



SOURCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG EFL STUDENT TEACHERS IN LIBYA

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to reveal the sources of foreign language anxiety among EFL student teachers in Libya. The study was conducted to address 1) the level of foreign language anxiety among Libyan student teachers, 2) the sources of foreign language anxiety among Libyan student teachers, and 3) the differences in the sources of FLA between student teachers with different levels of anxiety. The participants were 152 Libyan student teachers (male = 47 and female = 105) studying ELT in Libya. Horwitz's (1996) Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS) was the primary tool and an open-ended questionnaire designed by the researcher was the secondary tool for data collection. Descriptive methods including percentage mean, SD, and t-tests were utilized to analyse the data. The findings showed that student teachers in Libya have a high level of foreign language anxiety. Their classification led to only two levels of anxiety: moderately anxious (averages between 2.50 and 3.49), and highly anxious (averages between 3.50 and 5) groups. Moreover, all the items included in TFLAS were responsible for making these teachers anxious. These sources were generally related to speaking anxiety, teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, classroom procedures, teaching anxiety and teachers' proficiency level. The degree of sources of anxiety in the moderately anxious and highly anxious groups were found as significantly different suggesting that the more students experience any of the sources of teacher FLA, the more apprehension they experience. The study had useful implications for teachers and practitioners in this field. It was suggested that factors including a friendly learning and teaching atmosphere, having a good proficiency in English, getting enough training in teaching practices, and receiving support from the institution can contribute to the reduction of teacher anxiety.

Key Words: Student teacher's Foreign Language anxiety, Libyan Students,

Introduction

Second language anxiety is a psychological factor inhibiting the language learning of both learners and teachers. During the past decades, much research have been made to know the construct of foreign language anxiety (FLA). Despite considerable research carried out on learner anxiety, language teacher anxiety left almost an unexplored phenomenon until the introduction of Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale to the field by Horwitz et al. (1986) and later on, by introduction of Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale by Horwitz's (1996) to explore why non-native speaker (NNS) teachers are subject to anxiety. NNS teachers' or student teachers' feelings of anxiety is perceived as a critical issue for many NNS professionals in the field of ELT because it is believed that to be successful, EFL teachers should have a low level of anxiety (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001). Affective filter hypothesis, one of the main five hypotheses proposed by Krashen (1985) is utilized as the main framework in this study. Affective filter hypothesis deals with motivation, self-confidence and anxiety as the most influential factors affecting second language learning. In other words, to be a successful language learner, one should be motivated, self-confident and low-anxious. Krashen (1985) also argues that anxiety is associated to "club membership" (p. 16) suggesting that the affective filter is down when language learner considers himself as a member of the group. For Krashen (1976) also the degree of formality of an environment can contribute to language learning in the sense that learning a language in a formal context like classroom can



produce anxiety in learners compared to informal environments and learning English at an early age. The context of the present study is formal, and thus, anxiety provoking. However, identifying the sources of them can help removing them and empowering both language learners and teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, some affective variables including motivation, personality, self-confidence, self-esteem, and anxiety play a role in foreign and second language learning. Of these variables, anxiety is the topic of the present study. Spielberger (1966) defines anxiety as "an unpleasant affective state or condition similar to dread or nervousness, with physiological and behavioral manifestation" (p. 9). Some years later, he provides a more recent definition: "Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger 1983 cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986, p. 125). For Reber (2000), anxiety is "a vague, unpleasant emotional state with qualities of apprehension, dread, distress, and uneasiness" (p. 43). Dilmac, Hamarta and Arslan (2009) defined anxiety as "the condition of being stimulated that manifests itself with physical, emotional, and mental alterations the individual experiences against a non-objective danger" (p. 144).

More recently, Yoon (2012) described anxiety as "a normal feeling to human beings which can be brought about by any internal or external changes, uncertain situations, or feeling of uncertainty" (p. 1100). Closely related to second language learning, Brown argues that anxiety is "associated with feelings of uneasiness, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry" (p. 106). This and other definitions highlight that anxiety results in the development of negative emotions such as discomfort, stress, insecurity, and even panic within an individual. is regarded as a barrier to language learning because anxiety produces a challenging situation that yields specific reactions like tendency to avoid the situation. So far, much attempt has been made to identify and categorize different types of anxiety as discussed in the next section. According to Scovel, "facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to "fight" the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behaviour. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to "flee" the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behaviour" (p. 193). In this definition, emphasis is put on performance with debilitating anxiety perceived as an impediment to language learning producing negative feelings in language learners whereas facilitative anxiety be regarded as motivating, producing positive feelings in language learners. These two constructs have been the subject of much research. For example, Bailey (1983) and Horwitz (1990) showed the positive effect of facilitative anxiety on language learning but, in general, language learning is mostly associated with debilitating anxiety. However, some researchers argue that varying degrees of both anxieties may be present in an individual and work together.

The topics and research reviews highlight that anxiety is a concerning issue in different contexts around the world. Though conducted in a variety of contexts, the findings of research, to a large extent, is consistent in supporting the fact that there is a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and language learning (e.g., Horwitz, 1996; Tum & Kunt, 2013). In other words, as far as foreign language learning is concerned, anxiety has a debilitating effect. Teacher's foreign language anxiety was particularly found as a concerning issue because anxiety may decrease the amount and quality of input teachers provide to students and unintentionally transfer the teachers' uneasiness in using the target language to their students (Horwitz, 1996). The findings suggested that teachers try not to get involved in practices that requires high degree of target language use because of their poor language proficiency. Overall, anxiety can diminish the overall performance of teachers and hinders student learning. This



situation is also exacerbated by the fact that “in addition to learning the target language, student teachers must also acquire the skills of teaching” (Tum &Kunt, 2013, p. 386).

Given that extensive research has been carried out on the relationship between foreign language anxieties among language learners in contrast to the limited research administered to non-native, it is important to address this gap in literature. Some researchers have called a need to support non-native EFL teachers and alleviate their feelings of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, 1996). The potential negative outcomes of non-native teacher’s anxiety and their destructive effect on language learners’ make this topic worthy of further inquiry. The first step to bridge this gap is the careful examination of the level and sources of FL anxiety among student teachers that is addressed in this research project. Another scarcely investigated domain is the investigation of sources of FLA between low- and highly anxious student teachers that is addressed in this research project. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, no studies have explored these questions in the context of Libya. So, this project was set out to address the above-mentioned gaps in the existing literature.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-method design, that is, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to collect data. To elaborate, whereas close-ended questionnaire provides quantitative data on sources of FLA, the close-ended questionnaire is also utilized so more comprehensive data can be obtained from the student teachers to allow confirming the quantitative data collected. These mixed method approaches have been proved as being useful because it allows for triangulation of data that approaches the problem under investigation from different vantage points. The present study was administered in four colleges in Al ZZaytuna University, one of the major universities in Libya. Both collages are located in Tarhuna city. At this university students are taught majorly by Libyan teachers and by a few Indians and Iraqi teachers.

Participants of the study were 152 male (N = 47, 30.9%) and female (N = 105, 69.1%) Libyan student teachers at a major university in Libya. The participants’ age ranged from 20-24 (N = 140, 92.1%), 25-29 (N= 10, 6%), and 30-35 (N = 2, 1.3%). So, the majority of the participants were between 20-24 years of age. These participants were selected by convenience sampling. All the participants were native speakers of Arabic and were learning English as a foreign language. These student teachers were enrolled in the junior and senior year of a four-year foreign language teacher education program, thus considered as novice non-native EFL teachers.

Horwitz’s (1996) Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale is the primary data collection tool in this study (Appendix I). Horwitz was the first one to realize that student teachers suffer from a high level of FLA and thus designed this scale to identify and measure teachers’ feeling of anxiety. This 18-item questionnaire measures the participants’ degree of FLA on a five-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaire had two parts: the demographic part and the main part containing the 18 items. The English version of the questionnaire was used to collect data because it was assumed that the participants would not have any difficulty understanding the questionnaire content.

An open-ended questionnaire was also designed as the secondary source of data collection by the researcher containing three more general questions to elicit more in-depth information about sources of FLA among Libyan student teachers. In other words, not only the data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire can be used to confirm or reject the data obtained by the close-ended questionnaire but also



it is used to see whether other new sources peculiar to Libyan students can be identified. Data obtained from the TFLAS was calculated by SPSS software (version .16). In order to answer the first research question, i.e., identifying the level of FLA of Libyan student teachers, the data obtained from TFLAS was subjected to descriptive statistics so Median, Mean and Standard Deviation of average responses was calculated. Afterwards, student teachers were divided based on their average scores on the TFLAS. Descriptive statistics was performed to determine frequency and percentage, Median, Mean and Standard Deviation of average responses. In order to answer the second research question, i.e., identifying the sources of FLA of Libyan student teachers, descriptive statistics was performed to determine the percentage of answers to different choices in a given item along with Mean, and SD. In order to answer the third research question, i.e., identifying the sources of FLA among Libyan student teachers with different levels of anxiety, eighteen (the number of items in TFLAS) independent t-tests were performed to identify the mean difference between the moderately-anxious and highly-anxious groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides answer to the first research question: What is the level of foreign language anxiety among student teachers in Libya? The Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS) was used to measure the extent to which student teachers were affected by FLA. The TFLAS has 18 items so the highest score that could be obtained from the questionnaire is 90 and half of this score, i.e. 45, is the middle score signifying a moderate score. The student teachers' average score was used in this study to determine the level of anxiety. The questionnaire was scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from one "strongly disagree" to five "strongly agree". Some of the items were negatively worded (items 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13 & 15), thus, they were scored reversely.

It is evident from the results that the total mean scores of all the student teachers were a little more than half of the highest possible score ($M: 47.78 > 45$), which indicated rather moderate level of foreign language anxiety.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for the TFLAS, average responses

Measure	No.	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average responses	152	2.76	4.39	3.72	3.72	.33

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the average responses to the items of the TFLAS. As can be seen, the mean and the median scores (Mean & Mdn 3.72) which are the same were more than half of the possible average response ($3.72 > 5.00/2$) suggesting a high level of foreign language speaking among the NN student teachers (the score between 3.5 and 5 is considered as the high rate of anxiety).

In order to identify the anxiety level, the participants were also needed to be categorized according to their level of anxiety based on their average scores on the TFLAS. Another purpose is to see whether sources of anxiety change according to the level of anxiety. In doing so, the participants whose average fell between the scores 1.00 and 2.49 (i.e., choices considered to be closer to disagree or strongly disagree) were considered as slightly anxious, those with averages between 2.50 and 3.49 (i.e., choices considered to be as neither agree or nor disagree) were classified as moderately anxious, and those who scored between 3.50 and 5.00 (i.e., choices considered to be closer to strongly agree or agree) were grouped as highly anxious.



Interestingly, no instances of slightly anxious student teachers were found in this study based on average scores. Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics for the classification of the participants into slightly anxious, moderately anxious, and highly anxious groups.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for classifying student teachers into different anxiety level groups based on their average responses

Anxiety level	frequency & percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation
Moderate anxiety	39 (8%)	2.76	3.47	3.30	3.29	.15
High anxiety	113 (92%)	3.50	4.39	3.88	3.88	.22

As Table 2 shows, the minimum average response was 2.50 indicating that no participant's average falls within the slightly anxious category (mean between 1-2.49) on the basis of the divisions made and explained above.

The majority of the participants (N = 113 out of 152, 92%) fell into the highly anxious category (Mdn: 3.88), suggesting that Libyan NN student teachers suffer from a high level of foreign language anxiety. A smaller proportion of participants (N = 39, 8%) fell into the moderately anxious category (Mdn: 3.30). Hence, it can be concluded that the level of foreign language speaking anxiety is generally high in the Libyan EFL context.

Unfortunately, in most educational contexts, the emphasis has always been placed on students' learning and anxiety. Teachers should most of the time be anxious about their student's performance, pave the way for their second language learning, provide them with a good learning environment and encourage them to proceed; yet, it has not been taken into account how the pressure and load of the teaching profession can be anxiety-provoking for language teachers, themselves. The results of this and other studies highlights that language teachers experience a great deal of stress. In fact, just completing a language teaching program and being granted a certificate to teach does not guarantee qualification to teach a language specifically for non-native speaker teachers (Horwitz, 1996). As soon as these teachers start their profession, they realize that in order to survive in this profession they need to have a high language proficiency, teaching ability, classroom-management and good communication skills, etc. usually student teachers are weak in all or some of these aspects and may even feel panic in the classroom.

When the level of anxiety is high, students can feel their teacher's unrest and this negative feeling are transferred to them as well, or as Horwitz (1996) put it, it is "a perception not likely to foster their own feelings of target language confidence" (p. 4).

Sources of foreign language anxiety

This section provides answer to the first research question: 2- What are the sources of foreign language anxiety among student teachers in Libya? In order to investigate factor or sources that contribute to teacher foreign language anxiety, TFLAS was administered and data was subjected to statistical procedures. Based on the results of the TFLAS questionnaire and the open-ended questionnaire, there were different sources of anxiety among student teachers. As it was explained earlier, since almost all participants of this study were found as anxious, the anxiety level classification ended up with two



moderately anxious and highly anxious groups only. Similar results can be seen in terms of the second research question. To elaborate, the majority of the items in TFLAS has a mean which is considered as high (above 3.5), only three items fall in the moderate category, and no item is considered as low in terms of its contribution to the feeling of anxiety.

There are different factors contributing to the feeling of anxiety in language teachers. These factors, among the other things, include speaking anxiety, teaching anxiety, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' proficiency level, etc. (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al. 1986; Young 1991). For discussion purposes, the combination of percentages of agree and strongly agree responses will be used under the title of agree, and disagree and strongly disagree responses are also merged to talk about the percentage of disagreement.

On the other hand, the lowest mean of all items belongs to item 11 ($M = 3.04$) which is placed in the moderate level of anxiety. 33.6% of the responses showed disagreement with this statement, 20.4% showed neutrality, and 19.6% showed agreement. These percentages generally suggest that most student teachers are afraid of making mistakes and do not consider it as part of the language learning process itself. The fear of making mistakes has also other negative consequences. It makes student less participatory specially in speaking and would delay their learning process. However, as the information in the open-ended questionnaire highlighted, anxiety stimulated from making mistakes is not only related to student teachers' beliefs themselves but is also rooted in the emphasis that the educational systems in general and professors in particular place on this process. One of the student teachers explained that:

...my teacher is very serious about even small mistakes like grammar mistakes.

Another student also mentioned that:

I don't like my teachers interrupting and correcting me whenever I'm speaking. I feel bad and cannot continue.

The problem of correcting all mistakes or avoiding mistakes characterizes traditional methods of foreign language teaching and learning still popular in some contexts such as Libya. These examples also show that, when student teachers have a wrong perception of making mistakes and consider it as a sign of failure rather than a necessary step in acquiring a new language, making mistakes can turn into a quite anxiety-provoking situation. Similar to the findings of this study, İpek (2007) also found that making mistakes was one of the major six sources of anxiety in his study.

This and similar concerns are related to a sort of anxiety referred to as classroom procedure by Young (1991). Other concerned mentioned by the student teachers in the open-ended questionnaire shed more light on this type of anxiety. One of the student teachers asserted that:

I feel anxious when I have to do something that I will be graded for. If I speak to my teacher or to my friends in a casual speech I am ok, but if I have to speak for an oral exam I get very anxious.

According to another student teacher:

I feel anxious when I have to speak or do something in front of the class. I start thinking about many things like my appearance and my English. I look at my close friends who tell me what's wrong by signs.

Likewise, another student teacher remarked that:

I always feel anxious when I speak or write on the board in front of my teachers and colleagues. Sometimes even if I know the answer I don't tell it to my teacher because I will get anxious. Even my spelling will be effected and even my hand writing become very bad when I write on the bored.



These examples highlight that classroom procedure in the context of Libya is traditional. Classes are teacher-centered and traditional teaching procedures are employed. For instance, students are called to the board and have to speak in front of the class, they are interrupted and corrected by the teachers as soon as they make a mistake, they are expected to speak the language proficiently and they are graded for their performance and product. Most of these activities are anxiety-producing as it was also perceived by most NNS student teachers in this study.

One of the student teachers confirmed it by telling that:

Learning English is very difficult. You should always worry about your listening and speaking problems. You don't know many vocabularies. You cannot write well and it takes a lot of time to improve. Sometimes, you get discouraged, you feel you cannot learn it any more.

Another contributory factor to anxiety is lack of self-confidence. According to one of the student teachers:

Actually, I think I am anxious when I speak in front of my professors. I know my English is not perfect and they are very good. But I am all the time trying to stop thinking about it I only want to speak and finish quickly.

Closely related to self-confidence is another personal and interpersonal human characteristics called competitiveness. People with low self-confidence have a tendency to worry about what other people think about them and consequently strive to satisfy them (Young, 1992). That is why they are usually engaged in comparing their performance with that of others (here, other language teachers). As one of the student teachers explains:

I all the time feel anxious when I speak English. It is cause I think my colleagues speak it better than me. I compare my speaking with my friends' speaking. They speak fast but I do not. I have to think about my words a lot then I speak.

Another student teacher adds that, he doesn't like to speak in front of his colleagues because:

[I feel anxious because] because I think about how my teachers will say about my English and how my friend will say too.

As can be seen, other colleagues' judgments about one's language proficiency and performance particularly while speaking is a factor producing anxiety in some student teachers. This also results in student teachers feel that their language ability is lower than that of others and other students look down at them. In this line, one of the student teachers asserted that:

I don't like to speak English], cause I don't want someone to tease me and I want to be the best in the class.

This result is consistent with those of some other studies. For example, Price (1991) found that the majority of participants of her study rated themselves lower than others in the class, and thus, concluded that students' self-perception as being weaker than others which is rooted in low self-esteem would lead to tension and anxiety in them. Ohata (2005) also found that low self-confidence and competitiveness were two of the major sources of anxiety among the participants in her study. Competitiveness is a form of "interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings" (Leary, 1982, p. 102) also referred to as social anxiety. In this line, Krashen (1985) argues that when learners consider themselves as a member of a community of practice, their affective filter can be lowered and the anxiety would be reduced.



Student teachers' belief about 'native speakers' is another main anxiety-provoking situation. This source of anxiety was also confirmed by one of the students who filled in the open-ended questionnaire. He said that:

I am always afraid I don't understand what other people say especially native speakers because they talk fast and I feel panic and cannot hear what they say anymore.

Learners' belief as a major role to play in producing anxiety. Here, the student teachers believe that understanding whatever someone is saying in English, and even what every single word means is important. Some instances of anxiety around 'native speaker' topic was observed in the open-ended interviews. One of the participants mentioned:

When I see a native speaker, although I know I can learn many things from him/her, I prefer not to speak with them or they will realize that how incorrectly I speak.

Another participant reflected on one of her failures to communicate with an English tourist in her country:

I tried to talk to her [the native speaker]. She asked me about an address but I used the language wrongly so she couldn't understand me and asked another person to help her. I feel embarrassed. I know that I should not communicate with them before I have a high language proficiency because they cannot understand me.

As the above example shows, being understood by native speakers is such important as an idealized self-image of the target language that for some NNS teachers that making mistake in front of them is considered as a sort of weakness or damage to their identity as good language teachers. Ohata (2005) argues that sometimes L2 learners have unrealistic expectations about language learning. As it is observed in the findings presented here the myth of 'native-speakerism' may even avoid them to get close to the native speakers because of the large distance they feel between them and speakers of the target language. Yet, they cannot realize that successful communication should be the ultimate goal of language learning. Such unrealistic goals, that is, to become as proficient as a native speaker, is not only hardly attainable but also lead to frustration.

Proficiency in English is one of the important factors affecting how students feel about a given foreign language. The main reason is that these students do not feel proficient enough to fully understand a course which is in the target language. One of the student teachers reflected more on this issue by asserting that:

Our teachers tell everything in English and they expect us to understand. We still don't know the meaning of many English vocabularies and our grammar is weak. I think it is better if teachers explain some of the things in the Arabic language.

However, 27% of the student teachers were neutral and 12.5% agree with it. One of these students justified her agreement by telling that:

... If classes are held in English, we have more opportunity to learn English because we have more exposure to it.

Poor proficiency in English which is related to weakness in different language skills, lack of mastery over grammar rules and structure of a language, and insufficient range of vocabulary have been mentioned in some studies as a significant source of FLA. Suleimenova (2013), for instance, found that students feel anxious when they have a low proficiency in English. Therefore, there is a negative relationship between anxiety and language proficiency meaning that the more the students are proficient, the less they feel anxious and also the more confident they are.



Another related source of anxiety is associated to teacher-student interaction as manifested. A very significant reason is that the student teachers are not still proficient learners of English so verbal communication with the students make them anxious. One student teacher remarked that:

I still have a lot of problems speaking English. I do not know how I can teach my students English after I graduate and start my job as an English teacher. I don't know what I should do if students ask me a question and I cannot answer... how can I talk all the time in English with them?

Similar findings were observed in other studies. For example, in Çokay's (2014) study, "lack of vocabulary knowledge, being unprepared for the class, unexpected questions from the students, failure of background knowledge about the topic, uninteresting topics, unable to motivate the students, and insufficient pronunciation knowledge" (pp. 40-41) were reported as major sources of speaking with students.

In general, teaching anxiety has a negative influence on student teachers and cause them experience the same feelings of stress and tension experienced by the language learners. These findings of other studies also confirm these results (Cheung & Hui, 2011). It can also affect their instruction in a negative way. As one of the student teachers mentioned, they are not proficient users of language yet; thus, this may result turning to activities which require a low level of language use on the part of them.

Conclusion

To measure the extent to which student teachers were affected by FLA, the Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS) was employed. The overall mean was 3.72 suggesting a high level of foreign language anxiety. Classifying student teachers to different anxiety levels led to only two levels of anxiety and the student teachers fell into moderately anxious (averages between 2.50 and 3.49), and highly anxious (averages between 3.50 and 5) groups. The high level of anxiety among these teachers indicated that having a teaching certificate does not qualify these teachers for the teaching profession because as soon as they start their job, they realize the real demands and requirements of their teaching profession which includes high proficiency in English, good teaching ability, classroom-management and good communication skills (good speaking and listening ability), etc. Having realized that they do not still possess these capabilities, they become so anxious and cannot perform well enough in the classroom. This finding was confirmed the results of the majority of previous studies (Park & Lee, 2008; Seller, 2000; Suleimenova, 2013; Tasee, 2009; Wilson, 2006); however, contradicted with some other studies in the sense that some other levels of FLA had been reported by some previous studies (Çokay, 2014; Suleimenova, 2013).

In order to investigate sources that contribute to teacher foreign language anxiety, the percentage and mean of responses to items of TFLAS was computed. According to the results, almost all items of the questionnaire caused high level of anxiety in Libyan student teachers except three items (9, 11, 12) that had average means. These sources included speaking anxiety, teaching anxiety, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' proficiency level (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al. 1986; Young, 1991) that were explained mainly according to young's (1991) categorization of sources of anxiety.

The highest mean of all belonged to item 1: 'It frightens me when I don't understand what someone is saying in English' (M = 4.48). Concerning speaking anxiety, the anxiety was mainly related to speaking caused by personal beliefs, and lack of self-confidence communicating with native speakers. For example the majority of the student teachers (67.4%) believed that learning English is difficult (item 16). They also



had a negative belief about ‘native speakers’ (items 3, 8, 9, & 13) in a sense that being understood by native speakers was like an idealized self-image of the target language for these teachers and they could not accept making mistake in front of them as it was considered as a damage to their identity as good language teachers.

The student teachers did not feel confident speaking English (item 14), either. Low self-confidence, in turn, resulted in competitiveness (items 5 & 15) and this result was confirmed by the result of previous research (Price, 1991; Ohata, 2005).

Another main source of anxiety was related to classroom procedure; that most student teachers were afraid of making mistakes (item 11). The results obtained from open-ended questionnaire confirmed this results and showed the prevalence of traditional methods of foreign language teaching and learning still popular in some contexts such as Libya which put emphasis on avoidance of mistakes.

Lack of proficiency in English as manifested in items 2 and 7 was another anxiety-provoking situation. In fact, there is a negative relationship between anxiety and language proficiency; with more proficiency, less anxiety is experienced by the teachers.

Finally, as indicated in items 10, 12, and 18, the student teachers experienced teaching anxiety (items 10, 12, & 11) manifested in lack of ability to establish good teacher-student relationship as wells as the feeling of in adequacy to become a language teacher and being proficient enough to become a language teacher. The same findings were found by some other studies (Çokay, 2014).

The third aim of the study was to find the differences in the sources of anxiety between the moderately anxious and highly anxious groups. The results showed that the mean was higher in the highly anxious group regarding all the items in the TFLAS. However, to see if the difference is significant, t-test was run and the results showed that the mean difference between the two groups was significant in all the items except in items 4, 9, and 18. Though the majority of the student teachers had a high degree of anxiety and anxiety was associated roughly to all the sources mentioned in TFLAS in both groups, the degree of each source in both group were found as significantly different. Therefore it can be concluded that, the less students experience any of the sources of teacher FLA, the less anxiety they experience.

One of the least studied areas of research is the teacher foreign language anxiety because even today most studies are focused on learners’ language anxiety. To this end, investigating levels and sources of FLA experienced by student teachers in Libya became a rationale of conducting this study. The findings of this study showed that student teachers are highly anxious and different personal and interpersonal factors, speaking anxiety, and teaching anxiety, among the other things, contributed to this psychological barrier. These findings suggested that having a certificate to teach English does not qualify teachers to teach English. Other factors including a friendly learning and teaching atmosphere, having a good proficiency in English, having enough training in teaching practices, support from the institution, etc. all contribute to the reduction of teacher anxiety. This study generally raised awareness about the existence of the concerning issue of teacher anxiety and drew attention to the need to help teachers to overcome this debilitating barrier by employing appropriate strategies.



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