

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING ANXIETY OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

PRE-SERVICE VS. IN-SERVICE

Hasan Şerif Baltacı, Başkent University, School of Foreign Languages, hsbaltaci@baskent.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the feelings of foreign language teaching anxiety of pre-service and in-service teachers. Horwitz and his colleagues' (1996) Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) was administered to find out whether there was a difference between the pre-service and in-service group regarding their foreign language teaching anxiety. A total of 60 pre-service and in-service teachers participated in the study. The results indicated that different levels of anxiety were measured in each group individually and there was a significant difference between pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers with respect to their FLTA. In the light of these findings, there is a need to carry out future studies to research ways to eliminate or cope with foreign language teaching anxiety of pre-service teachers prior to the start of their teaching career and to help in-service teachers get affected by FLTA as little as possible.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language anxiety is the apprehension and negative emotional reaction when individuals learn and utilize a second language (Young, 1999) which is considered as a significant factor affecting the learning of a foreign language by researchers, theoreticians and language teachers. Therefore, many studies devoted effort to identification of anxiety, its sources, effects on learning, ways to alleviate anxiety and factors affecting anxiety. The research on the issue revealed that there are many learner-related, social and environmental factors influencing anxiety and achievement such as age, years of study, gender, prior experience of the target culture and foreign languages, motivation, beliefs in language acquisition, learners' personalities, classroom and social interactions etc.

Foreign language anxiety was defined as a "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). In the literature, it has been substantially discussed that anxiety can affect learners positively (*facilitating anxiety*) or negatively (*debilitating anxiety*). Kunt and Tım (2010) reports that some studies found negative relationships between anxiety and achievement, others found positive relationships whilst some of them found no relationship at all. According to many researchers this discrepancy was due the fact that researchers did not specify the type of anxiety they were examining and measuring. Scovel (1978) emphasized that researchers need to establish which type of anxiety they measure. Later, the researchers ended up classifying the anxiety into three types as *trait anxiety*, *state anxiety* and *situation specific anxiety*. *Trait anxiety* is considered as a feature of personality while *state anxiety* is experienced at a specific time as a reaction to a certain situation (Spielberger, 1983). As to *situation specific anxiety*, it is related to specific situations and events. (Horwitz et al., 1986). According to Gardner and Intyre (1993), foreign language anxiety is an apprehension when learners use their foreign language without having a complete proficiency.

Horwitz et al. (1986) mentions three kinds of performance anxiety: communication apprehension (when trying to have mutual understanding and interacting using a foreign language), test anxiety (fear of failure in a test) and fear of negative evaluation (feeling of nervousness or worry about others' judgments and negative evaluation about a learner's language use.)

In the literature, there is a limited amount of effort to create instruments to measure foreign language anxiety. In addition, most of the studies employed FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) developed by Horwitz et al. in 1986. In the last three decades, there have been many studies focusing on FL anxiety of learners using FLCAS. However, there was a very limited number of studies that focused on the anxiety of teachers or teacher candidates (which is to be referred as *pre-service teachers* later in this paper).

In the last decade, researchers have tried to shed light on foreign language student teacher anxiety, even though the concept of foreign language student teacher or teacher anxiety has not been precisely defined in the literature so far. Highlighting the fact that language learning is never complete, Horwitz (1996) emphasized teachers experience anxiety, as well since they are still language learners. This makes foreign language teachers susceptible to language anxiety. As many studies have shown that language anxiety is not peculiar to lower level learners, higher level learners are affected by foreign language anxiety.

Kim and Kim (2004) conducted a study on in-service teachers and the findings indicated that teachers experienced foreign language teaching anxiety when they teach English using it as a medium of instruction, when they are observed, have unexpected questions, they teach speaking or listening etc. Horwitz (1996) highlights the fact that graduating from departments of foreign language at university or having a teaching certificate may not necessarily make language teachers self-assured, so they might need to develop themselves simultaneously with starting their classroom teaching. Horwitz (1996) also claimed that foreign language teachers who lack confidence in their communicative skills and have a high level of anxiety are apt to use the target language and communication-based activities or strategies less. In one of her studies, she also reported that the teachers who had significant levels of anxiety had a tendency not to employ discussions, role-play activities as a part of their teaching methodology and instead they preferred to teach grammar in L1.

Kunt and Tüm (2010), using the Turkish version of FLCAS and employing interviews, carried out a study on pre-service teachers studying in a teacher education program and they found different levels of anxiety among the participants. Another study carried out by Merç (2010) focused on the relationship between the proficiency and anxiety of pre-service teachers using the Student Teacher Anxiety Scale (STAS) of Hart (1987), diaries and interviews, which showed that the pre-service teachers had less anxiety towards the end of their education when compared to the beginning of their practicum. Furthermore, the findings of the study also revealed that there was no significant relationship between the proficiency and anxiety levels of pre-service teachers. In his study, Hismanoglu (2013) investigated the relationship between language learning anxiety and independent variables such as gender, age and grade in an ELT department having participants from all grades (1-4). The results showed that ELT teacher candidates had low levels of foreign language anxiety and the relationship between anxiety and the independent variables turned out to be significant. On the other hand, Yüksel (2008) studying the relationship between foreign language learning and teaching anxiety found a low levels of anxiety among the participants. The study also reported that foreign language learning anxiety and gender were not significantly correlated with Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety (FLTA). Likewise, Aslrasouli and Vahid (2014) focusing on the role of gender on the levels of anxiety among experienced and novice EFL teachers found out that gender was not a significant variable affecting teacher

anxiety. Kesen and Aydın's study (2014) carried among novice instructors at a private university indicated that the novice instructors had a lower level of teaching anxiety compared to experienced teachers.

From this review of research, it is seen that previous studies have primarily focused on foreign language anxiety and its sources (Wörde,1998; Edwald,2007; Balemir,2009; Çakar,2009;), pre-service teachers' foreign language anxiety (Bekleyen, 2009; Kunt and Tüm, 2010; Merç, 2011; Hismanoglu, 2013; Tüm,2015; Aydın,2016;), in-service (Karakaya, 2011) and pre-service teachers' teaching and speaking anxiety. However, there is a lack of focus on both pre-service and in-service teachers' foreign language teaching anxiety in the literature. Thus, this study aims to investigate the following research question;

1. Is there a significant difference between pre-service and in-service EFL teachers regarding their foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA)?

Unlike the previous studies which focused on anxiety of foreign language teacher candidates and in-service teachers separately, this study will deal with both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers' FLTA. One of the reasons why this study will focus on both is that the findings may reveal some key issues and implications related to the effect of classroom experience, teacher training programs, scope/adequacy of practicum at Foreign Language Education departments in addition to comparing anxiety levels of both group.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 30 non-native pre-service teachers who were enrolled in the last year of an ELT program in a Turkish State university and 30 non-native in-service teachers who were working as instructors of English at a private university participated in the study. Their ages ranged from 21 to 55.

Instruments

In this study, The TFLAS, which contains 18 items with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from '*1=strongly disagree*', '*2=disagree*', '*3=not sure*', '*4=agree*' to '*5=strongly agree*' and developed by Horwitz et al. (1996) was used. The ideal target population to which the researcher would like to generalize is the non-native EFL pre-service and in-service teachers in Turkey. However, the accessible population for the researcher was the pre-service teachers studying in their last year (n=30) and the in-service teachers (n=30) working at a preparatory school of a private university in Turkey. Hence, convenience sampling was used for the present study.

Data collection and analysis

TFLAS was administered to 60 respondents and the data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In addition to descriptive analysis of the data, a series of independent samples t-tests were employed to compare English language teacher candidates' mean scores for foreign language teaching anxiety with that of in-service English language teachers.

For the current study, the TFLAS which contains 18 items was classified into 3 factors (6 items for each) to reduce the number of variables; fear of negative evaluation, self-confidence and communication apprehension (see Appendix C.)

FINDINGS

A total of 60 participants took part in the study. 30 of them were pre-service teachers and 30 of them in-service teachers. As can be seen in *Table I*, pre-service teachers had a mean of 3.45 (SD=.42) for less fear of negative evaluation whereas in-service group had a mean of 3.87 (SD=.43). For self-confidence factor, pre-service teachers revealed a mean of 3.58 (SD=.44) and in-service teachers had a mean of 4.06 (SD=.50). As to communication apprehension, the pre-service group had a mean of 3.38 (SD=.53) while in-service group had a mean of 4.10 (SD=.58).

Table I: Descriptives
(n=30 for each group)

	<i>Group</i>		<i>Statistic</i>
Less fear of negative evaluation	<i>Pre-service</i>	M	3.45
		SD	.42
	<i>In-service</i>	M	3.87
		SD	.43
Self-confidence	<i>Pre-service</i>	M	3.58
		SD	.44
	<i>In-service</i>	M	4.06
		SD	.50
Communication apprehension	<i>Pre-service</i>	M	3.38
		SD	.53
	<i>In-service</i>	M	4.09
		SD	.58

A series of independent samples t-tests were performed to reveal whether there was a significant mean difference between pre-service teachers' and in-service teachers' foreign language teaching anxiety. The results of the independent samples t-tests (see Table II) indicated that there were significant differences between pre-service and in-service teachers regarding fear of negative evaluation ($t(58) = 3.83, p < .0001$), self-confidence ($t(58) = 3.91, p < .0001$) and communication apprehension ($t(58) = 4.92, p < .0001$).

Table II: Independent Samples Test

	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>MD</i>	Std. Error Difference
Less fear of negative evaluation	-3.83	.0001	-.42	.11
Self-confidence	-3.91	.0001	-.48	.12
Communication apprehension	-4.92	.0001	-.71	.14

DISCUSSION

The unique aspect of this study and the major contribution it makes to the current literature on foreign language anxiety is that it compared FLTA of both pre-service and in-service teachers. Two main conclusions were reached in this study. First of all, like the previous studies, the current study also revealed that pre-service and in-service teachers always continue to have considerable levels of foreign language teaching and speaking anxiety which may negatively influence themselves and their teaching performance since they remain as a foreign language learner (Horwitz, 1996). Secondly, in-service teachers turned out to have more self-confidence, less fear of negative evaluation and less communication apprehension when compared to the pre-service teachers. This study showed that this difference was statistically significant, which may stand as an indicator of the effect of professional development or limited contribution of English Language Teaching programs to the candidates' speaking and teaching skills.

When relating the findings of this study to the previous research, it can be said that limited numbers of speaking courses (Kunt and Tm,2010) and practicum at undergraduate level cause pre-service teachers to have significant levels of both foreign language learning and teaching anxiety. Furthermore, as argued by Horwitz (1996), showed by Tm's study (2015) anxious foreign language teachers may unconsciously abstain from using language-intensive activities and strategies that restrict both the quality and quantity of target language input received by learners, specifically in settings where the target language is not broadly used outside of the foreign language classroom.

According to Tm (2015), as also mentioned by Horwitz (1996), even if teacher foreign language anxiety had no impact on foreign language classroom instruction, suffering from ruinous feelings of foreign language anxiety would likely be a substantial burden for foreign language teachers. Using the target language in front of a live audience day-to-day would presumably be a great source of uneasiness for foreign language teachers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of this study showed that English language teacher candidates at a state university had more foreign language teaching anxiety compared to the in-service teachers who were working as instructors of English at a private university. More specifically, the current study reported that pre-service teachers were experiencing higher levels of communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and they have less self-confidence when it comes to speaking and teaching their foreign language. Empowering the previous studies, this study suggested significant findings to reveal potential solutions for alleviating foreign language learning and teaching apprehension (see Tm,2015 p.650).

The limitation of the study was that it was restricted to 30 pre-service teachers and 30 in-service teachers. Thus, it could be conducted using larger samples and including qualitative research design to deeply search for the sources of FLTA among both pre-service and in-service teachers as still little is known about the sources of it.

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