considered, and investigated as she thought such anxiety might negatively affect their instructional choices, too. According to Aydın (2016), FLTA is "an emotional and affective state experienced by a language teacher because of personal, perceptual, motivational, and technical concerns of language teaching before, during, and after the teaching practice" (p. 639). In a similar vein, Tüfekçi-Can

(2018) delineates FLTA as the feeling, belief, and thinking of being incompetent in teaching and practicing a foreign language, as well as in performing the language adequately with real students in a real teaching context. FLTA was defined by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) as a state of uneasiness and tension.

Review of the Literature

Earlier studies on foreign language anxiety conducted so far have mostly focused on foreign language *learning* anxiety (e.g., Horwitz, 1986; Liu & Huang, 2011; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Von Worde, 2003) rather than foreign language *teaching* anxiety. Moreover, those focused on foreign language teaching anxiety were mostly concerned with pre-service teachers' anxiety (e.g., Aydın, 2016; Paker, 2011). On the other hand, research on FLTA levels among in-service teachers has been limited in scope, with only a handful of studies conducted on the subject (e.g., Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Aydın, 2016; Dişli, 2020; İpek, 2016; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Kralova & Tirpakova, 2019; Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2017; Öztürk, 2016; Song & Park, 2019; Williams, 1991). What has also been reported in the literature is that FLTA levels vary, and sources of foreign language anxiety could vary. Literature also suggests that FLTA might also vary by gender, years of teaching experience, as well as type and level of school teachers teach at.

Levels and Sources of Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

Concerning the level and sources of FLTA, it is now well established from a variety of studies that there are varying levels of it, and different variables tend to provoke FLTA experienced by teachers. Among the most commonly cited sources are limited target language proficiency (Horwitz, 1996) and limited linguistic knowledge (Numrich, 1996). Other common sources are demanding workload (e.g., Fraschini & Park, 2021), fear of making mistakes (e.g., İpek, 2016), fear of failure (e.g., İpek, 2006), classroom management (e.g., Kim & Kim, 2004; Paker, 2011), time management (e.g., Aydın & Ustuk, 2020), lack of target language proficiency (e.g., Aydın, 2016; Horwitz, 1996; İpek, 2006, 2016; Kim & Kim, 2004; Öztürk, 2016), inadequacy in content knowledge (e.g., İpek, 2006), the use of native language (e.g., İpek, 2006; Kim & Kim, 2004), student, peer, and supervisor evaluations (e.g., Fraschini & Park, 2021).

Several studies have investigated the sources of FLTA. In the international context, one of the earlier studies was conducted by Kim and Kim (2004), who investigated Korean in-service EFL teachers' (N= 147) anxiety, who were teaching at different grade levels and with different years of teaching experience. Findings showed most had anxiety when required to teach English through English, and having to teach speaking skills was anxiety-provoking for them. Unexpected questions directed by students towards them or not being able to manage the classroom also adversely affected their anxiety. Another study by Aslrasouli and Vahid (2014) focused on Iranian EFL teachers' (N= 114) anxiety. The findings of the study, which employed both novice and experienced teachers, showed that more than half of the teachers experienced anxiety, which derived mostly from interpersonal relations and lack of language proficiency. A comparatively more recent study was conducted in the Korean EFL context by Fraschini and Park (2021). According to their study where they used Q methodology, Korean ESL teachers (N= 45) reported work-life imbalance, student, peer, and supervisor evaluations, being compared to colleagues, and employment uncertainties among the anxiety-provoking factors.

Studies in the Turkish context yielded similar results, too. For example, İpek (2006) stated that making mistakes (e.g., mispronouncing or misspelling a word, making a grammar mistake), insecurity in teaching certain skills (e.g., teaching writing), fear of failure (e.g., in giving clear instructions) were anxiety-provoking for non-native EFL teachers' (N= 32) who were English instructors teaching at the university level. Similarly, Kesen and Aydın (2014) investigated Turkish EFL instructors' (N= 35) anxiety and reported that they had moderate levels of anxiety. However, since the study adopted a quantitative design and data came from only a scale, details regarding the reasons were not discussed in depth. Öztürk (2016) likewise showed in his mixed-method study that Turkish EFL instructors (N= 103) had a moderate level of foreign language teaching anxiety but experienced more anxiety when they were required to teach a skill at which they were not much competent. Also, perceived limited knowledge of target language items (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary), students' manners, and limited knowledge of target culture were among other primary anxiety-provoking factors. A recent study by Eren (2020) investigated native (N= 53) and non-native (N= 180) EFL instructors' FLTA, who were working at Turkish universities. Findings showed that participants overall had low levels of FLTA, whereas non-native instructors had higher levels of FLTA. Target language performance, making mistakes, and using students' L1 were among the top anxiety-provoking factors for them. Similarly, Dişli (2020) also administered the FLTAS to 151 EFL teachers at high schools and found that they had moderate levels of anxiety. Her mixed-method study illustrated that using the native language, teaching a particular language skill, making mistakes, teaching students at a particular level, learners' attitudes, and misuse of the technology were anxiety provoking.

As reported, the literature includes a limited number of studies. Also, studies in the Turkish context were mostly conducted with EFL instructors teaching at public or private universities, except for one study (i.e., Dişli, 2020). The literature review suggests that foreign language teachers experience different levels of teaching anxiety, and a number of different factors tend to result in such experience. As such, these factors are not only concerned with themselves but also with language learners, teaching environment, and profession. Indeed, their anxiety could vary according to other different variables, too.

Demographic Factors Related to Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

Concerning the level and sources of FLTA, it is now well established from a variety of studies that there are varying levels of it, and different variables tend to provoke FLTA experienced by teachers. FLTA is a complex phenomenon that can be influenced by various demographic factors. Some of the most commonly studied demographic factors related to FLTA include gender, years of teaching experience, and school type and grade level taught.

For example, with respect to the potential differences between male and female teachers in terms of their FLTA levels, literature shows that very few studies were conducted (i.e., Aslrasoulia & Vahid, 2014; Aydın & Uştuk, 2020; Eren, 2020; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Öztürk, 2016). Also, the generalisability of these earlier studies appears to be problematic as they produced inconclusive findings. Some of these studies reported no significant variance across genders (e.g., Aslrasoulia & Vahid, 2014; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Öztürk, 2016). Furthermore, while it was asserted in a study conducted by Aydın and Uştuk (2020) that male teachers experience more anxiety than female teachers, in Eren's (2020) study, findings indicated that female instructors had higher levels of teaching anxiety than their male counterparts, yielding statistically significant differences.

In another line of research, researchers investigated whether FLTA varies according to years of teaching experience. Whereas there was only one study (i.e., Tseng, 2005) that discovered no connection between anxiety level and experience year, the majority of earlier studies suggested that they are somehow linked. Most suggested that FLTA decreases as teachers gain more experience (Aslrasoulia & Vahid, 2014; Aydın & Uştuk, 2020; Canessa, 2004; Eren, 2020; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Öztürk, 2016). However, Aslrasouli and Vahid (2014) reported that both novice and experienced teachers suffer from high levels of anxiety, but experienced teachers have less tension than novice ones. However, other studies reported significant differences. Öztürk (2016), for example, reported a significant difference among Turkish EFL instructors (N= 103) having different years of experience. Those having more teaching experience (i.e., +16 years) tended to experience lower levels of teaching anxiety than did those having less experience (i.e., -10 years). Eren (2020) likewise reported significant differences. Specifically, teachers having 6-10 years of experience had higher levels of anxiety than did those having over 21 years of experience. In other words, more experienced teachers had lower levels of anxiety. From another perspective, contradictory findings were also reported in the literature. For example, in Kim and Kim's (2004) mixed-method study with Korean EFL teachers, those who had more than 10 years of teaching experience reported higher levels of anxiety as compared to those having less than 10 years of experience. They interpreted this finding by discussing the potential fear of teachers to change their teaching style and adapt to curricular and student-related changes.

When it comes to the studies investigating the variance of foreign language anxiety according to school type and grade level taught, there are few studies and those yielded contradictory findings. For instance, high school teachers, according to Aydın and Uştuk (2020), were more worried about the fear of making mistakes, whereas public school teachers are more concerned with the use of target language in lectures, time management, and being unprepared for courses. On the other hand, Kim and Kim (2004) found that secondary school teachers had greater levels of foreign language teaching anxiety than elementary school teachers. However, in Kim and Kim's study with Korean EFL teachers, (N= 147) middle school teachers reported having higher levels of anxiety compared to elementary school teachers, yet this difference was not statistically significant. Overall, it can be suggested that FLTA varies according to school type and grade level taught as well as it does in different teaching contexts.

Overall, this literature review shows that these demographic factors could play a significant role in the development and experience of FLTA among foreign language teachers. Also, the relationship between demographic factors and FLTA is a complex issue and further research is needed to establish a clear understanding of the relationship.

Significance of the Study and Research Questions

FLTA is a complex phenomenon that can have a significant impact on teaching and learning processes. However, as the body of research indicated, research on anxiety has mainly focused on language learners' or pre-service language teachers' teaching anxiety (e.g., Tüfekçi-Can, 2018), whereas there is scant knowledge regarding teaching anxiety that in-service teachers experience. As such, earlier findings disclosed that there are very few studies that addressed the issue of FLTA among in-service EFL teachers (e.g., Aydın, 2021). Moreover, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, FLTA has not been investigated in-depth according to different variables, either. For example, despite the fact that there has been some research investigating FLTA levels across school types and grade levels teachers teach at, they are very few and inconclusive (e.g., Aydın & Uştuk, 2020). Moreover, regarding gender, no research until now has considered a balanced gender-based involvement of males and females in the same study. In other words, women clearly outnumbered males in all such studies, producing inconclusive findings and making their interpretations imprecise. Similarly, earlier studies reported inconclusive findings with respect to the variances of FLTA levels according to teachers' years of experience.

To sum up, these highlight the importance of further research on the relationship between demographic factors and FLTA. The inconclusive and conflicting results of previous research highlight the need for additional study in order to establish a clear understanding of this relationship. Given the limitations of earlier studies and the so-called gap in the literature, this study aims to investigate whether Turkish EFL teachers experience foreign language teaching anxiety and, if so, identify the level of anxiety as well as whether its level varies according to individual characteristics, namely gender, years of teaching experience, grade level and school type teachers work at. Accordingly, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Do Turkish in-service EFL teachers experience foreign language teaching anxiety? If so, what is their self-perceived anxiety level?
2. Does the foreign language teaching anxiety level of Turkish in-service EFL teachers vary according to
 - a. gender?
 - b. years of teaching experience?
 - c. school type they teach at (i.e., public or private)?
 - d. grade level they teach at (i.e., primary, secondary, and high school)?

METHODOLOGY

Design

The present study adopted a mixed-method research design that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Of the mixed-method research typologies, the sequential order of the "QUAN→qual" sequence was followed. The quantitative methods were used first to concentrate more on the study's purpose, and the qualitative methods were used later to help explain the quantitative findings. Researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methods in this design (Creswell & Clark, 2011). As a result, as additional results throughout the study, a thorough grasp of the participants' degree of anxiety related to teaching foreign languages, as well as the underlying causes, was offered. A cross-sectional research design was also adopted for this study.

Participants

Participants were a total of 94 Turkish non-native EFL in-service teachers (46 males and 48 females) performing the teaching profession in one of the largest cities located in the Marmara Region of Turkey. Their participation was voluntary, and their consent was taken. Also, they were informed they could withdraw from the study if they wanted to. While choosing the participants, balanced gender-based participation of males and females was purposefully ensured to reduce the potential problem that might arise from women outnumbering men (Farhadi, 2021). In order to achieve the desired sample size, a combination of purposive and convenience sampling was used, as random sampling would not have provided enough male participants. Purposive sampling involves hand-picking participants based on their typicality or possession of specific characteristics that match the researchers' requirements, while convenience sampling entails selecting the nearest available and accessible individuals as participants and repeating the process until the desired sample size is reached. Participants varied in terms of their gender, years of teaching experience, and school type and grade level they teach at. Details regarding the demographics of the participants are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of participants (N= 94)

Demographics	Value	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	48%
	Female	48	52%
Years of teaching experience	1-5	25	27%
	6-10	21	22%
	11-15	22	23%
	16-20	13	14%
	21 and above	13	14%
School type they teach at	Public	48	52%
	Private	46	48%
Grade level they teach at	Primary	32	34%
	Secondary	31	33%
	High school	31	33%

Data Collection Tools

Data for this mixed-method study came from quantitative and qualitative data collection tools: a scale and interviews. Quantitative data came from the Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) (İpek, 2006), which was used as the main data collection tool for this study in order to measure foreign language teaching anxiety of Turkish EFL teachers. It consisted of 26 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually, 5 = always). Participants were presented with statements and invited to choose the most appropriate option for them, which referred to the level of anxiety they experience for each statement. The scale consists of five factors: 1) anxiety in teaching a particular language skill, 2) worry about target language performance, 3) making mistakes, 4) being compared to fellow teachers, and 5) using the native language. To avoid bias or misunderstandings, the original Turkish form of the scale was used. This scale was chosen given that it is a reliable and valid scale developed for Turkish EFL teachers. In addition to its high reliability and validity statistics demonstrated by İpek (2006), the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .91 in this study, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. Table 2 presents the reliability coefficients of the scale in detail. .

Table 2. Reliability coefficients of FLTAS

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	n of Items
Anxiety in teaching a particular language skill	.87	7
Worry about target language performance	.81	8
Making mistakes	.72	6
Being compared to fellow teachers	.84	2
Using the native language	.34	3
Overall	.91	26

To elicit in-depth data on FLTA and triangulate the data, qualitative data were also collected via individual semi-structured interviews. Researchers developed an interview protocol consisting of eight questions to obtain in-depth data on foreign language teaching anxiety. The validity of the protocol was ensured through expert opinions. Opinions of two experts in the field were elicited in terms of its meaningfulness and clarity, and several revisions were made to the protocol afterwards. The final form of the interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used to conduct semi-structured interviews.

Data Collection

Data collection procedure consisted of two phases mainly: (1) quantitative and (2) qualitative data collection. Data were collected face-to-face by visiting schools, and meeting and inviting teachers to participate in the study. Before collecting data, the procedure was initiated by providing the participants with a thorough explanation of the purpose and methodology of the study, along with the rationale behind the choice of subject. It was emphasized to the participants that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time they felt the need to. The researchers also ensured that the participants' answers and personal information would be kept confidential and anonymous.

To collect quantitative data, an online form version of the Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) was created. The form was then published online, and the participants were invited to complete it. This was done to make the process of data collection more convenient and accessible for the participants, allowing them to complete the form at their own pace and in a location of their choice. The use of an online form also ensured that the data collected was accurate, consistent, and free from human error. The online form version of the questionnaire and FLTAS was designed to capture the data in a systematic and standardized manner, which was critical for the validity of the study results.

After the elicitation of data through the scale, the researchers also carried out individual semi-structured interviews with ten of these participants to collect in-depth data. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) purported, interviews are used in order to "gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 103). Among those who agreed to participate in interviews, a total of 10 teachers were purposefully selected. The interviewees were carefully selected based on their gender, years of experience, school type, and grade level they taught at, since these demographic variables are deemed to be factors in determining their level of FLTA. Interview sessions were conducted face-to-face in either Turkish or English, depending on the preferences of the interviewees. This approach was taken to ensure that they felt comfortable and relaxed during the interview and that their responses were genuine and accurate. The researchers did not have any conflict of interest, either. Approximately 20 minutes were spent on each interview. Before conducting the interview, all ethical principles were observed, and participants' informed consent was obtained.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data coming from FLTAS were analysed by using SPSS software. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were run. First, before inferential statistics, data were screened for normality. Since data were not distributed normally, nonparametric tests were used. In order to answer RQ1, descriptive statistics and frequency analysis were performed. Moreover, Friedman and post-hoc Wilcoxon signed rank tests were run to compare factors of FLTAS. For RQ2, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis H tests were performed. These statistical analyses are non-parametric methods used to compare two or more independent groups. The Mann-Whitney U test compares the medians of two groups to determine whether or not the differences are statistically significant. The Kruskal Wallis H test compares the medians of multiple independent groups and determines whether there are statistically significant differences between the groups. The purpose of these tests was to ascertain whether there were significant differences in anxiety levels between the various participant groups.

As for qualitative collected through semi-structured interviews, Stempel's (1989) framework for content analysis was utilized. This structure included six steps: (1) developing research questions or objectives, (2) selecting communication content and sample, (3) developing content categories, (4) finalizing units of analysis, (5) developing a coding schedule, (6) conducting experimental testing, and (7) confirming inter-coder reliability and data analysis. After verbatim transcription of the interviews, the researchers checked the data for any gaps. The emergent themes were then allocated frequencies based on the initial codes. This method was utilized to identify and classify themes in qualitative data and to summarize the findings.

FINDINGS

Scale

Levels of foreign language teaching anxiety

Findings regarding the levels of FLTA demonstrated that Turkish EFL teachers experience a moderate level of anxiety ($M=50.41$, $SD=15.28$). Table 3 presents FLTA levels across factors.

Table 3. FLTA levels across factors

Factor	N	Highest score	Mean	Mdn	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Anxiety in teaching a particular language skill	94	35	14.12	13	5.83	7	28	.673	-.519
Worry about target language performance	94	40	11.93	11	4.10	8	27	1.497	2.546
Making mistakes	94	30	11.28	11	4.10	6	22	.584	-.324
Being compared to fellow teachers	94	10	5.75	6	2.69	2	10	.135	-1.114
Using the native language	94	15	7.30	7	2.21	3	13	.237	.117
FLTAS Overall	94	130	50.41	47	15.28	26	92	.716	.145

As reported, being compared to fellow teachers and using the native language as compared to other factors were more anxiety-arousing factors for teachers. The Friedman test was also conducted to investigate whether there are differences across the factors of FLTAS. Findings illustrated a statistically significant difference depending on the factors, $\chi^2(2) = 240.572$, $p = 0.000$. To examine which factors actually differed, post-hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were run with a Bonferroni adjustment and the significance level was set to $p < 0.000$. Significant differences were found between all factors except for the one between making mistakes and worrying about target language performance ($Z = -1.507$, $p = 0.132$).

FLTA levels were investigated separately for five sub-factors, too. Findings regarding anxiety about the instruction of a specific language skill showed the majority of Turkish EFL teachers experience a low level of anxiety. As shown in Table 4, they reported low levels of anxiety about their ability to teach reading (\bar{X} = 1.83) or writing (\bar{X} = 1.97) effectively, whereas teaching oral skills, namely listening (\bar{X} = 2.23) and speaking (\bar{X} = 2.24), were more anxiety-provoking for them. Indeed, anxiety about their ability to teach grammar (\bar{X} = 2.30) had the highest mean score.

Table 4. Levels of anxiety about teaching a particular language skill (N= 94)

Items	Frequencies					Mean	Median	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Usually (%)	Always (%)				
10. I worry about not being able to teach grammar effectively.	35.1 (33)	23.4 (22)	25.5 (24)	8.5 (8)	7.4 (7)	2.30	2.00	.128	1.243
11. I feel uncomfortable when teaching a skill in which I feel I am not proficient enough.	34 (32)	33 (31)	26.6 (25)	5.3 (5)	1.1 (1)	2.06	2.00	.099	.959
12. I worry about not being able to teach listening effectively.	34 (32)	28.7 (27)	21.3 (20)	11.7 (11)	4.3 (4)	2.23	2.00	.120	1.168
16. I worry about not being able to teach speaking effectively.	34 (32)	31.9 (30)	17 (16)	9.6 (9)	7.4 (7)	2.24	2.00	.127	1.233
22. I worry about not being able to teach reading effectively.	51.1 (48)	26.6 (25)	14.9 (14)	3.2 (3)	4.3 (4)	1.83	1.00	.111	1.074
23. I feel uneasy when I am teaching listening topics.	69.1 (65)	18.1 (17)	9.6 (9)	1.1 (1)	2.1 (2)	1.49	1.00	.090	.877
24. I worry about not being able to teach writing effectively.	43.6 (41)	28.7 (27)	19.1 (18)	4.3 (4)	4.3 (4)	1.97	2.00	.113	1.092

Concerning teachers' worries about target language performance, teachers experience a low level of anxiety. Giving instructions in English or speaking English in class were not anxiety-arousing, yet a striking finding was that they felt comparatively more anxious while teaching high-proficiency learners. Indeed, although the majority of teachers (63.8%) never or rarely felt nervous while teaching English to learners with a high proficiency level (\bar{X} = 2.19), this was comparatively higher as compared to other statements. Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5. Levels of anxiety about worrying about target language performance (N= 94)

Items	Frequencies					Mean	Median	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Usually (%)	Always (%)				
6. I feel nervous when teaching English to students with an average proficiency level.	68.1 (64)	23.4 (22)	6.4 (6)	1.1 (1)	1.1 (1)	1.44	1.00	.078	.756
7. I feel tense when I am giving instructions in English.	79.8 (75)	13.8 (13)	6.4 (6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.27	1.00	.059	.571
9. I think my knowledge of English is not good enough to teach in English.	91.5 (86)	6.4 (6)	1.1 (1)	1.1 (1)	0 (0)	1.12	1.00	.045	.436

13. I worry about not being able to give clear instructions in English.	75.5 (71)	17 (16)	5.3 (5)	1.1 (1)	1.1 (1)	1.35	1.00	.075	.729
14. I feel nervous when speaking English in class.	78.7 (74)	18.1 (17)	2.1 (2)	1.1 (1)	0 (0)	1.26	1.00	.056	.547
15. I feel nervous when teaching English to students with a high proficiency level.	34 (32)	29.8 (28)	24.5 (23)	6.4 (6)	5.3 (5)	2.19	2.00	.117	1.139
18. Teaching English to students with a high level of language proficiency makes me feel uneasy.	50 (47)	23.4 (22)	20.2 (19)	3.2 (3)	3.2 (3)	1.86	1.50	.109	1.053
20. I feel uneasy when I am teaching speaking topics.	67 (63)	21.3 (20)	10.6 (10)	1.1 (1)	0 (0)	1.46	1.00	.075	.728

As to teachers' FLTA levels about making mistakes, as reported in Table 6, grammar-related issues were anxiety-provoking as almost half of the participants agreed with grammar-related statements. Namely, teachers rated higher levels of FLTA for worrying about making grammar mistakes (\bar{X} = 2.31) and not being able to answer a grammar question (\bar{X} = 2.30).

Table 6. Levels of anxiety about making mistake (N= 94)

Items	Frequencies					Mean	Median	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Usually (%)	Always (%)				
2. The thought of making a grammar mistake worries me.	31.9 (30)	23.4 (22)	31.9 (30)	7.4 (7)	5.3 (5)	2.31	2.00	.119	1.155
3. I feel anxious about my students testing my knowledge of English.	53.2 (50)	24.5 (23)	13.8 (13)	7.4 (7)	1.1 (1)	1.79	1.00	.105	1.015
4. The thought of making a spelling mistake on the board disturbs me.	42.6 (40)	27.7 (26)	18.1 (17)	9.6 (9)	2.1 (2)	2.01	2.00	.113	1.092
5. I get so nervous when I am teaching English that I forget the things that I know.	88.3 (83)	9.6 (9)	2.1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.14	1.00	.042	.404
21. I am afraid of my students criticizing my knowledge of English.	57.4 (54)	22.3 (21)	12.8 (12)	3.2 (3)	4.3 (4)	1.74	1.00	.111	1.077
25. I would feel uneasy about not being able to answer a grammar question.	34 (32)	33 (31)	12.8 (12)	9.6 (9)	10.6 (10)	2.30	2.00	.136	1.318

Concerning FLTA levels about being compared to fellow teachers, findings revealed that teachers felt anxious about these statements. Although almost forty percent of teachers never or rarely felt so, the majority of them, namely almost 60 percent, appeared to experience anxiety and felt uncomfortable when their English teaching methods or knowledge were compared to that of other teachers. Table 7 presents the results in depth.

Table 7. Levels of anxiety about being compared to fellow teachers (N= 94)

Items	Frequencies					Mean	Median	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Usually (%)	Always (%)				
8. I feel uncomfortable when my English knowledge is compared to that of other teachers.	27.7 (26)	10.6 (10)	28.7 (27)	11.7 (11)	21.3 (20)	2.88	3.00	.153	1.480
19. I feel uneasy when my English teaching methods are compared to that of other teachers.	22.3 (21)	18.1 (17)	30.9 (29)	7.4 (7)	21.3 (20)	2.87	3.00	.146	1.416

Regarding the use of native language (i.e., Turkish) use during the class, EFL teachers' FLTA levels are on average level. While most teachers reported feeling uneasy while using Turkish in the class (\bar{X} = 3.55), they rarely felt uneasy when they thought about having used Turkish during the lesson (\bar{X} = 2.03) or making a mistake while teaching English (\bar{X} = 1.72).

Table 8. Levels of anxiety about using the native language (N= 94)

Items	Frequencies					Mean	Median	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Usually (%)	Always (%)				
1. I feel uncomfortable when I use Turkish in the class.	12.8 (12)	8.5 (8)	26.6 (25)	14.9 (14)	37.2 (35)	3.55	4.00	.144	1.396
17. I feel uncomfortable when I think about having used Turkish during the lesson.	42.6 (40)	21.3 (20)	27.7 (26)	7.4 (7)	1.1 (1)	2.03	2.00	.108	1.052
26. I feel anxious about making a mistake while teaching English.	50 (47)	30.9 (29)	16 (15)	3.2 (3)	0 (0)	1.72	1.50	.087	.848

Gender

Findings of the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that female teachers (\bar{X} = 45.85) had comparatively lower levels of anxiety compared to male teachers (\bar{X} = 49.22). In other words, male teachers had higher FLTA levels, including all the factors. This difference was not statistically significant ($U= 1025$, $p= .550$), though. Table 9 presents the findings in detail.

Table 9. FLTA across gender

Factor	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	Sig. (p)
Anxiety in teaching a particular language skill	Male	46	49.77	999.5	.391
	Female	48	45.32		
Worry about target language performance	Male	46	48.07	1078	.655
	Female	48	46.96		
Making mistakes	Male	46	48.28	1068	.784
	Female	48	46.75		
Being compared to fellow teachers	Male	46	48.77	1045.5	.842

	Female	48	46.28		
	Male	46	49.92		
Using the native language				992.5	.428
	Female	48	45.18		
	Male	46	49.22		
FLTAS Overall				1025	.550
	Female	48	45.85		

Years of Teaching Experience

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to investigate whether FLTA levels vary across teachers having different years of teaching experience. Findings did not yield a statistically significant difference in FLTA levels according to years of teaching experience, $\chi^2(2) = 2.364$, $p = .669$, with a mean rank FLTA level of 50.80 for novice teachers (i.e., those having 1-5 years of teaching experience) and 37.35 for experienced teachers (i.e., those having 21 or more years of experience). Differences in the factors were not significant, either.

Table 10. Factors across experience

Factor	Years of Teaching Experience	n	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig. (p)
	1-5	25	49.36		
	6-10	21	50.07		
Anxiety in teaching a particular language skill	11-15	22	49.11	1.353	.852
	16-20	13	42.73		
	21 and above	13	41.81		
	1-5	25	52.68		
	6-10	21	49.71		
Worry about target language performance	11-15	22	44.64	2.698	.610
	16-20	13	47.62		
	21 and above	13	38.69		
	1-5	25	48.86		
	6-10	21	49.45		
Making mistakes	11-15	22	46.45	4.385	.356
	16-20	13	56.19		
	21 and above	13	34.81		

	1-5	25	49.62		
	6-10	21	47.81		
Being compared to fellow teachers	11-15	22	45.30	1.597	.809
	16-20	13	53.08		
	21 and above	13	41.08		
	1-5	25	53.68		
	6-10	21	49.26		
Using the native language	11-15	22	45.23	5.870	.209
	16-20	13	51.50		
	21 and above	13	32.62		
	1-5	25	50.80		
	6-10	21	49.17		
FLTAS Overall	11-15	22	46.75	2.364	.669
	16-20	13	49.88		
	21 and above	13	37.35		

School Type

The findings of the Mann-Whitney U test, which was performed to find out whether there is a difference in teachers' FLTA levels according to the type of school they teach at, indicated a mean difference between those who teach at private school ($\bar{X}=48.36$) and public school ($\bar{X}=46.68$). Nevertheless, this difference was not statistically significant ($U=1064$, $p=.765$). As posited in Table 11, compared to public school counterparts, private school teachers had higher anxiety in teaching a particular language skill, being compared to fellow teachers, and using the native language, albeit not significantly.

Table 11. FLTA across school types

Factor	School type	n	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	Sig. (p)
Anxiety in teaching a particular language skill	Public	48	46.73	1067	.779
	Private	46	48.30		
Worry about target language performance	Public	48	47.58	1100	.976
	Private	46	47.41		
Making mistakes	Public	48	47.82	1088.5	.906
	Private	46	47.16		
Being compared to fellow teachers	Public	48	45.72	1018.5	.513
	Private	46	49.36		

Using the native language	Public	48	42.83	880	.085
	Private	46	52.37		
FLTAS Overall	Public	48	46.68	1064.5	.765
	Private	46	48.36		

Grade Level

Findings with respect to grade level, as illustrated in Table 12, showed that teachers teaching at the high school level had the highest level of anxiety (\bar{X} = 52.68), whereas it was comparatively lower among those teaching at the middle school (\bar{X} = 46.69) and elementary school (\bar{X} = 43.27). In all factors, high school teachers had the highest FLTA level. Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed, however, the difference across grade levels was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(2)$ = 1.917, p = .383), nor were they in the factors. Specifically, high school EFL teachers felt more anxious about their students testing their English knowledge (p = .001) and making mistakes while teaching English (p = .012). Furthermore, they felt more uneasy while teaching speaking topics (p = .01) than elementary and secondary school teachers.

Table 12. FLTA across grade levels

Factor	Grade Level	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig. (p)
Anxiety in teaching a particular language skill	Elementary	32	46.50	.293	.864
	Middle	31	46.37		
	High	31	49.66		
Worry about target language performance	Elementary	32	41.73	3.436	.179
	Middle	31	46.69		
	High	31	54.26		
Making mistakes	Elementary	32	41.47	4.799	0.91
	Middle	31	45.27		
	High	31	55.95		
Being compared to fellow teachers	Elementary	32	48.41	.915	.633
	Middle	31	50.21		
	High	31	43.85		
Using the native language	Elementary	32	40.75	5.900	.052
	Middle	31	45.26		
	High	31	56.71		
FLTAS Overall	Elementary	32	43.27	1.917	.383
	Middle	31	46.69		
	High	31	52.68		

Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the major sources of foreign language teaching anxiety with purposively selected 10 EFL teachers based on their years of experience and convenience. Table 13 presents the findings derived from the content analysis.

Table 13. Sources of foreign language teaching anxiety

Themes	Codes	Frequencies
Time Management	Lack of weekly lesson hours	3
	Syllabus and book mismatch	2
	Limited time for speaking, and pronunciation	3
	Short attention span	2
Classroom management	Lack of learner's interest and engagement	1
	Exam-oriented study	2
Knowledge of Target Language	Unexpected questions	1
	Teaching grammar	2

Interview findings illustrated that time management was the main cause of anxiety for the teachers working at primary and secondary schools. According to teachers, two or three hours a week is insufficient to meet the intended learning objectives, and in terms of the course of the subjects, there is a discrepancy between the textbook and the curriculum. On this issue, interviewees 1, 3, and 4 elucidated the following:

"Since the time allocated for English lessons in primary school is two hours a week, I always endeavour to cover the topics given in the curriculum and cannot make time for speaking and pronunciation. On the one hand, there is an examination system that is enforced, but on the other hand, pupils are expected to speak English. How can both be possible at the same time?" (Interviewee 1)

"The way in which the curriculum guides us may generate some issues. The first unit of the fifth-grade book, for example, begins with a strong emphasis on the present tense, but the simple tense is not mentioned in the curriculum. The teacher either has to take it on his own initiative and start the subject somehow or has to wait for two units because children do not understand anything, and you are continuously attempting to teach them anything on a subject they do not understand. This leads to a great deal of anxiety." (Interviewee 3)

"I only have three hours of lessons per week with a class. In my experience, if I only speak English in class, the student avoids and even despises the class." (Interviewee 4)

In addition to these, classroom management was also one of the causes of anxiety among teachers. While primary school teachers tended to feel anxious resulting from the short attention span of learners, teachers working at high school tended to experience anxiety regarding students' interest in English decreased as they boned for the university exam. Excerpts from interviewees demonstrated how these factors can cause instructors to experience anxiety:

"The thing that makes me anxious is students' generally indifferent and careless attitude in learning English as they do not responsible for English in the university entrance exam. In particular, the priority of senior students is numerical courses, and they try to solve math questions while I am teaching English." (Interviewee 5)

"...sometimes I feel like I am losing control." (Interviewee 7)

".. the kids (young learners) have a short attention span. It can be sometimes tiresome and hard to get the control back, their focus back." (Interviewee 8)

As shown in Table 10, issues with knowledge of the target language were also reported among the anxiety-provoking factors. Some teachers indicated that teaching grammar and answering unexpected questions also engendered anxiety. On this issue, interviewees 1, 7, and 4 uttered the following:

"If the students compare me to another instructor, it makes me anxious." (Interviewee 1)

"I feel very confident when I am teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening, but I experience anxiety while I am teaching grammar...sometimes not always." (Interviewee 7)

"I feel anxious while I am teaching grammar. My knowledge of grammar is good, but the way I teach grammar may not be suitable for every student all the time." (Interviewee 4)

DISCUSSION

RQ1 inquired as to whether Turkish EFL teachers experience FLTA, and if so, identify their anxiety levels. Findings revealed that Turkish EFL teachers experience FLTA, but at a low level. FLTA is not based on their self-perceptions of target language performance. Besides, teaching a particular skill does not engender any kind of anxiety among teachers, even if they are not proficient enough in that skill. Although prior studies (e.g., Horwitz, 1996; Tum, 2012; Öztürk, 2016) indicated that thoughts of being inadequate in the target language have an effect on FLTA, the current study manifests that they have no significant impact on EFL teachers' anxiety levels. In addition, they experience anxiety at a moderate level when they make a mistake or are compared to fellow teachers. They never feel anxious when speaking English in class, whereas they usually feel uneasy while using Turkish in class. On the other hand, when the teachers were given the choice of answering in Turkish or English during the interview while collecting data for the qualitative part of the study, most teachers answered the questions in Turkish. This could demonstrate that the survey responses and the teachers' true feelings are not the same and the concept of anxiety is not understood well enough among teachers; it is misinterpreted as something bad and discreditable, and therefore it is possible that it is rejected. This is actually related to what Horwitz (1996) said, "teachers of any subject matter are expected to be experts in that area". Although extensive research has been carried out on FLTA, no single study exists which adequately examines the differences between the responses given in scale and interview.

RQ2 sought whether FLTA varies by gender, years of teaching experience, and type of school and grade level teachers taught at. Regarding gender, findings showed a difference between male and female teachers' levels of FLTA, with male teachers experiencing higher anxiety levels. These findings concur only with those of Aydın and Uştuk's study (2020), where male teachers were more anxious than female counterparts. There could be potential interpretations of this finding. For example, cultural norms and gender roles could be influential. As the Turkish context is a context where traditional gender roles matter, this could have put more pressure on the male teachers, thereby increasing their FLTA. Or, findings could be specific to this sample size and characteristics, too. Although there have also been studies that did not report any difference between male and female teachers, their findings were not probably significant because the number of female instructors in the sample was larger than the number of male teachers (e.g., Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Öztürk, 2016; Paker, 2011).

Findings also illustrated differences in FLTA levels between teachers with varied years of experience, albeit not significantly. Novice teachers having 1-5 years of experience had the highest FLTA level, whereas experienced teachers having 21 or more years of experience had the lowest FLTA level. This finding concurs with earlier studies suggesting that FLTA decreases as teachers gain more experience (e.g., Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Aydın & Uştuk, 2020; Canessa, 2004; Eren, 2020; Kesen & Aydın, 2014; Öztürk, 2016). Indeed, teaching experience has been stated to have a positive influence on reducing teacher anxiety and boosting teaching confidence (Ganschow et al., 1994). Still, the relationship between experience and FLTA is complicated, and it is worth noting that it may be affected by a number of potential variables, including the teaching context, instructor self-efficacy, and personal beliefs and attitudes.

Additionally, findings yielded that teachers working at private schools felt comparatively more anxious than those working at public schools, although it was not a statistically significant difference. To the best of researchers' knowledge, there is one study which investigated this variable (i.e., Aydın & Uştuk, 2020), and this finding contradicts theirs. In their study, they reported that public school teachers were more anxious about the use of target language in lectures. However, given that participants were from diverse nationalities, educational systems and the differences between private-public schools could highly vary. Regarding the interpretation of the finding of this study, it is potential that working conditions and expectations from teachers are different in public schools compared to those in private schools. Parents, students, and school management are more likely to have higher expectations from teachers at private schools. Indeed, this could be supported by the finding that using the native language was the most anxiety-provoking factor for private school teachers in this study. It is also possible that students at private schools have higher proficiency levels or expectations, which would result in teachers experiencing FLTA levels. Overall, it is important to consider the cultural, social, and economic differences between public and private schools, which may also contribute to these differences in FLTA.

With respect to grade level, teachers teaching at the high school level had the highest level of anxiety, whereas it was comparatively lower among those teaching at the middle and elementary school, respectively. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Still, this finding is consistent with previous research that has found that teaching at higher levels can increase stress levels among teachers (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Higher education teachers may feel more pressured to perform and be evaluated by their students, leading to higher levels of anxiety. On the other hand, teachers working at high schools felt more anxious, in line with Kesen and Aydın's (2014) and Aydın and Uştuk's (2020) research, regarding making a mistake while teaching English and their students testing their knowledge of English. Higher levels of anxiety among high school teachers can be attributed to the possibility that high school students may be more demanding and less tolerant than their younger counterparts. In addition, findings of this study indicated that high school instructors felt more anxious about testing their students' English proficiency and making mistakes while teaching English. This finding is consistent with earlier research indicating that teacher anxiety is frequently associated with evaluation and assessment anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Findings also concur with Kim and Kim's (2004) study, where they reported that middle school teachers reported having higher levels of anxiety compared to elementary school teachers.

Based on interview findings, a noteworthy discovery was the existence of anxiety-inducing factors associated with the incompatibility between textbook and curriculum materials. This has resulted in teachers experiencing unease and uncertainty regarding the prioritization of either the textbook, or the curriculum or focusing solely on enhancing speaking skills. In addition, learners' short attention spans as well as lack of interest and engagement were among the factors that lead to anxiety in Turkish EFL teachers. As reported in Aydın and Uştuk (2020)'s study that investigated English language teachers' perceptions of student motivation and engagement in the classroom, lack of student interest and attention was also a source of teacher anxiety.

In a nutshell, this study illustrated that Turkish EFL teachers experienced moderate levels of anxiety, which could primarily be attributed to specific situations and events within the classroom. These findings lend credence to the fact that this type of anxiety, often referred to as situation-specific anxiety, is oftentimes characterized by feelings of unease, nervousness, and uncertainty that are triggered by particular events or situations, such as textbook and curriculum incompatibility. This aligns with prior research conducted by Horwitz (2010) and Aydın and Uştuk (2020), who emphasized the connection between particular circumstances and occurrences in the EFL setting and teacher anxiety levels. It is crucial to acknowledge that this kind of anxiety has the potential to significantly affect teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and performance. Consequently, it is vital to address this issue to support the professional growth and development of EFL instructors.

CONCLUSION

This mixed-method cross-sectional study sought to identify the level of foreign language teaching anxiety that Turkish EFL teachers experience and whether the level of anxiety varies according to gender, experience in years, type of school, and school level. Findings illustrated that Turkish EFL teachers experience anxiety at a moderate level. However, albeit not significant, there were differences in FLTA levels across gender, type of school, and school level, whereas they did not vary according to years of teaching experience.

This study contributes to the existing literature on FLTA in the EFL context by identifying the specific factors that contribute to situation-specific anxiety among Turkish EFL teachers. The findings of this study could assist in designing teacher training programs and support efforts that target the reduction of FLTA and enhancement of teacher confidence and efficiency. Based on these findings, several pedagogical implications can be suggested: First, undergraduate teacher education programs should include courses that address well-being and mindfulness. In addition, emotional experiences that teachers may encounter in their professional careers should be handled. In-service teacher training programs could also be designed and implemented to help teachers comprehend the nature of anxiety and acquire effective techniques to manage it. Particularly, novice teachers could be supported more as they appeared to feel more anxious compared to experienced ones. Also, such programs could provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share their experiences and strategies for dealing with anxiety, as well as encourage them to seek professional help if needed. For example, teacher support systems, such as mentoring programs, peer observation, and feedback sessions, could be implemented to help teachers feel more confident and secure in their teaching and alleviate their anxiety. Teachers should be encouraged to share their experiences and feelings with each other and with mentors or professional development leaders to receive support and advice. However, it must be highlighted that these training programs should be designed in a way that takes into consideration cultural and societal factors. Furthermore, to minimize teacher anxiety, instructional materials (e.g., books, curriculum) should be aligned and learning objectives should be presented in a consistent manner. Finally, it is crucial to highlight the responsibility of school administrators in establishing a favourable atmosphere for learning, and they should take steps to identify and resolve any issues that lead to teacher anxiety. Also, all the stakeholders should work together. To exemplify, schools and policymakers could work together to create a positive and supportive work environment for English teachers, including providing adequate resources, professional development opportunities, support, and recognition for their work.

Still, findings should be carefully interpreted in light of certain limitations. First, although the study employed a cross-sectional and mixed-method design, conducting further research with longitudinal and more comprehensive designs could enhance the understanding of FLTA. For instance, action research could be conducted or pure qualitative studies investigating FLTA via a longitudinal design can be conducted. Additionally, the generalizability of findings may be limited as the participants were EFL teachers from the Turkish educational setting; hence, further research with larger and more diverse samples could provide deeper insights. Also, this study investigated certain demographic variables, yet future studies could consider other variables that might affect FLTA. For example, cultural and societal factors may also affect EFL teachers' FLTA. Or, given that EFL teachers' L2 proficiency affects their classroom practices (Dewaele & Leung, 2022) and that FLTA is somehow linked to teachers' proficiency, future studies can focus on investigating the potential effect of this variable, too. Further research is necessary to explore the factors contributing to differences and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of FLTA among EFL teachers as well as to alleviate it. In addition, some mismatches were noted between the responses to the survey and the interview; thus, in future research, other data collection methods such as observation, in-depth or retrospective interviews -rather than self-reported surveys- might be utilized and triangulated to provide a more accurate representation of the phenomenon. Finally, future studies could investigate how FLTA influences teacher performance, student outcomes, and the overall experience of language learning and/or teaching.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Statements of publication ethics

We hereby declare that the study has no unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

The first author conducted data collection, analysis, and results discussion under the supervision of the second author. Both authors engaged in the discussion of the findings and made contributions to the writing of the final manuscript.

Researchers' contribution rate

The study was conducted and reported with the equal collaboration of the researchers.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

Ethics Committee Approval for this research was obtained from the Education Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Sakarya University (Reference number: E-61923333-050.99-105428; Date: 10/02/2022).

REFERENCES

- Al-Mashikhi, G. M. A. (2009). *Future anxiety and its relationship between self-efficacy and the level of ambition among a sample of Taif University students* [Unpublished PhD thesis]. Umm Al-Qura University.
- Aslrasouli, M., & Vahid, M. S. P. (2014). An investigation of teaching anxiety among novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers across gender. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 304-313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.421>
- Aydın, S. (2016). A qualitative research on foreign language teaching anxiety. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(4), 629-642. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2232>
- Aydın, S. (2021). A systematic review of research on teaching anxiety. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 8(2), 730-761. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1294321.pdf>
- Aydın, S., & Uştuk, Ö. (2020). A descriptive study on foreign language teaching anxiety. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 7(3), 860-876. <https://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/846>
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th edition). Pearson.
- Canessa, L. (2004). *A study of non-native foreign language teachers and their feelings of foreign language teaching anxiety* [Unpublished master's thesis]. The University of Texas.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd edition). Sage.
- Dewaele, J. M., & Leung, P. (2022). The effect of proficiency on "non-native" EFL teachers' feelings and self-reported behaviours. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 10(1), 11-32. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.10.1.01>
- Dişli, A. (2020). *A mixed approach towards EFL teachers' teaching anxiety* [Master's thesis, Çağ University]. Ulusal Tez Merkezi. https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=1xNKK8Tr_jc3eBu3SrH_ZA&no=mhxzRh2WB4R7GYlittFWe5g
- Eren, G. (2020). *Foreign language teaching anxiety and self-efficacy perceptions of native and nonnative EFL instructors at tertiary level institutions* [Master's Thesis, Bilkent University]. Bilkent University Library. <https://repository.bilkent.edu.tr/items/d5dd6134-8cf4-4a7d-bbd7-96c2c88303fc>
- Farhadi, S. (2021). Research on foreign language teaching anxiety in the last decade: A review of studies in Turkish EFL context. *Language Teaching and Educational Research*, 4(1), 93-106. <https://doi.org/10.35207/later.891540>
- Fraschini, N., & Park, H. (2021). Anxiety in language teachers: Exploring the variety of perceptions with Q methodology. *Foreign Language Annals*, 54(2), 341-364. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12527>
- Ganschow, L., Sparks, R., Anderson, R., Javorshy, J., Skinner, S., & Patton, J.M. (1994). Differences in language performance among high-, average-, and low-anxious college foreign language learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(1), 41-55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02013.x>

- Goetze, J. (2023). Like student like teacher? Taking a closer look at language teacher anxiety. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 1–15. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190523000053>
- Güngör, F., & Yaylı, D. (2012). Self-efficacy and anxiety perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers. In A. Akbarov & V. Cook (Eds.), *Approaches and methods in second and foreign language teaching* (pp. 227-236). IBU Publications.
- Han, T., & Takkaç-Tulgar, A. (2019). An analysis of the pre-service teachers' teaching anxiety and coping strategies: A Turkish elementary school context. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 19, 49-83. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.802>
- Horwitz, E. K. (1996). Even teachers get the blues: Recognizing and alleviating language teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(3), 365-372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1996.tb01248.x>
- Horwitz, E. K. (2010). Foreign and second language anxiety. *Language Teaching*, 43(2), 154-167. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480999036X>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327317>
- İpek, H. (2006). *Foreign language teaching anxiety* [PhD thesis, Anadolu University]. Anadolu University Institutional Repository. Retrieved from <https://earsiv.anadolu.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11421/4189/346328.pdf?sequence=1>
- İpek, H. (2016). A qualitative study on foreign language teaching anxiety. *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 4(3), 92-105. <https://doi.org/10.14689/issn.2148-2624.1.4c3s5m>
- Kim, S. Y., & Kim, J. H. (2004). When the learner becomes a teacher: Foreign language anxiety as an occupational hazard. *English Teaching*, 59(1), 165-186. http://kate.bada.cc/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/kate_59_1_9.pdf
- Kesen, A., & Aydın, Z. (2014). Anxiety levels of novice and experienced EFL instructors: İstanbul Aydın University case. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 880-883. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.314>
- Kralova, Z., & Tirpakova, A. (2019). Nonnative EFL teachers' speaking anxiety: Postcommunist country context. *SAGE Open*, 9(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019846698>
- Liu, M., & Huang, W. (2011). An exploration of foreign language anxiety and English learning motivation. *Education Research International*. 2011, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/493167>
- Liu, H., Yan, C., & Fu, J. (2022). Exploring livestream English teaching anxiety in the Chinese context: An ecological perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 111, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103620>
- Mahmoodi-Shahreabaki, M. (2017). The effect of perfectionism on burnout among English language teachers: The mediating role of anxiety. *Teachers and Teaching*, 23(1), 91-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1203776>
- MacIntyre, P. D. (2016). So far so good: An overview of positive psychology and its contributions to SLA. In D. Gabryś-Barker & D. Gałajda (Eds.), *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching* (pp. 3-20). Springer International Publishing.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and second-language learning: Towards a theoretical clarification. *Language Learning*, 39(2), 251-275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1989.tb00423.x>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Ross, J., Talbot, K., Mercer, S., Gregersen, T., & Banga, C. A. (2019). Stressors, personality and wellbeing among language teachers. *System*, 82, 26–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.02.013>
- Merç, A. (2011). Sources of foreign language student teacher anxiety: A qualitative inquiry. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(4), 80-94. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/199751>
- Norrish, J. M., & Vella-Brodrick, D. A. (2009). Positive psychology and adolescents: Where are we now? Where to from here?. *Australian Psychologist*, 44(4), 270-278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00050060902914103>
- Numrich, C. (1996). On becoming a language teacher: Insights from diary studies. *Tesol Quarterly*, 30(1), 131-153. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587610>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. E. (1999). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20(2), 217-239. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716499002039>
- Öztürk, G. (2016). Foreign language teaching anxiety among non-native teachers of English: A sample from Turkey. *Sakarya University Journal of Education*, 6(3), 54-70. <http://dx.doi.org/10.19126/suje.220180>

- Paker, T. (2011). Student teacher anxiety related to the teaching practicum. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 42(1), 207-224. <https://ejer.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ejer.2011.42.13.pdf>
- Saito, Y., & Samimy, K. K. (1996). Foreign language anxiety and language performance: A study of learner anxiety in beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level college students of Japanese. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(2), 239-249. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1996.tb02330.x>
- Spielberger, C. D. (1983). *Manual for the state-trait anxiety inventory*. Consulting Psychological Press.
- Song, J., & Park, J. S. Y. (2019). The politics of emotions in ELT: Structure of feeling and anxiety of Korean English teachers. *Changing English*, 26(3), 252-262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2019.1590145>
- Stempel, G. H. (1989). Content analysis. In G. H. Stempel & B. H. Westley (Eds.), *Research methods in mass communications* (pp. 119-131). Prentice-Hall.
- Stevick, E. (1980). *Teaching languages: A way and ways*. Newbury House.
- Tseng, C. (2005). *Taiwanese English teachers' language anxiety: A comparison study between elementary school and high school teachers* [Unpublished master's thesis]. The University of Texas.
- Tüfekçi-Can, D. (2018). Foreign language teaching anxiety among pre-service teachers during teaching practicum. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 5(3), 579-595. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/420/255>
- Tüm, D. Ö. (2019). Öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil kaygısı. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 27(3), 1359-1369. <https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.3169>
- Von Worde, R. (2003). Students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety. *Inquiry*, 8(1), 1-15. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ876838.pdf>
- Williams, L. S. (1991). The effects of a comprehensive teaching assistant training program on teaching anxiety and effectiveness. *Research in Higher Education*, 32(5), 585-598. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992630>

Appendix A

Interview Protocol Regarding Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

1. Do you experience any kind of anxiety or nervousness while teaching English in a classroom atmosphere? (Öztürk, 2016)
 - 1.1. If yes, why?
 - 1.2. If not, how?
2. Could you tell me about the situations that make you anxious or nervous while teaching English in a classroom atmosphere? (Öztürk, 2016)
3. What do you think about your knowledge of English? How would you define it? Low, average, high?
4. Do you think your knowledge of English is good enough to teach in English? Why/why not?
5. Do you feel anxious when you use Turkish in the class?
6. Do you experience any anxiety while teaching
 - a. grammar?
 - b. reading?
 - c. writing?
 - d. speaking skills in English?
7. Do you feel anxious about making a mistake while teaching English?
8. Do you feel anxious when your English knowledge is compared to that of other teachers?