



Speaking Anxiety Among Efl Student Teachers

İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Konuşma Kaygısı

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ABSTRACT: Speaking anxiety among student teachers can have considerable negative impacts on foreign language education. However, our current understanding of this construct remains very limited. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate non-native student teachers' feelings of anxiety while speaking English. A study was conducted with 131 student teachers to probe the effects of such feelings. To that end, a questionnaire was administered to the participants and follow-up interviews were conducted. The results indicated that student teachers approaching the end of their teacher education programs did indeed experience feelings of self-consciousness and anxiety, which adversely affected their target language performance and emotional well-being. According to the participants' responses to items on the questionnaire and their remarks during the interviews, foreign language anxiety has adverse effects in two areas: (1) the application of grammar rules and (2) the execution of speaking skills. Recommendations to help anxious student teachers overcome their anxiety are also made.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, student teachers, speaking anxiety.

ÖZET: Öğretmen adaylarının konuşma kaygısı yabancı dil eğitiminde kayda değer etkilere yol açabilmektedir. Fakat, bu konu ile ilgili bildiklerimiz oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce konuşurken yaşadıkları dil kaygısını incelemektir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma 131 öğretmen adayının yaşadığı dil kaygısını irdelemektedir. Katılımcıların yabancı dil kaygılarını incelemek için anket ve mülakatlar kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre eğitimlerinin sonuna yaklaşan İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının belirgin bir düzeyde kaygı yaşadıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının yaşadığı yabancı dil kaygısının olumsuz etkileri özellikle konuşmanın iki ayrı alanında daha da belirgin olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bunlar: (1) Dilbilgisi kurallarına uyulması ve (2) Konuşma becerilerinin uygulanması, olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Kaygılı öğretmen adaylarının kaygılarını aşabilmeleri için bazı öneriler de sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, öğretmen adayları, konuşma kaygısı.

1. INTRODUCTION

If I can't express myself in English now, how will I be able to next year when I am a teacher?

The quotation above was taken from an interview with a non-native foreign language student teacher who was approaching the end of her teaching education program. The student teacher was reflecting upon her frequent anxiety as an affective state and self-consciousness when she attempted to communicate in the language she would soon be teaching. Such affective states have long been recognized to have an adverse effect on the *learning* of a language. However, two decades of research in foreign language anxiety have little to report on anxiety experienced by prospective teachers (Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010).

This paucity of research into the affective forces acting on non-native student teachers of a foreign language is indeed unfortunate (see, Canessa, 2004; Horwitz, 1996; Kunt and Tum, 2010). Not only are non-native foreign language teachers increasing in number worldwide (Borg, 2006), but it is entirely plausible that many of those student teachers face challenges of overwhelming complexity and need special guidance and understanding. We must keep in mind, for example, that many are still foreign language learners themselves. Even non-native

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instructors of advanced levels of foreign languages have discovered that the process of learning a language is never completely finished. Quite likely, therefore, student teachers might experience affective states of foreign language anxiety in their own classrooms from time to time, just as any other language learner might.

The exigencies of teaching a language in the foreign language classroom can be unnerving for a non-native teacher. The language teacher faces a different classroom challenge every day. The language teacher must thus plan diligently and make great allowance for extemporaneous responses to teaching opportunities that occur naturally and frequently in classroom discourse. For non-native teachers of the target language, however, the spontaneity and uncertainties of general classroom discourse can induce anxiety as an affective state and loss of control. As Horwitz (1996) succinctly puts it, “It is one thing to say you speak a language; it is quite another to say you teach it” (p.367).

In addition to learning the target language, student teachers must also acquire the skills of teaching. Even native speakers of the target language must struggle to grasp the fundamentals of teaching methodologies and best practices. If they are non-native speakers, then the task can be even more difficult, as the speakers cited previously dramatically attest.

Finally, there is the ever-present expectation, felt by learners and teachers alike, that a language teacher should be capable of performing flawlessly in the target language. When student teachers sense that their performance may not measure up to that expectation, then they may easily succumb to affective states of inadequacy. Horwitz (1996), in her study of language student teachers, contends that affective states of inadequacy and self-consciousness, when repeated often enough, can lead to a general state of foreign language anxiety.

1.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope’s (1986) groundbreaking study identified foreign language anxiety as being conceptually related to three anxieties specific to the foreign language classroom: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These researchers defined communication apprehension as kind of shyness or anxiety associated with communicating with other people while test anxiety was define as a kind of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. Lastly, the fear of negative evaluation was explained by these researchers and Aydın (2008) as an apprehension of other people’s evaluations, avoiding evaluative situations, and expecting to be evaluated negatively by others. Specifically, Horwitz and her colleagues (1986) defined language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning experience” (p. 128). From their clinical experiences with university-level students studying a foreign language, these researchers also developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) for measuring the levels of foreign language anxiety experienced by learners. Using that instrument, the researchers measured a negative relationship between the level of foreign language anxiety and the level of achievement in the target language.

The Horwitz *et al.* (1986) study had a ripple effect on research in foreign language anxiety. Studies were conducted in numerous research contexts around the world, and they were consistent in their support of the negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and achievement in the target language (e.g., Horwitz, 1996; Kunt, 1997; Horwitz, 2001; Kitano, 2001; Yan and Horwitz, 2008). Foreign language anxiety has also been examined in relation to its effects on specific language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening (e.g., Saito and Samimy, 1996; Vogely, 1998; Saito, Horwitz, and Garza, 1999; Sellers, 2000; Cheng, 2002). Such studies have indicated that foreign language anxiety can have profound negative effects on all foreign language skills. Further studies have proposed methods and guidelines for creating

classroom environments that avoid or reduce the amount of foreign language anxiety and described ways to alleviate or cope with foreign language anxiety when it does appear (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986.; Young, 1991). In short, extensive research has been conducted on the relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language learning. In contrast, research on foreign language anxiety experienced by non-native student teachers remains in its infancy and the notion of foreign language student teacher anxiety has yet to be clearly defined (Merç, 2011).

1.2 Foreign Language Anxiety among Non-Native Teachers and Student Teachers

When the small amount of research on teacher and student teacher foreign language anxiety is reviewed closely, two studies give particularly cogent reasons why teachers and student teachers are susceptible to anxiety as an affective state: Horwitz's initial study on teacher foreign language anxiety (1996) and Canessa's study (2004), which focused on the role of context in foreign language teaching anxiety.

Horwitz (1996) put forward a number of reasons for foreign language anxiety among teachers. First, teachers have already put a considerable amount of "motivation and ego-investment" (p. 367) into learning the target language. Second, in the current trend of communicative, learner-centered methodologies in EFL learning, teachers assume less than full control over the vocabulary and grammar appearing in class discussions. Third, teachers may tend to set unrealistic goals in their own proficiency in the target language. Last, teachers may still suffer affective states of foreign language anxiety from the time they themselves were learning the target language.

Canessa (2004) concluded that the cultural background of teachers—specifically, the role the culture traditionally assigns to teachers—can cause teacher foreign language anxiety. In her study with Argentineans, Korean, Taiwanese, and American non-native foreign language teachers, Canessa found that the teachers of East Asian cultural backgrounds reported higher levels of foreign language anxiety. Such cultures frown upon teacher mistakes and have high expectations of teachers, and those social attitudes can easily create affective states of foreign language anxiety among teachers.

A number of studies conducted in contexts within Turkey and Northern Cyprus have indicated that student teachers from similar backgrounds do, in fact, experience anxiety (e.g., İpek, 2007; Merç, 2011). For example, İpek (2007) collected data from 32 student teachers through diaries and semi-structured interviews and revealed six categories of anxiety: making mistakes, teaching a particular language area, using the native language, teaching students at particular language levels, fear of failure, and being compared to fellow teachers. Similarly, Merç (2011) also identified six main sources of student teacher anxiety in a study utilizing diaries and semi-structured interviews. It is likely that teacher educators around the world would concur that student teachers who are non-native speakers of the language they are teaching are still developing their competency and skills in the target language. At the same time, it would be safe to assume that they are studying to improve their teaching abilities and pedagogical competence. Because of the complexity of that dual focus, along with potentially mounting pressure to meet the social expectation that teachers should be experts in the craft and subject matter of their teaching, it is not unrealistic to assume that non-native foreign language student teachers may experience affective states of inadequacy as teachers, especially as they near graduation. If frequent and often repeated, these affective states could well develop into foreign language anxiety, with the same adverse effects on language usage as those experienced by language learners. It is unlikely that such anxiety will disappear upon the receipt of a mere teaching certificate.

1.3 Potential Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety on EFL Learning

In her paper on foreign language teaching anxiety, Horwitz (1996) enumerated a number of undesirable effects of foreign language anxiety among language teachers in the classroom. First, based on her studies of student teachers exhibiting anxiety, Horwitz proposed that teachers' foreign language anxiety could reduce the amount and quality of input that the teachers could provide to students. In other words, anxious and insecure teachers may consciously limit the amount of target language they use in the classroom and refrain from using language-intensive classroom activities that might expose their language deficiencies. Second, Horwitz proposed that teachers might unknowingly transmit their uneasiness and discomfort in using the target language to their students. Finally, experiencing foreign language anxiety on a day-to-day basis would unquestionably degrade the teacher's quality of life and job satisfaction. When all these potential negative outcomes are considered, it is clear that action needs to be taken to help student teachers overcome their affective states of foreign language anxiety before they begin their teaching careers.

As can be seen, a sound case can be made as to why non-native EFL student teachers are susceptible to foreign language anxiety. Keeping in mind the potential effects of anxiety on the foreign language classroom, it is clear that measures need to be taken to combat student teacher foreign language anxiety. Clearly, more research is needed to determine to what extent non-native foreign language student teachers are subject to affective states that may undermine their teaching and language performance. Therefore, this study aims to broaden our understanding of the phenomenon of student teacher foreign language anxiety by investigating the specific effects of anxiety on anxious student teachers' target language performance. To that end, the current paper presents the findings of a quantitative and qualitative study with non-native foreign language student teachers who were drawing near the end of their teacher education programs. Specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do student teachers experience anxiety as they approach the end of their teacher education program?
2. How does foreign language anxiety affect student teachers' target language performance?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

The study participants were Turkish-speaking student teachers at two universities in Northern Cyprus. The student teachers were enrolled in either the junior or senior year of a four-year foreign language teacher education program. The two programs were considered similar in terms of the cultural backgrounds of enrolled student teachers, requirements for enrollment, and content of program. As student teachers typically enroll into the program straight out of high school with no prior practical teaching experience, it was decided to include only student teachers in the last two years of their programs in this study. This is because student teachers in the last two years of the program had begun to gain some practical teaching experience (through microteachings and internship programs) as part of their degree requirements. Apart from a handful of native speaker student teachers, all of the student teachers enrolled in the programs spoke English as a foreign language. For this reason, each program required that the enrolling student teachers provided evidence of their English proficiency by achieving a minimal score on standardized English proficiency tests, such as the IELTS or an English proficiency exam administered by the university itself.

Student teachers at the universities study a wide range of subjects. During the first year of their programs, they are required to take courses aimed at developing their proficiency and

language skills in English. Those courses concentrate on developing student teachers' command of English, including reading, writing, listening, speaking and oral presentation skills, and grammar. Apart from those early courses, student teachers also take courses on second language acquisition and second language learning theories. Courses also focus on aspects of language itself, including linguistics, morphology, phonology, syntax, semantics, and translation (Turkish-English). Other courses focus on topics in second language teaching and pedagogy, such as assessment and evaluation, testing, classroom management, lesson planning, material development, teaching methodology, approaches to second language teaching, and teaching English to young learners. Furthermore, a considerable range of courses in English literature is included in the program, and in the final semester student teachers take part in a practicum in which they practice teaching in real-life classrooms.

The participants of the study were 131 English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) student teachers, all non-native speakers of English, who were studying in the four-year teacher education programs in Northern Cyprus described previously. The participants were in the second half of either the junior or senior year of their programs. Specifically, 51% of the participants were enrolled in the senior year of the program while 49% were in the junior year. The participants ranged in age from 19 to 24 years, and they had studied English for at least six years during their secondary education before entering university. In terms of language proficiency, 11.5% of the student teachers rated their proficiency in English as "Near-native" while 62% rated their proficiency "Adequate for most of my needs" and a considerable 27% as "Adequate for most of my needs although I often have difficulty expressing myself". It is important to note that the data on the participants' proficiency levels reflect only the participants' self-perceptions of their proficiency level and do not reflect any objective proficiency measurement. In terms of gender, 73% of the participants were female and 27% were male, which reflects the overall gender ratio of the student teacher population in the department the participants study. All of the participants were native speakers of Turkish.

2.2 Data Collection Instruments

The student teachers were given Horwitz's Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale questionnaire consisting of 18 items. It was chosen to measure the participants' degree of foreign language anxiety with a five-point Likert scale of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. In the questionnaire, "English" refers to the target language that the student teachers will one day teach. The participants were also asked to self-rate their English proficiency. For the present study, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for 131 participants was 0.78. Expert judgement was used in obtaining the content validity of this study.

One statistician, one language education expert and one educational psychologist reached a consensus about the content validity of this study. The questionnaire was not translated into the participants' mother tongue as it was assumed the participants (being either junior or senior university-level students in reputable English-medium universities) would not have any trouble understanding the questionnaire items.

2.3 Data Collection and Analyses Procedures

All of the student teachers who filled out the questionnaire were invited to participate in the interviews. A total of 28 student teachers were interviewed. The interviews were recorded on audiotape (with the consent of the participants) and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were semi-structured in that all participants were asked questions on the same topics, but the wording and ordering of the questions varied from interview to interview. The participants were asked to explain how they feel when speaking English and encouraged to elaborate on the affective states they experienced when using the target language under certain circumstances, such as in the presence of their peers, course instructors, or native speakers. The interviews also focused on how any negative affective states may have affected the participants' language usage and what

could be done to help alleviate any negative affective states or anxiety. Each interview lasted around 15 to 20 minutes and was conducted by the second author. The interviews were conducted in the participants' native language to ensure the participants could comfortably elaborate on points discussed during the interviews. Participants were not given any compensation for participating in the interviews. Although using interviews can reduce the levels of standardization and generalizability of studies, as the aim of the study was to obtain rich and in-depth data shedding light on teacher foreign language anxiety rather than producing generalizable results, it was decided that the interview was an appropriate research instrument for this exploratory study. To maintain the reliability of the study, as much detail as possible has been provided on the methodology, assumptions, data collection and analyses procedures, and set-up of the interviews.

Once the interviews were transcribed and translated by both the authors, the responses were analyzed, and related ideas were grouped into thematic categories. In analyzing the data, a three-step thematic analysis was conducted with the general purpose of "finding and marking the underlying ideas in the data, grouping similar information together, and relating different ideas and themes to one another" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 229). Specifically, the researchers first individually scrutinized the data and identified small units of basic ideas related to the research questions. Each unit of basic ideas was then physically copied onto a small index cards, along with a preliminary code for the unit and the corresponding quotation from the interview. Only ideas which appeared on both researchers' lists were included in further analyses. The cards containing similar basic ideas were brought together into groups, and the groups were examined to determine further patterns. Next, labels were given to each group and to any subdivision within a group. Thus, the data were grouped according to recurring themes, all of which had bearing on the effects of anxiety on student teachers' language use and skills.

The student teachers' responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS to obtain the mean and standard deviation scores. The mean scores and standard deviation for each item was calculated. Consequently, it was decided to conduct a percentage analysis for each item of the questionnaire. All percentages (see Table 1) refer to the number of participants who agreed or strongly agreed (or disagreed and strongly disagreed) with statements indicative of foreign language anxiety. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number. The themes which were obtained from the interview data were triangulated with the student teachers' TFLAS responses in that TFLAS items reflecting similar concerns to those voiced by the student teachers during interviews were grouped together.

3. FINDINGS

The first aim of this study was to determine the extent to which student teachers experienced affective states of foreign language anxiety. As can be seen from Table 1, significantly high numbers of the student teachers indicated experiencing affective states of foreign language anxiety. To illustrate, items reflecting that the participant had experienced foreign language anxiety received strong agreement among the student teachers. Such items included "It frightens me when I do not understand what someone is saying in English" (48%), "When speaking English, I can get so nervous I forget the things I know" (45%), and "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English" (38%).

Table 1. Questionnaire Items, with Percentages of Student Teachers Selecting Each Alternative

	SA*	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. It frightens me when I don't understand what someone is saying in English. PST**	19	29	26	14	11	3.13	1.36
2. I would not worry about taking a course conducted entirely in English. PST	55	23	14	3	4	1.53	0.96
3. I am afraid that native speakers will notice every mistake I make. PST	13	20	25	24	18	3.43	1.25
4. I am pleased with the level of English proficiency I have achieved. PST	31	37	19	10	3	1.96	1.00
5. I feel self-conscious speaking English in front of the other (student) teachers. PST	27	33	22	13	5	2.44	1.28
6. When speaking English, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. PST	18	27	17	26	11	3.26	1.35
7. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English PST	12	26	32	20	10	3.31	1.25
8. I feel comfortable around native speakers of English. PST	28	24	31	10	6	2.18	1.17
9. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English in front of native speakers PST	18	26	27	20	9	3.20	1.31
10. I am not nervous speaking English with students. PST	37	31	15	13	4	1.78	1.08
11. I don't worry about making mistakes in English. PST	25	39	22	10	4	2.11	1.06
12. I speak English well enough to be a good foreign language teacher. PST	26	35	27	10	2	1.88	1.02
13. I get nervous when I don't understand every word a native speaker says. PST	10	16	23	39	11	3.41	1.21
14. I feel confident when I speak English. PST	27	36	25	7	4	1.97	1.02
15. I always feel that other (student) teachers speak the language better than I do. PST	14	21	27	26	12	3.44	1.27
16. I don't understand why some people think learning English is so hard. PST	23	33	26	13	5	2.54	1.15
17. I try to speak English with native speakers whenever I can. PST	35	34	19	8	4	2.07	1.07
18. I feel that my English preparation was adequate to become an EFL teacher. PST	26	39	23	11	2	1.93	0.96

*SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

** PST = Percentages of each response of student teachers for each item.

*** The data in this table is rounded to the nearest whole number. Thus, the percentages might not add up to 100 due to the rounding.

The study also investigated how foreign language anxiety affected student teachers' target language usage. According to the participants' responses to items on the questionnaire and their remarks during the interviews, foreign language anxiety has adverse effects in two areas: (1) the application of grammar rules and (2) the execution of speaking skills. The following two sections explore the participants' experience in those two general areas.

3.1 Effects on the Application of Grammar Rules

The student teachers expressed concern over having to learn such a large number of English grammar rules and having to properly apply the rules they already knew. For example, 38% of the student teachers responded positively to the statement "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English." Feeling threatened by the sheer number of rules of the target language, which in turn leads to doubt that one can master the

target language, is a well-documented indicator of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). In the interviews, the student teachers stated repeatedly their belief that knowing the rules of English was essential. The following is a typical expression of that belief:

I worry that I will get stuck at a certain point and not know how to go on or be unable to answer a question asked by my students.... Knowing the language—having a firm grasp of English—is a very important factor.

Here, the student teacher, who places great importance on having a strong foundation in English, worries about not having the knowledge to respond to the needs of future students.

As mentioned previously, Horwitz *et al.* (1986) contended that affective states of inadequacy in a target language, if those affective states occur often enough, can advance to affective states of foreign language anxiety. Throughout their interviews, the student teachers pointed out that anxiety affected their grammatical accuracy. They even tripped over simple rules that normally gave them little trouble.

The questionnaire provided similar evidence that anxiety interfered with the participants' ability to recall known rules. For example, 45% of the student teachers were in agreement with "When speaking English, I can get so nervous I forget things I know," which conforms with findings from previous research on the effects of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al, 1986). The student teacher below further demonstrates this relationship between anxiety and grammatical error

I make mistakes because I feel anxious. For example, I start the sentence with "he" or "she," but I continue with "they" because I am so stressed. Or I say "my sister," but then I continue with "he." I know the rule, but I still make a mistake at the time.

Another potential source of foreign language anxiety appears to be the student teacher's self-imposed insistence on perfect performance in the target language. Such student teachers often set unrealistically high standards for themselves and overreact to even small errors in their language use (Gregerson and Horwitz, 2002). The findings from the questionnaire and interviews revealed hints of such perfectionist tendencies among the student teachers. Below, self-hypocriticism is actually the cause of the participant's mistakes.

The reason I feel uncomfortable and anxious is that I want to do the best I can. While entirely focusing on not making any mistakes, I end up making even more.

By emphasizing doing "the best I can," the participant indicates having high standards of performance and an intolerance for mistakes. Clearly aware that attempts to meet such high standards are futile, the student teacher nevertheless appears unable to lower those standards to realistic levels and continues to make mistakes.

Many student teachers attributed their anxiety as an affective state to their fear of being "caught out" by their peers, as exemplified below:

My anxiety directly affects my language use. I make grammar mistakes. While making sentences I bring the beginning of the sentence to the end and the end to middle—I get confused and flustered.... The source of this anxiety is my peers—their criticizing looks, the way they try to catch out my shortcomings.

In the extract above, the student teacher complains about the debilitating effects that anxiety has on the participant's language usage, specifically, on grammar and sentence construction. Importantly, the student teacher has identified the source of the anxiety and panic: fellow student teachers and their attitudes towards the speaker's performance. Under this pressure, the anxious student teacher panics and suffers a loss of language skill.

When laying the conceptual foundations of foreign language anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) noted that the fear of negative evaluation was associated with foreign language anxiety. Since

then, research with non-native learners in a variety of contexts has confirmed that an important indicator of foreign language anxiety is the fear of making mistakes and appearing foolish in front of others. The extract below demonstrates how insidiously the fear of peer judgment can erode a student teacher's language proficiency:

I generally focus on not making grammar mistakes in English, and this is why I sometimes end up dithering and stuttering.... I pay attention to not making grammar mistakes because I do not want my peers to think I do not know how to use the language. This would be disturbing for me. I would be better at English if I didn't focus so much on making mistakes.

Here, the participant refers to the difficulty of using English while simultaneously focusing on the avoidance of grammatical mistakes. Underlying that avoidance is the fear of being judged incompetent in English by fellow student teachers. The student teacher realizes that it is the fear itself causing the language mistakes, but in this case the fear seems stronger than reason.

In short, the student teachers, when overcome by anxiety, were confounded by the number of English grammar rules and their inability to correctly apply even simple rules that normally gave them little trouble. Furthermore, the student teachers gave hints of their perfectionist tendencies in their insistence that their performance meet the highest standards of grammatical accuracy. In addition, the student teachers attributed their language mistakes to a fear of being negatively evaluated by their peers, which they claimed was a major source of their anxiety.

The next section will describe how anxiety affected the speaking skills of the student teachers in this study.

3.2 Effects on Speaking Skills

According to the questionnaire results, a high percentage of the student teachers experienced foreign language anxiety when speaking the target language. For example, 33% responded positively to "I am afraid that native speakers will notice every mistake I make"; 60% to "I feel self-conscious speaking English in front of the other student teachers"; 45% to "When speaking English I can get so nervous that I forget things I know"; 45% to "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English in front of native speakers"; and 35% to "I always feel that other student teachers speak the language better than I do". Such affective states and experiences parallel those of anxious foreign language *learners*.

The fear of appearing inadequate or incompetent in the eyes of other student teachers was mentioned frequently in the interviews, and the student teachers attributed their mistakes in pronunciation or diction to that fear. The following student provides an example of that attitude:

When speaking English, I feel under pressure. I can forget auxiliary verbs or I may not pay attention to the plural forms of some nouns. I may mispronounce some words. Then, I try to remember a word and when I cannot, I feel even more depressed.

This participant senses pressure or stress while speaking English and feels "even more depressed" when attempts to cope with that pressure become hopeless. Meanwhile, the speaker continues to mishandle spoken words and phrases and has trouble recalling known vocabulary items.

Other studies have likewise found that student teachers experience higher levels of foreign language anxiety when they must speak the target language in front of specific audiences. In her study with non-native foreign language student teachers, Wood (1999) found the participants experienced anxiety as an affective state and apprehension when speaking the target language in front of audiences that included native speakers, as well as peers and other language teachers.

In the current study, nearly half of the participants responded positively to Item 8 (“I feel comfortable around native speakers”). It is one thing, however, to feel comfortable around a native speaker and a much different thing to feel comfortable in expressing oneself to a native speaker in the target language. In the latter case, the student teachers can no longer remain inconspicuously silent during the conversation and can no longer rely on gestures and body language to fill in the blanks in the conversation. In fact, in their responses to other questionnaire items, many student teachers agreed with questionnaire items reflecting apprehension regarding interactions with native speakers, such as “I am afraid native speakers will notice every mistake I make” (33%) and “I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in front of native speakers” (44%). According to those percentages, many participants were self-conscious when speaking in the target language in the presence of native speakers and feared making mistakes in front of them.

The interview data provided further support for the claim that interaction with native speakers was a source of uneasiness for the participants. The following speaker voices a typical response toward the prospect of conversing with a native speaker:

I forget what I was going to say. I mix up the words. I mix up the subjects. I muddle my sentences. This is what scares me the most. I can't speak fluently because of my anxiety. For example, when I am approached by a native speaker, I start to worry whether I will be able to speak properly. This anxiety results in my leaving the conversation.

Not only does anxiety severely interfere with this student teacher's ability to communicate in English, but it also leads the speaker to abandon attempts to communicate with native speakers. The concern is not whether the participant can convey meaning but whether the participant can do so “fluently” and “properly.” As discussed previously, unrealistic expectations for one's own performance can be a source of anxiety for foreign language learners. In this case, the student teacher's “self-concept as a competent communicator” (Horwitz et al., 1986) is being threatened. In fact, Kunt and Tum (2010) provide evidence that the mere presence of native speakers in the classroom can make student teachers nervous and apprehensive.

To sum up, from their responses on the questionnaire and during the interviews, it can be said that student teachers experience affective states of foreign language anxiety. Those affective states gain significance when it is considered these participants are soon to become teachers. It is unlikely that receiving a teaching certificate at the end of the teacher education program will eradicate such strong anxiety as an affective state. It should also be borne in mind that persistent anxiety may also have a negative impact on job satisfaction and the overall physical and emotional well-being of the future teacher.

It appears, however, that the student teachers are also open to ideas about coping and eventually overcoming their affective states of self-consciousness and anxiety. For example, the participants strongly concurred with items such as “I speak English well enough to be a good foreign language teacher” (61%), and “I would not worry about taking a course conducted entirely in English” (78%). In fact, 69% of the student teachers agreed with “I try to speak English with native speakers whenever I can” despite the fact that their uneasiness of interacting with native speakers was recorded throughout the questionnaire and interviews. Such positive responses indicate that there is light at the end of the tunnel for non-native student teachers beset by anxiety. By offering understanding and guidance, the administrators of teacher education programs should be able to help non-native student teachers conquer their anxiety as an affective state.

4. CONCLUSIONS and DISCUSSION

Over the past few decades, research interest in foreign language anxiety among language learners has been extensive. Only a small body of research, however, has addressed anxiety among student teachers who are non-native speakers of the target language. Yet, there are strong reasons to believe that anxiety as an affective state are prevalent among those student teachers, especially as they approach the start of their teaching careers.

The student teachers in this study were in the process of developing both their pedagogical knowledge and their proficiency in English, and their practical teaching experience was minimal. As they drew nearer to the time they would graduate and become teachers, they grew increasingly aware of the responsibilities and expectations that awaited them. Similar to the conceptualizations of previous research on teacher foreign language anxiety (e.g., Canessa, 2004; Horwitz, 1996), as that awareness increased, they began to experience affective states of foreign language anxiety from time to time. Quite likely, those affective states will persist for some time after they begin teaching. Just because they have earned their teaching certificates does not mean the anxiety will go away. Findings from other contexts (see, İpek, 2007; Merç, 2011) have also similarly indicated that non-native student teachers are susceptible to feelings of anxiety in the target language they will one day teach. Thus, when this body of research is considered as a whole, it appears foreign language anxiety should be considered as a significant concern in the experiences of non-native student teachers.

The findings of this study in no way imply that non-native teachers are less capable foreign language teachers than native speakers. In fact, as elaborated by Cook (1999), non-native teachers have a number of advantages over monolingual teachers. It is also clear, however, that non-native teachers may suffer the negative effects of anxiety on teaching performance and overall well-being and job satisfaction. In that case, countermeasures should be taken.

Teacher education programs should combat foreign language anxiety among their student teachers. We recommend a specific plan that consists of two parts: (1) recognition and (2) response. First, teacher educators must recognize that non-native foreign language student teachers are likely to experience increasing levels of language anxiety as they near the end of their training and start of their professional careers. From time to time the teachers and administrators should counsel the student teachers in regard to their emotional response to the challenges ahead. Specifically, the student teachers should be advised that it is normal to experience anxiety as an affective state when they communicate in the target language with their peers, with native speakers, or in their future classrooms with their students. The student teachers need to be made aware that they are not alone in their anxiety as an affective state. According to Philips (1992), the realization that others experience similar debilitating affective states can help student teachers to cope. Recognition, therefore—at both the individual and institutional levels—is the essential first step. Second, teacher education programs should help the student teachers to respond in appropriate ways to their anxiety as an affective state. Horwitz (1996) put forward a number of guidelines in support of anxious teachers that also hold true for student teachers. Briefly, anxious teachers should set realistic goals in terms of target language proficiency and feel proud of the level of proficiency they have achieved, even as they set goals for further development. Teacher educators should aid student teachers in establishing a long-term continual plan for target language proficiency improvement after the completion of their teacher training program. Furthermore, she believes that teachers should stay aware that the language learning process can induce negative affective states, such as culture shock and foreign language anxiety, and to regard those affective states as a part of the process of learning. Teacher trainers may opt to also help anxious student teachers respond to their feelings of foreign language anxiety in the target language in appropriate ways. For example, although student teachers realize their own future students will make mistakes when learning and using the target

language, student teachers themselves may often be unwilling to show the same levels of tolerance to their own language errors when using the target language. Thus, it would be beneficial for teacher trainers to help student teachers realize what they have already achieved in the target language while still recognizing the importance of a long-term plan for target language maintenance and development. Alternatively, it is important to make student teachers aware that all teachers (regardless of whether they are native or non-native speakers of the target language) feel the need to look things up from time to time in and out of the classroom. Thus, student teachers should be encouraged to use dictionaries and online tools in their future classrooms to look up word meanings and usages at potentially stressful moments in the foreign language classroom. Finally, Horwitz recommends relaxation techniques that teachers can rely on when they are feeling anxious. In this study, it became apparent that the fear of peer judgment and attitudes toward each other were sources of anxiety among student teachers. It would be helpful, therefore, for teacher education programs to foster and encourage feelings of cooperation and empathy in their institutions rather than competition and judgment.

While the current study makes an important contribution to the existing limited literature on EFL student teacher foreign language anxiety, its findings are limited in that the current study does not address how anxiety may affect anxious student teachers' approach to teaching the target language. Horwitz (1996) suggested that anxious student teachers may avoid using language-intensive activities in the classroom, limiting the learners' access to quality target language input. Future research could address the issue of whether anxious EFL student teachers do actually avoid using the target language intensively in their classroom activity preferences. It would also be interesting to follow up on the research of Canessa (2004) and investigate the relationship between culture and anxiety in the Turkish EFL context. Moreover, different sample groups and methodology could be utilized in future studies. For example, it would be interesting to conduct similar studies with practicing novice and experienced teachers. Additionally, such a study could also utilize classroom observations to investigate the effects of teacher foreign language anxiety on pedagogical preferences and teacher target language use in the foreign language classroom.

In summary, the feelings and manifestations of student teacher foreign language anxiety found in this study are quite similar to those experienced by anxious foreign language *learners* in previous studies. However, when the potential negative effects of foreign language anxiety on foreign language education described earlier are considered, it is clear that the current findings make an important contribution to the field of foreign language teacher education. Although the reduction or elimination of feelings of foreign language anxiety in student teachers is a formidable challenge, it is far from impossible. There are many measures that can help ease the transition from student teacher to professional teacher, and measures that foster feelings of empathy, understanding, and cooperation rather than feelings of self-consciousness, judgment, competition, and anxiety. In so doing, our institutions, teacher education programs, and education administrators can fulfill a profound obligation: to give their student teachers not only the knowledge but also the optimism, self-confidence, and eagerness to build productive careers.

5. REFERENCES

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Yabancı dil kullanımına yönelik kaygı sadece yabancı dili öğrenenlerin değil aynı zamanda bu dili öğretecek olan öğretmen adaylarının da önemli bir sorunudur.

Yabancı dil kaygısı ile ilgili literatüre bakıldığında, yapılan çalışmalar yabancı dil kaygısı olan öğretmen adaylarının yaşadıkları kaygıdan dolayı dili etkin bir şekilde kullanamadıklarını ileri sürmektedir. Bunun yanında öğretmen adayları öğretmenlik mesleğine başladıkları zaman öğretmenlik yetilerinin yanında ayrıca kendi yabancı dil yetilerine yönelik beklentilerin de oldukça yüksek olduğunu bildiklerinden daha da kaygılanmaktadırlar. Bu beklentilere göre, yabancı dil öğretmeni sınıfıçti etkileşimi canlı tutabilmek için dili doğal, akıcı, ve hatasız bir biçimde kullanılmalıdır. Ancak bu durum anadili farklı olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerinde fazladan bir kaygı oluşmasına, hatta sınıf kontrolünü dahi

kaybetmelerine neden olabilir. Bu koşullarda yetişen yabancı dil öğretmen adaylarının kaygı düzeyleri oldukça yüksek boyutlara ulaşabilmektedir.

Yirmi beş yılı aşkın bir süreden beri, yabancı dil kaygısı birçok araştırmacının yoğun bir şekilde ilgi odağı olmuştur. Ancak anadili farklı olan yabancı dil öğretmen adaylarının yaşadığı kaygıya yönelik çalışmalar oldukça azdır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma öğretmenlik yaşamlarına ilk adımlarını atmak üzere olan öğretmen adaylarının yaşadığı dil kaygısını irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma özellikle yabancı dil kaygısının öğretmen adaylarının dil kullanımını nasıl etkilediğini ve bu etkinin eğitim sürecinin sonuna geldikçe nasıl seyrettiğini incelemektedir.

Çalışmanın katılımcıları Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki iki ayrı üniversitede İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümlerinde öğrenim gören (3. ve 4. sınıfta okuyan) 131 öğretmen adaydır. Katılımcıların %51'i dördüncü, %49'u üçüncü sınıfta okumaktadır. Bunların %64'ü 6 ile 11 yıl arasında değişen sürelerde İngilizce eğitimi görmüştür. Adayların %73'ü bayan, %27'si erkek olmakla birlikte tümünün anadili Türkçe olup yaşları 19 ile 24 arasında değişmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın verileri nicel ve nitel yöntemler kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Nicel veriler Horwitz'in Öğretmen Yabancı Dil Kaygı Ölçeği tüm katılımcılara uygulanarak elde edilmiş ve analizi için SPSS paket programının 16. versiyonu kullanılarak ortalamalar ve yüzdelikler hesaplanmıştır. Nitel veriler ise mülakat uygulaması ile rasgele seçilmiş 28 katılımcıdan elde edilmiş ve temalara göre gruplandırma tekniği kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir.

Analiz sonuçlarına göre eğitimlerinin sonuna yaklaşan İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının belirgin bir düzeyde kaygı yaşadıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Öğretmen Yabancı Dil Kaygı Ölçeğine ilişkin yapılan madde çözümlemesi analizine göre öğretmen adaylarının kaygı düzeyine şu maddeler örnek olarak verilebilir: "Karşımdakinin İngilizce olarak söylediklerini anlamamaktan korkuyorum." bu maddede belirtilen düşünceye adayların %48'i katıldığını, %26'sı tarafsız kaldığını, %25'i ise katılmadığını belirtti. "İngilizce konuşurken o kadar çok geriliyorum ki bildiğim şeyleri unutuyorum." buradaki düşünce katılımcıların %45'ini içererek benimsenmiş, %37'si tarafından benimsenmemiş, %17'si ise tarafsız kalmıştır. "Diğer öğretmen adaylarının karşısında İngilizce konuşurken kendimden emin olmayıp utangaçlık hissine kapılıyorum." Ölçeğin tüm maddelerine bakıldığında yaşanan kaygının en yüksek olumsuz etkisinin %60 katılıyorum yanıtı ile bu maddede olduğu görülmektedir.

Ayrıca mülakatlarla ilgili sonuçlar ele alındığında öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil kaygılarının olumsuz yönde iki ayrı alanda etkili olduğu da tespit edilmiştir. Bunlar: (1) Dilbilgisi kurallarına uyulması ve (2) Konuşma becerilerinin uygulanması, olarak sınıflandırılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada büyük ölçüde gözlemlenen yabancı dil kaygısının olumsuz etkilerine rağmen bazı maddelere bakıldığında öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce'yi iyi bir şekilde konuşmaya yönelik inançlarını yitirmediğini ve çabalarını sürdürdüklerini görmekteyiz. Olumlu etkilere örnek maddeler şöyle sıralanabilir: "İyi bir yabancı dil öğretmeni olmak için İngilizce'yi iyi bir şekilde konuşuyorum." Öğretmen adayları çoğunlukla (%61) buna inanmaktadır. "Fırsat buldukça anadili İngilizce olan kişilerle konuşmaya çalışıyorum." maddesine %69 katılıyorum yanıtı vererek adaylar bu alandaki çabalarını büyük bir çoğunlukla dile getirmektedir.

Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlar ışığında yabancı dil kaygısının olumsuz etkilerinin üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıfta okuyan öğretmen adayları üzerinde oldukça fazla olduğu görülmektedir. Bunun yanında adaylar hem pedagojik bilgilerini geliştirme hem de minimum düzeyde olan öğretmenlik deneyimlerini artırma çabalarını sürdürürken artan sorumluluklar ve beklentilerle birlikte bir de kendilerinin yabancı dil öğrenme sürecinin hiçbir zaman tamamlanmayacağını keşfetmeleri onları daha çok kaygılandırmaktadır. Ancak bunları çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda söylerken anadili farklı olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin anadili aynı olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerine göre daha az yeterli olduğunu kesinlikle ima etmek istemiyoruz. Bununla ilgili olarak literatüre bakıldığında, farklı anadili olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin çoğu durumlarda daha etkili olduğu görülmektedir (Cook, 1999).

Öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine başlarken yaşadıkları yabancı dil kaygısının olumsuz etkilerinden kurtulmalarına yardım için eğitimcilere oldukça önemli sorumluluklar ve görevler düşmektedir. Bu yardımların nasıl olacağı çalışmamızda detaylı olarak bahsedilmekle birlikte kısaca eğitimcilere iki kısımdan oluşan yabancı dil kaygısına yönelik bir plan önerilebilir. Plan: (1) öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil kaygısı olduğunu kabul etme ve (2) öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil kaygısına

çözüm üretme. Ayrıca bu çalışmadaki bulgulara bakıldığında, öğretmen adaylarının kaygıları önemli ölçüde kendi akranlarının yargılayıcı tutumlarından da kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle öğretmen yetiştiren kurumlara öğretmen adayları arasında yargılayıcı ve yarışmacı tutumlardan uzak, birbirleriyle yardımlaşarak kolektif bir şekilde çalışabilen ve aralarında empati kurabilen bireyler olarak yetiştirmeleri önerilebilir.

Citation Information

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