



Öğretmen Adaylarının Yabancı Dil Kaygısı

Prospective Language Teachers' Feelings of Foreign Language Anxiety

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Öz

Yabancı dil kaygısı ile yabancı dil öğrenimi arasındaki negatif ilişki son kırk yılda iyice yerleşmiştir. Yine de, öğretmen dil kaygısı göreceli olarak incelenmemiş bir fenomen olarak kalmaya devam etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, anadili İngilizce olmayan yabancı öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil kaygısı kaynaklarını ve etkilerini incelemektir. Bulgular, katılımcıların olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusu, hatalara ilişkin endişeler ve olumsuz benlik algıları nedeniyle endişe duyduklarını göstermektedir. Dil kaygısının, yabancı dil öğretimi üzerinde daha önce detaylı olarak araştırılmamış birtakım olumsuz etkileri olduğu da görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: öğretmen adayları, yabancı dil kaygısı, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce

Abstract

The negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language learning has been well-established over the last four decades. Yet, teacher language anxiety remains a relatively unexamined phenomenon. The purpose of this study is to investigate what anxious non-native student teachers perceive to be the sources and effects of their feelings of foreign language anxiety. The findings indicate the participants experience feelings of anxiety due to their fear of being negatively evaluated, concern over errors, and negative self-perceptions. Language anxiety also appears to have a number of negative impacts on foreign language instruction which have not been investigated in-depth before.

Keywords: english as a foreign language, foreign language anxiety, student teachers

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Extended Summary

Introduction: Foreign language anxiety has interested language researchers and teachers ever since it was proposed as a major obstacle to effective foreign language teaching and learning in 1986 by Horwitz and her colleagues. Since then, research on foreign language anxiety has been found to have a considerable negative effect on all target language skills at all stages of foreign language instruction regardless of the target language being learnt (for reviews, see, Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010). Similarly, language learners of all levels – from early beginners to advanced-level learners – have been found to experience significant feelings of foreign language anxiety (Gregersen, 2003; Horwitz, 2010). Thus, foreign language anxiety should not be equated with a poor command of the target language as advanced level learners have also often been found to experience the negative impacts of foreign language anxiety.

It is safe to say that the majority of non-native teachers and student teachers have generally invested heavily in studying the target language they teach. Indeed, they have spent considerable time and effort in developing their command of the target language. However, it can be argued that they too may also be susceptible to feelings of foreign language anxiety. Just as research on learner foreign language anxiety has shown, high-level language learners often tend to overreact to the slight errors they make in the target language and experience feelings of worry and inadequacy as a result (Saito and Samimy, 1996). If such experiences of overreaction, worry, nervousness, and inadequacy occur often and repeatedly, they could easily engender feelings of full-blown foreign language anxiety in the target language.

In fact, when the existing research on foreign language anxiety is studied closely, examples of teachers and student teachers experiencing significant levels of foreign language anxiety can be found (e.g., Bekleyen, 2009; Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003). However, these studies did not consider the potential effects teacher foreign language anxiety could have on foreign language instruction. Briefly, teacher foreign language anxiety has the potential to adversely affect both the quantity and quality of target language input future language learners receive and could readily engender similar feelings in the learners themselves (Horwitz, 1996) – not to mention the effect it would have on teacher well-being and their level of job satisfaction.

Method: Thus, this study aims to address this gap in the existing body of research by investigating both the sources and effects of teacher foreign language anxiety. A full-cohort of 12 student teachers close to completing a four-year EFL teacher education program at a university in Cyprus were given the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure their levels of foreign language anxiety. Consequently, the three participants with the highest FLCAS scores and the three participants with the lowest FLCAS scores were interviewed to get a better understanding of teacher foreign language anxiety, its sources, and effects.

Findings: The anxious student teachers in this study appear to experience feelings of foreign language anxiety due to three main reasons: fear of negative evaluation, concern over errors, and negative self-perceptions. Interestingly, while these were sources of considerable concern for the anxious student teachers, they did not appear in the interviews with low-anxious participants. Furthermore, the anxious student teachers explained how they believe their feelings of foreign language anxiety negatively affects their performance in the target language. Perhaps most importantly, the anxious student teachers also elaborated upon how they believe their feelings of foreign language anxiety negatively affects their approach to teaching the target language in the foreign language classroom. Specifically, they stated that they would avoid speaking the target language in front of their students as much as possible due to their anxiety and also avoid using foreign language teaching activities and methods which entail language-intensive, free, spontaneous, and unpredictable target language use in their classrooms.

2. Introduction

“Speaking English in front of my students stresses me out. I want them to be impressed by my English, so I worry about making silly errors or sounding really slow in front of them. But I know that speaking English is a touchy issue for me. I know that I can get really anxious when I speak English. My heart starts pounding and I start to feel worried. I really don’t want my students to ever see me when I’m feeling like that, but it happens so often that I feel really helpless about this.”

- Anonymous anxious student teacher

In the quotation above, the student teacher above is describing the challenges he faces while speaking English due to feelings of anxiety. Teacher trainers working with non-native student teachers in EFL contexts around the world have also likely encountered student teachers with similar concerns. However, very few studies have actually been conducted on non-native student teachers’ language anxiety.

For numerous years, many second language acquisition researchers have studied foreign language anxiety. Over the years, research has persistently pointed to a moderate negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and success and performance in the target language (for reviews, see, Horwitz, 2010; Horwitz, Tallon, & Lou, 2010). Based on the findings of these studies, foreign language anxiety has been recognized as a significant threat to conducive foreign language teaching and learning; and thus, foreign language teachers have been encouraged to plan language instruction which minimizes feelings of anxiety by creating a comfortable and cultivating foreign language learning environment.

However, what foreign language teachers have overlooked is that they as teachers might also face feelings of anxiety while using the target language, which could negatively impact how they go about teaching the language. Despite the common belief that language teachers are experts of the language they teach, uncomfortable moments when speaking the target language might be just as common among these non-native teachers and student teachers. If such uncomfortable moments are frequent and repeated, it can be hypothesized that they might certainly cause language anxiety. When considering teacher language anxiety, we must remember anxiety is not based on a cogent self-evaluation of target language proficiency. In other words, a non-native speaker who is anxious about their target language performance is not necessarily less capable than are more confident learners. In fact, foreign language anxiety studies have consistently pointed out that high-achievers in the target language tend to focus on and overblow the slight errors they make while speaking the foreign language (Gregersen, 2003; Saito & Samimy, 1996).

Thus, claiming that all language teachers are confident speakers of the target language simply because they have completed a teacher-training program would be idealistic. On the contrary, many novice teachers might question their ability to deal with the linguistic demand of teaching the target language in the classroom, especially if their own educational background emphasized grammatical accuracy and perfect pronunciation. As conceptualized by Horwitz (1996), for such teachers, speaking the target language to their students is likely to be similar to their experiences of previous target language performance tests.

Meanwhile, in today’s foreign language classroom, trial and error is seen as inherent to foreign language learning and teachers encourage their students to engage in target language communication as frequently as possible about issues they find interesting and relevant (Gregersen, 2003; Phillips, 1999). Although teachers do not expect their students to produce perfect sentences, many, unfortunately, rarely show such error tolerance when it comes to their own target language performance after investing considerable time and effort in studying the target language. Although speaking the target language as effortlessly and flawlessly as one speaks one’s mother tongue is desirable, such levels of achievement are truly rare. Pressured by pursuing such an idealized level of proficiency, teachers may be anxious about their target language performance regardless of how accomplished they actually are in the foreign language (Horwitz, 1996).

Thus, regardless of the lack of research in this area., it can reasonably be claimed that non-native teachers may be prone to foreign language anxiety. In fact, evidence of teacher language anxiety can be found when we closely analyze the existing studies on *learner* foreign language anxiety. Three studies on advanced-level learners’ feelings of foreign language anxiety (see, Bekleyen, 2009; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003) did in fact include non-native student teachers in their studies as research participants. Importantly, these participants reported experiencing significant levels of foreign language anxiety. Nonetheless, none of these studies actually considered that these highly anxious individuals were soon-to-be teachers of the target language; and thus, the potential impact of fo-

reign language anxiety on foreign language instruction were not considered. Moreover, recently, another popular area of research has been on the experiences of non-native teachers (for reviews, see, Braine, 2010; Llurda, 2005). Interestingly, when closely analyzed, studies indicating non-native teachers' and student teachers' reporting experiencing feelings of 'uneasiness', 'discomfort', 'concern', and 'anxiety' when speaking the foreign language to the degree that could negatively influence their teaching of the foreign language can be identified (see, Borg, 2006; Medyges, 1983; Rajagopalan, 2005; Reeves & Medyges, 1994). However, as these studies mostly focused on the features of native and non-native teachers, these reports of anxiety in using the target language were not inspected any more. Thus, evidence of teacher language anxiety does exist, but what causes these feelings and how these feelings could impact foreign language learning and teaching remains unclear. However, what is clear is that foreign language anxiety has the potential to significantly influence how foreign languages are taught and learnt.

Teacher language anxiety's potential effects on the foreign language classroom

It can be contended that teacher foreign language anxiety could significantly impact foreign language instruction for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Horwitz (1996) conceptualized, anxious language teachers are not the best target language role models for students to have as such teachers will probably struggle in using the target language in front of their students and may even avoid using the target language communicatively as much as possible in the classroom. Moreover, language teachers suffering from language anxiety might involuntarily shy away from using instructional strategies which require free and active target language production. Thus, teacher language anxiety could decrease target language input in terms of not only quantity but also the quality too. This predicament is especially significant for foreign language contexts because in such contexts the classroom is generally the chief source of target language input with very little target language exposure occurring outside of the classroom. Another concern is that students could end up experiencing similar feelings of anxiety in using the target language after continuously sensing the teacher's similar feelings in target language production. Importantly, regardless of all these potential adverse effects on foreign language instruction, having to stand in front of the class and speak the target language every day while experiencing feelings of anxiety would have to be very discomforting for teachers. Thus, it is safe to say that suffering from language anxiety would be a considerable blow to the job satisfaction and overall well-being of anxious language teachers.

Purpose of the study

Considering the adverse effects outlined above, the purpose of the research reported in this article was to explore foreign language anxiety as experienced by non-native student teachers. Specifically, two research questions were addressed:

What do anxious student teachers perceive to cause their language anxiety?

What effects do anxious student teachers believe language anxiety has on their teaching of the target language?

3. Method

Participants

For this interview study, a sample of six anxious student teachers was selected from a larger group of 12 non-native student teachers studying in an EFL-teacher training program of a university in Cyprus. The student teachers were close to completing the four-year-long program. The six student teachers were selected according to their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) scores. Specifically, they were the three highest-scoring (i.e., most anxious) and the three lowest-scoring (i.e., least anxious) student teachers on the FLCAS. The FLCAS, first introduced by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986, is made up of 33 questions with a five-point Likert scale and produces a total score ranging from a lowest score of 33 (not anxious at all) to a highest score of 165 (extremely anxious). Today, it remains the most frequently used questionnaire in measuring foreign language anxiety. Horwitz (1986) found the internal reliability measure of the FLCAS to be an alpha coefficient of 0.93. In the current study, the participants' mean FLCAS was 97.17 and the standard deviation was 26.79. Table 1 displays the FLCAS scores of the six student teachers participating in the interview study reported in this article.

Table 1. Summary of FLCAS scores

Mean FLCAS Score	97.16
Standard Deviation	26.79

Table 2. Participants' FLCAS scores

Highly Anxious Student Teacher No. 1	127	Low Anxious Student Teacher No. 1	79
Highly Anxious Student Teacher No. 2	121	Low Anxious Student Teacher No. 2	70
Highly Anxious Student Teacher No. 3	110	Low Anxious Student Teacher No. 3	63

All six spoke Turkish as their native tongue and had studied EFL for at least nine years before starting university three years ago, which is typical in the context of the study. All of the participants were preparing to become high school or middle school EFL teachers. As part of the teacher-education program they were enrolled in, the student teachers study a varied series of courses in ELT methodology, second language acquisition, literature, linguistics, and educational sciences. The medium of instruction of the university was English. A list of all the courses covered throughout the four-year program can be seen in Appendix 1.

All six participants were female while they ranged from 22 to 24 in age, both of which can be considered consistent with the context as the clear majority of student teachers enrolled in the program was female. Each of the participants was preparing to be an EFL teacher.

Procedures

Student teachers participated in this study voluntarily and before beginning all participants were assured of anonymity. As a first step, the full-cohort of student teachers (12 student teachers in total) were given the FLCAS to measure their foreign language anxiety level. All 12 agreed to participate; and consequently, filled out the FLCAS. SPSS was used to analyze their FLCAS questionnaires; and thus, the descriptive statistics needed were obtained.

In addition to the FLCAS, the student teachers were also given two separate sets of activities commonly used in foreign language teaching/learning. The activities included in each set were amended from Horwitz's (1996) Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS). The first set was made up of five activities which entail more intensive, free, and spontaneous language use (role plays, small group work, whole-class discussions, pronunciation exercises, and games). On the other hand, the second set included five activities which were less intensive and would likely lead to more predictable target language production (written grammar exercises, pattern drills, translation, gap-fill exercises, multiple-choice reading comprehension questions). The participants were requested to look at the two sets and choose which set they would be more likely to use in their own teachings without considering any program-based restrictions. The rudimentary assumption for including this task was that student teachers experiencing higher levels of foreign language anxiety may avoid the set of activities entailing free language use and prefer the set of activities which is likely to be followed by less active and more predictable target language production.

After completing the FLCAS, three student teachers with the highest FLCAS scores and three student teachers with the lowest FLCAS scores were invited; and consequently agreed, to participate in an interview study to further explore their experiences of teacher language anxiety. Thus, a semi-structured interview was conducted aiming to get information on the causes and effects of the participants' foreign language anxiety. The interview questions are listed in Appendix 2. It should also be emphasized that individual or whole group FLCAS scores were not told to participants in order to prevent a bias within the research project. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and the participants' consent was obtained in order to record the interviews. In order for the participants to be able to express themselves freely, the interviews were in Turkish. Consequently, the researcher translated the interviews into English and all translations were later verified by an experienced bilingual EFL teacher.

The interview data analysis

In order to analyze the interview data, themes were identified in the interview data on the participants' experiences of foreign language anxiety. When analyzing the interview data, the author first fully transcribed each interview. Subsequently, the transcripts were read for content analysis (Creswell, 2003) in order to obtain codes. These codes were then systematized into themes from the statements made by the interviewees. For example, in the interviews with the anxious student teachers, each of the participants made statements related to a fear of errors such as "I worry that everyone has noticed the error I've made" and "I absolutely hate making errors", which were identified as codes and then collected under the umbrella theme of "a concern over errors". The themes which are associated with the research questions are presented in the next section.

Establishing the trustworthiness and credibility of a research study is paramount in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are a number of techniques which may be utilized to establish the credibility of a study. Despite some criticisms and drawbacks (e.g., Morse, 1994; Angen, 2000; Sandelowski, 1993), member checks are widely used to establish credibility. In member checks, data, categories, interpretations, and

conclusions are either formally or informally checked with the participants who provided the research data. In the current study, the participants were provided with the opportunity to read and verify the quotations utilized in the study and the associated interpretations and conclusions which were made from these quotations. Overall, the participants were satisfied that the quotations presented and the interpretations and conclusions drawn sufficiently reflected their experiences with language anxiety.

4. Findings

Research Question 1: What causes student teacher language anxiety?

The first research question this study aimed to answer was to identify what the anxious student teachers perceived to be the sources of their feelings of language anxiety. From the interviews with the anxious student teachers, their feelings of teacher language anxiety appear to stem from three main sources: fear of evaluation, concern over errors, and negative self-perceptions. Importantly, none of these appeared to be a source of concern for the low anxious student teachers during their interviews. Thus, these three sources of teacher language anxiety appear to be significant points of difference between the high anxious and low anxious student teachers. These sources of anxiety and what the participants reported about each source are further elaborated upon below.

Fear of evaluation

A hallmark of language anxiety is the fear of the evaluation of others. Until today, studies investigating *learner* language anxiety have consistently documented that anxious learners often trace their feelings of anxiety to their fear of speaking the target language in front of their peers, instructors, and others (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Price, 1991; Mak, 2011; Young, 1990). Past research tells us that anxious language learners fear others laughing at them and appearing foolish in front of others.

Similarly, the fear of negative evaluation appeared predominantly in the responses of the anxious student teachers in the current study. Specifically, each of the participants explained that their main reason for being anxious in using the target language is their uneasiness in speaking in the foreign language in the presence of both other teachers and, importantly, their own students. For example, high-anxious student teacher No. 1 commented, "I always worry how people will find my level of English. When I start speaking, I worry they think my English is poor and wonder what kind of English teacher I am. It makes me feel terrible." Also, high-anxious student teacher No. 3, while talking about the anxiety she feels when speaking in front of students, stated:

"I believe every new teacher worries about speaking English in front of their students, but it makes me really nervous. I don't want my students to think that I'm no good at English because how can I say that I'm the teacher if they think my English isn't good enough. My worst fear is my students laughing at me when I say something wrong in English. Even just thinking about that makes me dread entering the classroom."

In their FLCAS responses, all of the high anxious student teachers also supported this notion by either agreeing or strongly agreeing with questions which display comparable feelings such as "I always feel like others speak the foreign language better than I do" and "I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of others". In addition, these anxious student teachers' FLCAS responses also reflected that they worried about consequently losing face as they all strongly agreed with the item "I am afraid that the others will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language".

On the other hand, not even one of the low anxious student teachers commented about perceived assessment by peers or students during interviews. Their FLCAS responses further supported this as all of the low anxious student teachers disagreed with the items "I always feel like others speak the foreign language better than I do," "I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of others," and "I am afraid that the others will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language". Thus, while the possibility of appearing foolish appears to be an important source of worry for anxious student teachers, it does not appear to be a concern for low anxious student teachers, making the fear of evaluation and subsequent apprehension of appearing foolish a factor clearly distinguishing high anxious and low anxious student teachers.

Concern over errors

Consistent with research on anxious novice learners, the three anxious student teachers traced their feelings of anxiety to their concern over making errors while speaking. Just as anxious language learners claim they constantly try

to avoid making and consistently exaggerate target language errors when they make them, each of the participants in this study explained that while speaking English, they find themselves worrying about making errors, dwelling over errors made, and completely overreacting to them. According to the anxious student teachers, their anxiety is triggered immediately when they notice they have made an error while speaking the target language. Moreover, they further reported their belief that the first error they make acts as an ignition spurring on increased feelings of anxiety, which consequently lead to even more errors. Remarkably, all the anxious student teachers explained that they are often unable to correct these errors or continue speaking the target language as they often give up and withdraw from the conversation altogether. To illustrate, high-anxious student teacher No. 3 worried:

“The moment I hear myself make an error, I just lose all of my concentration. I worry that everyone has noticed the error I’ve made; and then, I suddenly find myself making even more errors. I just lose control after that.”

Likewise, high-anxious student teacher No. 2 offered:

“Let me explain to you how it is. Immediately when I start to speak English, I am very concerned about making errors. I absolutely hate errors. Then, once I actually make an error, I just feel terrible. After just one error, I’ve had to make an excuse and stop talking. Afterwards, I get really angry with myself.”

On the other hand, completely opposite to the anxious student teachers, the low anxious student teachers did not seem particularly bothered by target language errors. To illustrate, low anxious student teacher No 3 explained how “I think my English is quite good. I make errors, but everyone makes mistakes” while low anxious student teacher No 1 offered:

“I make errors when speaking, but who doesn’t? They don’t bother me that much. I think it’s more important to be fluent and keep speaking as long as people can understand me easily. Everyone makes errors.”

Likewise, the low anxious student teachers’ FLCAS responses also corroborated their interviews. Precisely, the low anxious participants either agreed or strongly agreed with items reflecting a constructive approach to errors like “I don’t worry about making mistakes in language class”.

Negative self-perceptions

Negative self-perceptions have long been connected to foreign language *learner* anxiety (e.g., Bailey, 1983; Price, 1991; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010). Anxious learners often report experiencing language anxiety when they compare themselves with peers and conclude they are not as competent in the target language as their peers.

In line with the research findings on anxious language *learners*, two of the high-anxious student teachers in this study explained they feel their feelings of anxiety increase when they find themselves comparing their own target language proficiency to that of other EFL teachers and student teachers and find their target language skills to be weaker. To illustrate, high-anxious student teacher No. 3 explained that one of the main reasons she feels anxious when speaking the target language is that she constantly worries her target language performance “never sounds as fluent and natural as other student teachers”. Similarly, high-anxious student teacher No. 1 offered:

“I always feel nervous when I have to talk with people who speak English well. This can be teachers, native speakers, or just ordinary people who are good at English. As we are speaking to each other, I start to think how much better at English they are than I am and feel my face go red. I don’t think I would enjoy having a classroom full of advanced level students, either. It would be so embarrassing if they spoke English better than me.”

Research Question 2: Does student teacher language anxiety affect foreign language teaching?

The second research question investigated in the current study aimed to identify the potential effects of teacher language anxiety on the foreign language classroom and instruction. Most previous studies on foreign language anxiety which included teachers and student teachers as participants had not addressed this issue before. Interestingly, from the interviews with the anxious student teachers, there appears to be two main negative effects of teacher language anxiety on the foreign language classroom, namely avoiding target language use and refraining from using language-intensive instructional practices, which are described in further detail below.

Avoiding target language use and refraining from using language-intensive instructional practices

Based on surveys conducted with non-native student teachers, Horwitz (1996) speculated that anxious foreign

language teachers would avoid speaking the foreign language in the classroom as much as possible and they would also avoid using linguistically demanding and open-ended classroom activities even if they believed these to be beneficial for teaching the foreign language. Consistent with these conceptualizations, the anxious student teachers in the current study seemed to be more cautious of using intensive, free, and spontaneous language activities than the less anxious student teachers were. Indeed, between the two sets of teaching activities which were given to the student teachers, each of the high anxious student teachers opted for the set which included less demanding activities that would likely lead to more predictable target language production while the low anxious counterparts opted for the second group of activities.

During the interviews, all anxious student teachers explained they would indeed consciously and actively try to limit the amount of time they spend speaking the target language in their classrooms. To illustrate, anxious student teacher No. 3 stated: "I would prefer to rely on written materials in the classroom as I don't like to speak English for long periods of time. I just don't enjoy speaking English because of how nervous I get". Similarly, high-anxious student teacher No. 1 worried:

"Speaking English in the classroom is a real challenge when you feel anxious about speaking English. Everyone is watching and listening to you, so you definitely feel like you're under the microscope. That's why I think I limit the amount of time I spend speaking English before my students. I don't have any choice until I feel more confident about my English."

Moreover, two of the participants explained how they would avoid target language-intensive teaching activities due to their feelings of anxiety as they found such activities to be "threatening", "too unpredictable" and "nerve-racking". Specifically, they explained their intention to plan activities which entail predictable linguistic interactions rather than activities requiring spontaneous target language use in the classroom. Thus, they believed they would feel more confident in the classroom as they would be able to maintain control over the language structures and vocabulary used by their students as can be seen in the comments of high-anxious student teacher No. 2:

"In order to feel comfortable and prepared, I need to roughly know what the students will say at any given section of the lesson. Open-ended free activities worry me because of this reason. I don't want to have to worry about what my students will ask me. I'm not comfortable speaking about any topic in English. I need to feel in control of what's going on in the classroom so that I can control my own anxiety. Otherwise, I would just keep worrying about where the lesson is going."

5. Discussion and Implications

From the self-reports of the student teachers in this study, it is clear that they suffer from notable foreign language anxiety. This finding itself is significant as it validates the intuition that foreign language anxiety may be applicable to non-native teachers, as much as it is to novice language learners. Furthermore, as explained earlier, there are a number of existing studies focusing on foreign language anxiety which had included teachers and student teachers as participants (e.g., Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003). All of these studies found that the participants suffered from considerable levels of foreign language anxiety. However, none of these studies considered the ramifications of teacher language anxiety on foreign language instruction. Instead, the findings were presented as evidence for the relevance of foreign language anxiety as an obstacle for even advanced level learners. Thus, the findings of the current study substantiate the previously limited findings on teacher language anxiety and further explore teacher language anxiety by considering its sources and effects on foreign language instruction. Moreover, the current study also supports the findings of Bekleyen (2009) whose study was conducted in a similar Turkish context with EFL student teachers from a Turkish background and found that the Turkish student teachers experienced significant levels of foreign language listening anxiety. The current findings add to Bekleyen's by indicating that the skill most affected by language anxiety in this study appears to be speaking. Thus, it seems teacher language anxiety has the potential to affect both the listening and the speaking target language skills of anxious student teachers from the Turkish context, a finding which is of considerable importance for teacher trainers working in this context.

Significantly, what the participants reported in terms of language anxiety show notable parallels with the challenges of anxious novice language learners. In the current study, the anxious student teachers traced their feelings of language anxiety to their fear of negative evaluation, concern over errors, and negative self-perceptions – symptoms paralleling the findings on learner language anxiety. Just like the anxious language learners in previous studies on foreign language anxiety (e.g., Gregersen 2003), it appears the anxious student teachers lack error tolerance; and thus,

are rarely pleased with their achievements in the target language no matter how accomplished they actually are. For example, Gregersen (2003) found that anxious language learners tend to focus on their errors when evaluating their own performance in the target language and significantly overestimate the actual number of errors they make while speaking in the target language. Furthermore, in a study conducted in a similar Turkish context, İpek (2007) also found that the fear of making mistakes in the target language was a notable source of anxiety for Turkish EFL student teachers. Similar to Gregersen (2003) and İpek (2007), in the current study, the anxious student teachers explained how they repeatedly focus on their errors and consistently worry about the negative evaluation of others and the threat of subsequently appearing silly because of these target language errors. Ultimately, the anxious student teachers stated they avoid speaking the foreign language and employing linguistically-demanding classroom activities which involve the target language being used spontaneously and impulsively as much as possible in their own classrooms because of their language anxiety. This finding could be the reason behind why classroom discussion is often reported to be conducted all too often in the native tongue in many EFL classrooms around the world. According to Wilson (2001), successful foreign language learning entails risk-taking, experimentation, and the courage to make errors. However, it is questionable how students could be expected to get the message that it is alright to take risks, make errors, and be less than perfect if their teacher is reluctant to speak the language. Thus, anxious language teachers could unconsciously send the wrong message to novice language learners. However, at this stage, it is important to note that the aim of this study is not to promote complete avoidance of L1 usage in the foreign language classroom. L1 use in class has a number of benefits and has been found to be useful for learners in a number of ways by previous researchers (Ellis, 2008). The findings of this study should not be seen as a dispute of the potential benefits of L1 use in the classroom. Rather, the main concern related to teacher language anxiety is the negative effect that teacher language anxiety could have on the amount of spontaneous interactive target language input and exposure future generations of language learners receive.

Most language teachers today recognize that experimentation and error is inherent and essential to learners' language learning attempts. Thus, they foster learners' communication attempts while encouraging them to concentrate on their increasing aptitude in the foreign language instead of the mistakes and errors they make. Yet, it appears anxious student teachers are reluctant to show such compassion and tolerance for their own performance. Thus, student teachers must accept being less than flawless in the foreign language. This does not necessarily mean that target language weaknesses should be swept aside. Teacher trainers can help student teachers recognize their weaker areas and devise a tangible and step-by-step strategy for continual foreign language development. Simply having a plan of intermediate goals and interim steps ought to lead to a feeling of achievement that could shatter the anxiety cycle (Horwitz, 1996). Student teachers could also familiarize themselves with techniques to relax and reduce their anxiety such as deep-breathing, progressive relaxation exercises, imagining themselves speaking proficiently in the face of the stresses of classroom teaching, and taking time to relax and focus before a class. Importantly, teacher trainers should be supportive of student teachers and help them recognize and appreciate what they have already achieved in the foreign language to gain confidence in their language abilities and to become teachers who nurture similar confidence in their own students.

6. Limitations and recommendations for future research

Despite the current study producing evidence of teacher foreign language anxiety, there are also some limitations which need to be highlighted. In this study, the student teachers gave self-reports and we must remember self-report data can be partial with limited validity. Other student teachers studying in the same or various other settings might certainly give diverse responses. Yet, important similarities existed amid the student teachers' responses and their reports are clearly reminiscent to researchers who are interested in foreign language anxiety. Thus, these findings may hopefully guide researchers interested in teachers' and student teachers' experiences of language anxiety.

The current study was conducted on non-native student teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety studying in a university-based teacher training program situated in Cyprus. In the future, other researchers could focus on a bigger number of participants in other contexts. Furthermore, how teacher language anxiety may affect the five individual language skills may be another area of inquiry.

7. References

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Appendix 1: Breakdown of teacher training courses according to year of study

Year of Study	Courses Studied
Year One	Contextual Grammar Advanced Reading and Writing Listening and Pronunciation Oral Communication Skills Effective Communication Skills Introduction to Educational Sciences Educational Psychology Computer
Year Two	English Literature Linguistics Approaches to English Language Teaching Presentation Skills Principles and Methods of Instruction Language Acquisition Instructional Technology and Materials Design Research Methods in English Language Teaching
Year Three	Teaching Language Skills Classroom Management Teaching Methodology Teaching English to Young Learners Measurement and Evaluation Literature and Language Teaching Language and Society Turkish-English Translation
Year Four	Materials Development and Adaptation School Experience Counseling Special Education Testing and Evaluation in English Language Teaching Comparative Education History of Turkish Reforms

Appendix 2: Interview questions

1. Do you generally feel confident or nervous when you are using English?

2. (If the answer to the previous question is "I feel nervous") Why do you experience feelings of nervousness or anxiety in English?

3. (If the answer to the first question is "I feel nervous") Do you think your feelings of nervousness or anxiety may affect your teaching of the target language? If so, how?