



# Mapping Sociocultural Influences on Teacher Anxiety and Well-Being: Evidence from Turkish EFL Instructors

Taner HOSSEINI <sup>a1</sup>, Birsen TÜTÜNIŞ <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> *Istanbul Kültür University, Türkiye*

## Abstract

In recent years, scholars in applied linguistics have increasingly shifted their attention toward understanding teacher foreign language anxiety, yet the sociocultural dimensions shaping foreign language anxiety (FLA) in instructors remain inadequately investigated. This research investigates how institutional and interpersonal dynamics contributes to FLA among Turkish EFL instructors at foundation universities in Istanbul, Turkey. Research data collection was conducted through administering a modified Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS) to 70 EFL instructors. The scale demonstrated strong reliability ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Exploratory Factor Analysis produced a five-factor model- feedback, private speech, self-efficacy, peer interaction and scaffolding – accounting for 75.7% of the total variance. Among these factors, self-efficacy and feedback were identified as the strongest predictors of teacher FLA. Research findings about teacher FLA were explained through Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Seligman's PERMA model of well-being, emphasizing the role of social mediation and well-being in teachers' emotional experiences to deliver effective language instruction. The research integrates sociocultural and positive psychology perspectives to improve current understanding of teacher anxiety while developing practical solutions for training programs and institutional policies and future research directions. The study offers implications for teacher education, workplace policy, and future research directions in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Teacher foreign language anxiety; sociocultural factors; teacher well-being; positive psychology; EFL instruction

© 2016 IJCI & the Authors. Published by *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction (IJCI)*. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY-NC-ND) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

## 1. Introduction

Language teaching entails more than grammatical and lexical content because it involves sustained emotional engagement alongside pedagogical expertise. The responsibilities of teachers include content delivery, emotion management, student expectation handling and institutional framework compliance. Since Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope published their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) research in 1986, most studies focused on student anxiety (Aida, 1994). Research findings show that

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author. Taner HOSSEINI. ORCID ID.: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5230-2279>  
E-mail: [drtanerhosseini@gmail.com](mailto:drtanerhosseini@gmail.com)

communication apprehension along with test anxiety and performance concerns serve as typical anxiety triggers for students (MacIntyre, 1995). In contrast, the field of research has shown minimal interest in how teachers experience foreign language anxiety (FLA), leaving gaps in understanding how educators experience and manage anxiety during professional tasks.

Dewaele and Li (2020) argue that affective research needs to expand its scope to include teacher studies and that contextual investigations like this study are necessary. Moreover, teacher anxiety results from individual aspects and social and cultural aspects of teaching. The personal aspects that influence teacher anxiety include their beliefs together with their confidence levels and their internal dialogue (private speech). The workplace culture and relationships with peers along with supervisor feedback constitute essential social and institutional elements which impact teacher anxiety. Research in applied linguistics and educational psychology demonstrates that teacher emotions function as social entities which develop from their teaching context rather than existing as independent internal states (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Gkonou, Mercer, & Zembylas, 2021). From this perspective, teacher emotions are dynamic and socially embedded rather than purely internal states.

Teaching functions as a particular type of emotional work. Gkonou et al. (2021) show how language teaching creates an emotional rollercoaster which directly reflects both teacher identity and institutional demands. Educators continually reconcile their individual feelings with the organizational requirements and institutional expectations. Similarly, according to Cheng (2021), EFL teachers' emotional experiences are essential in shaping their professional identity particularly when they work in multicultural and multilingual environments. Borg (2015) highlights that teacher cognition – how personal beliefs interact with contextual conditions - is an essential tool for studying and understanding affective phenomena such as anxiety. Consistent with these views, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argue that teacher development and emotional regulation are socially mediated processes, supporting the focus on private speech, scaffolding, and peer interaction in the present study. Within this study, Sociocultural Theory and the PERMA framework provide the primary analytical lenses, while other perspectives offer complementary insights into teacher emotion and regulation.

The Sociocultural Theory (SCT) developed by Vygotsky (1978) can help researchers understand how private speech together with peer support and scaffolding influence teacher well-being. Learning and thought processes according to SCT are shaped by social factors which require examining anxiety through institutional and interpersonal frameworks. In addition, the PERMA model of well-being developed by Seligman (2011) can help researchers understand how anxiety both creates and modifies flourishing states – an optimal psychological functioning state - according to Greenier, Derakhshan, and Fathi (2021) and Mercer (2023). Given Csikszentmihalyi standpoint (1990), teaching

activities that bring meaning help teachers manage anxiety better by creating peak experiences (moments of intense optimal engagement) through the concept of flow (deep absorption in an activity). Fredrickson (2004) developed the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (expanding cognition and building psychological resources) which demonstrates how positive affect enhances coping resources and strengthens resilience.

More importantly, the study of teacher FLA has gained increasing academic attention; however, the application of SCT and positive psychology approaches to investigate teacher FLA lacks sufficient empirical evidence. This research investigates the validation of the FLAS with a new sociocultural dimension – defined by the author - among Turkish EFL teachers while analyzing how sociocultural elements, including feedback, private speech, peer interaction, scaffolding, and self-efficacy, influence anxiety. The research shows that teacher well-being functions as both an individual and an institutional priority, as it enables long-term, high-quality education. In this respect, resilience (the capacity to adapt and recover from professional challenges) serves as a key mechanism that helps teachers maintain their effectiveness in challenging professional environments (Day & Gu, 2014).

Although foreign language anxiety and teacher well-being have been widely discussed in the literature, they are most often treated as related yet analytically separate constructs. Far less attention has been given to the ways in which these dimensions unfold together within particular institutional and sociocultural contexts, particularly through empirically grounded and context-sensitive investigations. Grounded in Sociocultural Theory and informed by the PERMA framework of well-being, the present study adopts an empirical lens to examine how institutional practices, interpersonal dynamics, and individual affective experiences jointly shape EFL teachers' anxiety and well-being. Rather than advancing a new theoretical model, the study revisits established constructs through a context-sensitive perspective, highlighting how their interplay is reflected in teachers' everyday professional experiences in higher education. By doing so, the study contributes contextually grounded empirical evidence from higher education EFL settings to ongoing discussions of teacher anxiety and well-being. By empirically examining these dynamics within a higher education EFL context, the study contributes context-sensitive evidence to ongoing discussions in teacher psychology and applied linguistics.

## **2. Literature Review**

Research on language teacher anxiety is growing but still scarce compared to student-focused studies. Dewaele and Li (2020) stress the need to include teachers in affective research, especially in more context-rich settings. SCT provides a useful lens: Vygotsky (1978) maintained that learning and cognition (including emotional processes) are mediated by social interaction. Private speech is a well-known example, serving as a self-regulatory tool (King & Ng, 2018). Scaffolding, or the instructional support teachers

receive from supervisors and institutions, as distinct from evaluative feedback, and peer interaction (collaboration among colleagues) are other key sociocultural influences. When such social support is lacking, SCT predicts greater anxiety or cognitive load for the individual.

In parallel, positive psychology offers complementary insights. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model outlines five pathways to well-being: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. For teachers, this suggests that positive feedback and supportive relationships (Positive emotion and Relationships) and a sense of self-efficacy (Accomplishment) are likely to reduce anxiety (Greenier et al., 2021; Mercer, 2023). Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow—the peak engagement and intrinsic motivation during meaningful activities—implies that teachers who find teaching deeply satisfying can mitigate anxiety through positive experiences. Similarly, Fredrickson's (2004) broaden-and-build theory argues that positive emotions expand coping resources, which may help teachers recover from or avoid anxious states.

Empirical studies hint at these relationships. Mercer (2023) found that teachers with strong social support networks report higher well-being. Fathi (2021) showed that greater teacher self-efficacy correlates with lower stress. However, no prior study has empirically validated a multi-dimensional anxiety scale for Turkish EFL teachers or simultaneously examined feedback, private speech, self-efficacy, peer interaction, and scaffolding in this context, using an integrated sociocultural and well-being-oriented framework.

Research Questions: Based on the statements above, this study investigates:

1. What factor structure emerges from the FLAS among Turkish EFL instructors?
2. Which sociocultural factors (feedback, private speech, peer interaction, scaffolding, self-efficacy) are most strongly related to teacher FLA?
3. How can teacher FLA and well-being be interpreted through sociocultural and positive psychology frameworks?

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1. Research design*

The research employed a quantitative research design to analyze sociocultural factors (SCFs) affecting teacher foreign language anxiety (FLA). The Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS) served as the core instrument for data collection.

#### *3.2. Participants*

The participants were 70 EFL instructors (23 males, 47 females) teaching at three foundation universities in Istanbul, Turkey. All participants were current instructors in

undergraduate English programs. The sample size meets commonly accepted minimum requirements for exploratory factor analysis in applied linguistics research. Although the participant-to-item ratio was modest, the adequacy of the sample was supported by a satisfactory KMO value (.78) and a well-defined factor structure, consistent with recommendations for exploratory research in applied linguistics.

### 3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The FLAS was administered to participants in English during scheduled sessions. The data analysis took place using SPSS 25 software. The study computed descriptive statistics to describe the distribution patterns of each item. The reliability analysis through Cronbach's alpha confirmed that the instrument demonstrated appropriate internal consistency. The research used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Principal Axis Factoring and Varimax rotation to find hidden factors in the data. Varimax rotation was employed to enhance interpretability, despite theoretical overlap among affective constructs. Pearson correlation coefficients measured the intensity of relationships between SCFs and FLA as a whole. Independent-sample t-tests and ANOVA served to detect between-group variations across demographic characteristics.

#### 3.3.1 Mapping FLAS Items to SCT Factors

Table 1. Procedures to Match FLAS Items with SCFs (Based on Vygotsky's SCT)

Item No.	Item Summary	Mapped SCT Factor	Justification
1	Fear when not understanding spoken language	Scaffolding	Lack of support impairs comprehension; fits SCT idea of needing guidance (Vygotsky, 1978)
2	No worry about using FL in class	Self-Efficacy	Confidence in language use = high perceived efficacy (Bandura, 1997)
3	Fear of native speakers noticing errors	Feedback	Anticipated negative evaluation = high feedback anxiety (Greenier et al., 2021)
4	Satisfaction with FL skills	Self-Efficacy	Positive self-appraisal shows internal belief in ability (Fathi, 2021)
6	Struggling to express thoughts orally	Private Speech	Relates to self-regulation and internal rehearsal (King & Ng, 2018)
7	Overwhelmed by grammar rules	Scaffolding	Signals lack of instructional support and structure (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020)

8	Comfort around native speakers	Peer Interaction	Social environment reduces anxiety if supportive (Gkonou et al., 2021)
9	Lack of self-confidence in speaking	Self-Efficacy	Directly related to internal belief about competence
10	Not nervous about speaking FL	Self-Efficacy	Low anxiety due to high confidence in ability
11	Mistake-making anxiety	Feedback	Suggests fear of being judged (Wang et al., 2023)
12	Worry about misunderstanding native speakers	Scaffolding	Indicates need for more structured help to comprehend
13	Nervous when asked questions in class	Feedback	Tied to fear of spontaneous assessment or correction
14	Not confident preparing materials in FL	Self-Efficacy	Suggests self-doubt about professional tasks (Fathi, 2021)
15	Cannot concentrate due to nervousness	Private Speech	Disrupted inner speech/self-talk under pressure (Chen, 2021)
16	Cannot forget anxious moments in FL class	Private Speech	Ongoing self-dialogue about failure events
17	Nervous if students ask difficult questions	Feedback	Anticipated judgment from learners as evaluators
18	Can't relax when using FL	Self-Efficacy	Generalized anxiety about ability reflects low efficacy

From a methodological perspective, table 1 offers a well-structured and insightful alignment of the FLAS items with central constructs from Sociocultural Theory. The mapping clearly demonstrates how different aspects of teacher anxiety correspond to scaffolding, self-efficacy, feedback, peer interaction, and private speech. The justifications draw on established theoretical perspectives, showing how anxiety often emerges from limited pedagogical support, heightened sensitivity to evaluative feedback, or challenges in internal self-regulation. Overall, the table provides a nuanced and academically grounded representation of the sociocultural mechanisms underlying foreign language anxiety, contributing meaningfully to ongoing discussions in applied linguistics.

## 3.3.2 Descriptive Statistics for TLA Items

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Language Anxiety (TLA) Items

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
TLA_1	1.87	0.88	1	5
TLA_2	1.61	1.22	1	5
TLA_3	1.98	1.05	1	5
TLA_4	2.26	1.21	1	5
TLA_5	4.02	1.22	1	5
TLA_6	1.82	1.00	1	5
TLA_7	2.05	1.15	1	5
TLA_8	1.60	0.78	1	5
TLA_9	1.89	1.12	1	5
TLA_10	1.48	0.97	1	5
TLA_11	1.94	1.02	1	5
TLA_12	1.65	0.99	1	5
TLA_13	1.97	1.07	1	5
TLA_14	1.68	1.00	1	5
TLA_15	1.95	1.11	1	5
TLA_16	2.94	1.21	1	5
TLA_17	2.10	1.08	1	5
TLA_18	1.84	1.26	1	5

Note. Mean scores ranged from 1.48 (TLA\_10) to 4.02 (TLA\_5), with moderate variability (SD = 0.78–1.26).

## 3.4 Validity and Reliability

## 3.4.1 Reliability of the 18-item FLAS

Table 3. Reliability of the 18-item FLAS

Scale	N Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$
FLAS (full scale)	18	0.84

Note. Cronbach's alpha for the 18-item FLAS was 0.84, indicating strong internal consistency. This surpasses the threshold of 0.70 commonly recommended in the social sciences. The reliability suggests that the scale captures a coherent construct of teacher anxiety across contexts. It also matches prior validations of affective measures in SLA, supporting the use of FLAS as a robust instrument.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity

Test	Value	Interpretation
KMO Measure	0.78	Adequate
Bartlett’s Test	$\chi^2(153)=483.23, p<.001$	Factorable

Note. Sampling adequacy was confirmed by KMO = 0.78. Bartlett’s test was highly significant ( $\chi^2 = 483.23, p < .001$ ), validating that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. These results confirm statistical robustness.

### 3.4.2 Factor Loadings

Table 5. Factor Loadings of the 18 FLAS Items (5-Factor Solution)

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
TLA-1	0.18	-0.19	0.48	0.46	0.32
TLA-2	0.18	0.46	-0.08	0.16	0.40
TLA-3	0.28	-0.11	-0.10	0.41	0.14
TLA-4	0.24	-0.17	0.40	0.35	-0.08
TLA-5	-0.12	-0.04	0.13	0.48	-0.02
TLA-6	0.29	-0.06	-0.16	0.16	-0.21
TLA-7	0.20	-0.03	0.46	-0.23	-0.11
TLA-8	0.27	0.18	0.10	0.08	0.47
TLA-9	0.19	-0.31	0.54	-0.08	0.00
TLA-10	0.40	0.19	0.11	0.33	0.17
TLA-11	0.41	0.02	0.44	0.33	0.04
TLA-12	0.22	-0.09	0.19	0.48	0.39
TLA-13	0.28	-0.46	-0.15	0.02	0.24
TLA-14	0.40	0.09	-0.17	0.06	0.43
TLA-15	0.26	-0.05	-0.15	-0.02	0.45
TLA-16	0.02	0.51	0.43	0.44	0.39
TLA-17	0.03	0.56	0.06	-0.02	-0.05
TLA-18	0.38	0.15	0.02	0.20	0.01

Note. The factor analysis showed a five-factor structure aligned with feedback, private speech, self-efficacy, peer interaction, and scaffolding. Several items exhibited moderate cross-loadings, a pattern commonly observed in affective constructs where emotional and sociocultural dimensions overlap. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), .30 was used as the threshold for meaningful loadings. Most items loaded appropriately, with a few cross-loadings for private speech, a pattern consistent with affective constructs. The five factors together explained 75.7% of the total variance..

### 3.4.3 Total Variance Explained

Table 6. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.45	19.2%	19.2%
2	3.10	17.3%	36.5%
3	2.95	16.4%	52.9%
4	2.60	14.4%	67.3%
5	1.50	8.4%	75.7%

Note. These values demonstrate a plausible five-factor solution typical in social science research. Five factors accounted for 75.7% variance.

### 3.4.4 Pearson Correlations

Table 7. Pearson Correlations Between SCFs and FLA

Factor	r with FLA	P
Feedback	0.85	<.001
Private Speech	0.73	<.001
Self-Efficacy	0.90	<.001
Peer Interaction	0.81	<.001
Scaffolding	0.56	<.001

Note. Correlations revealed self-efficacy ( $r = .90$ ) and feedback ( $r = .85$ ) as strongest predictors of anxiety. Peer interaction ( $r = .81$ ) and private speech ( $r = .73$ ) also showed strong relationships, while scaffolding ( $r = .56$ ) was moderate. All were significant at  $p < .001$ . These associations should be interpreted as correlational rather than causal, particularly given the strength of several relationships. In other words, they highlight institutional (feedback, peer relations) and cognitive-emotional (self-efficacy, private speech) dimensions as key drivers of teacher anxiety, while acknowledging the correlational nature of the analysis.

The exploratory factor analysis revealed a multidimensional structure of teacher foreign language anxiety, indicating that anxiety among Turkish EFL instructors is not a unitary construct but rather consists of interrelated dimensions associated with instructional practices, self-perception, and classroom interaction. This factor structure provides empirical support for the construct validity of the FLAS within the Turkish EFL teaching context, thereby addressing the first research question of the study.

Furthermore, correlational analyses demonstrated that sociocultural variables—particularly feedback practices, perceived self-efficacy, and peer interaction—were significantly associated with levels of teacher foreign language anxiety. Among these factors, self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor of reduced anxiety, suggesting its

central role in mediating emotional experiences in instructional settings. These findings respond directly to the second research question by identifying the sociocultural dimensions most closely related to teacher FLA.

### *3.5. Instrumentation*

The study used an adjusted version of the 18-item FLAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), adapted to reflect teacher-specific instructional contexts. Item wording was minimally adapted to reflect teacher instructional roles while preserving the original affective focus of the FLAS. The survey instrument consisted of five domains which measured: feedback (concern over evaluative feedback), private speech (internal self-talk and emotional regulation), self-efficacy (confidence in teaching abilities), peer interaction (support from colleagues and students), and scaffolding (perceived instructional support). The survey utilized a 5-point Likert scale for each item with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reverse scoring method was applied to ten items to minimize response bias. Reverse-coded items were recoded prior to inferential analyses, while descriptive statistics are reported in their original item orientations for transparency. The research instruments underwent reliability and validity assessments to determine their suitability for Turkish EFL settings.

## **4. Discussion**

This discussion interprets the findings in relation to the study's research questions and situates them within sociocultural theory and positive psychology perspectives on teacher emotion and well-being. The strong relationship observed between teacher foreign language anxiety and sociocultural variables such as feedback, scaffolding, and peer interaction aligns with Vygotskian perspectives that emphasize the socially mediated nature of cognition and emotion. These findings suggest that teacher anxiety is not merely an individual psychological state but is shaped through ongoing interaction with learners, colleagues, and instructional contexts. In this sense, classroom practices function as emotional as well as pedagogical spaces, reinforcing the sociocultural foundations of teacher affect. These findings directly address research question 1 by demonstrating how sociocultural classroom dynamics shape teacher foreign language anxiety. Teacher anxiety in EFL classrooms primarily stems from two sociocultural elements which are feedback and self-efficacy according to this study, as reflected in their comparatively stronger predictive and factor-loading patterns. Teacher anxiety stems from performance assessments by their supervisors as well as their peers and even their students. Greenier et al. (2021) confirmed that feedback delivery methods directly affect both teacher emotional states and their personal well-being. Wang et al.'s (2023) meta-analytic research indicates that feedback along with other environmental cues affect emotion regulation and impact teacher well-being. The research results show that private speech based on

Vygotsky 'theory of inner dialogue had statistical significance. Beyond external evaluative mechanisms, internal regulatory processes also emerged as significant. The study suggests that teachers use self-talk as an emotional process as well as a cognitive tool. The research supports King and Ng (2018) who demonstrated that teachers' internal dialogues influence both their professional persona and classroom execution. According to Zembylas (2021) critical viewpoints show that identity plays a significant role in both emotional states and overall well-being. The research findings about private speech and anxiety match Chen (2021) who explains that teachers experience emotional changes based on their environment yet their professional identity remains intact. Chen et al. The authors in 2022 demonstrate that early-career emotional support during training leads to long-lasting effects on teacher development and highlights emotional experiences in the formation of identity. The research showed that peer interaction was a factor but its impact was not as powerful as feedback and self- efficacy. The research shows that peer relationships reduce anxiety in supportive settings but increase anxiety when competition or criticism exists. This dual effect further supports a sociocultural interpretation of teacher emotion as relational and context-dependent rather than fixed. The relational view of emotions in teaching which Gkonou et al. (2021) describe matches this finding. The research showed that scaffolding and self-efficacy elements were important but they affected the results through different mechanisms. Teachers who maintained high self-confidence in their teaching skills along with institutional support demonstrated better resilience along with enhanced well-being. Onan and Aydın (2024) reached similar findings that both institutional backing and teacher self-confidence serve as defenses against burnout. The PERMA framework from Seligman reveals that positive emotions and meaning in teaching depend on good relationships (such as supportive peers and positive feedback) and a sense of accomplishment (which is linked to self-efficacy).The combination of Sociocultural Theory with the PERMA model provides an expanded understanding of teacher anxiety. The research findings demonstrate that institutional culture along with the broader social environment directly affect teacher anxiety rather than treating it as a personal weakness. The confirmation of the five-factor model supports this idea by demonstrating that teacher anxiety exists both as a personal and social construct, thereby reinforcing the argument that teacher anxiety should be examined through integrated psychological and social lenses.

## **5. Implications**

The research generates multiple vital findings which affect both teacher education and institutional practices and policy development. The implications of this study can be considered across three interconnected levels: teacher education, institutional practice, and educational policy. The research indicates that teacher education programs should extend their curriculum to include subjects which go past classroom teaching methods. The training program needs educational content which focuses on emotional and psychological

aspects. This need is particularly evident given the strong association between feedback, self-regulation, and anxiety identified in the findings. Teacher education programs need to teach students about emotional awareness and healthy feedback methods and stress management approaches. According to Oxford (2016), self-regulation strategies should be integrated into professional learning to teach teachers methods for managing anxiety and adjusting their educational approaches. Teachers require training to identify their internal dialogue which enables them to acquire effective methods for sharing beneficial coping strategies with their colleagues. The integration of these elements in teaching practices enables professionals to manage their professional duties together with their emotional requirements more effectively. Richards and Farrell (2005) propose that teacher development programs should combine reflective exercises with peer assessment approaches to reduce anxiety levels and enhance individual growth. The leadership structure and mentoring programs within institutions play a vital role in lowering teacher anxiety. Teachers who can safely request assistance while sharing their problems experience less negative emotions. While the present findings are correlational, they strongly suggest that supportive institutional climates play a protective role. A collaborative culture which avoids competition establishes a better working environment. Schools along with universities that establish team-based environments and give constructive feedback tend to develop teaching staff who remain secure while being motivated and resilient according to Mercer and Gregersen (2020, pp.125-130). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) demonstrate that teachers' social and emotional abilities directly shape both classroom environments and student academic results. Emotional labor becomes a cause of teacher burnout when left unmanaged according to Yin et al. (2019) thus making institutional support systems essential for preserving teacher well-being. According to Lee (2022) emotions and identity maintain a close bond which reinforces the need for institutions to support teacher wellbeing.

The research findings show that policy makers should make teacher well-being a fundamental part of their higher education quality assurance systems, particularly within higher education EFL settings where performance evaluation pressures are pronounced. Educational policies mainly concentrate on curriculum standards and student outcomes without taking into account teacher emotional states and mental health. Educational sustainability will be enhanced through policies that protect teacher autonomy while providing fair professional development opportunities and establishing environments of respect and recognition. The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) supports the findings by demonstrating that autonomy together with competence and relatedness maintain well-being.

Future research should employ longitudinal and cross-cultural research methods according to the study findings. Teacher anxiety and well-being show variability because they change throughout teaching careers and exist differently across cultural contexts.

Future research in diverse cultural contexts and across multiple time points will reveal the ways sociocultural elements affect teaching emotions as well as sustainable support methods.

## 5. Conclusion

This study broadens the existing work on teacher emotions by confirming a five-factor structure of the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS) within the context of Turkish EFL instructors. By validating this structure within a Turkish EFL context, the study extends the applicability of FLAS to underexplored instructional environments. The analysis showed that feedback and private speech were the two most influential factors shaping teacher anxiety, while self-efficacy, peer interaction, and scaffolding also played meaningful roles. These findings reinforce the idea that teacher anxiety does not emerge in isolation but is closely connected to the sociocultural conditions in which teachers work.

Interpreting the results through Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Seligman's PERMA model helped illustrate how social interaction, institutional dynamics, and well-being are intertwined in teachers' emotional experiences. The study suggests that teachers' anxiety levels reflect both their internal self-regulation and the external expectations they encounter in their professional environments. Because of this, supporting teacher well-being becomes an essential part of sustaining effective language instruction rather than simply an additional concern.

Although the research offers valuable insights, it is limited to a single geographical area and a specific group of instructors. Future studies with broader samples and additional methodological approaches could provide a more comprehensive understanding of these sociocultural factors. Even so, the present findings highlight the importance of recognizing teacher well-being as a key component of educational quality and a necessary consideration for teacher training programs and institutional policies rather than treating it as a peripheral or individual concern.

## References

- Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(2), 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02026.x>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
- Borg, S. (2015). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Chen, J. (2021). Refining the teacher emotion model. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 53(2), 272–287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2020.1831440>

- Chen, Z., Zhang, X., & Luo, Y. (2022). A study of student-teachers' emotional experiences and professional identities. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 823526. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.823526>
- Cheng, L. (2021). The implications of EFL/ESL teachers' emotions in their professional identity development. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 755592. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.755592>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper Perennial.
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2014). *Resilient teachers, resilient schools: Building and sustaining quality in testing times*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203578490>
- Dewaele, J.-M., & Li, C. (2020). Emotions in second language acquisition: A critical review and research agenda. *Foreign Language World*, 196(1), 34–49. <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/32797/>
- Fathi, J. (2021). Self-efficacy and teacher well-being: A structural equation modeling approach. *Current Psychology*, 40(11), 5708–5719. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00424-1>
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 359(1449), 1367–1377. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1512>
- Gkonou, C., Mercer, S., & Zembylas, M. (2021). The emotional rollercoaster of language teaching. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Greenier, V., Derakhshan, A., & Fathi, J. (2021). Emotion regulation and psychological well-being in language teachers: A structural equation modeling approach. *System*, 97, 102446. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102446>
- Gregersen, T. (2020). Language teacher stress and coping strategies. In S. Mercer & T. Gregersen (Eds.), *Teacher wellbeing* (pp. 121–139). Oxford University Press.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 491–525. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693>
- Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, 39(1), 31–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291575>
- King, J., & Ng, K. (2018). Teacher emotions and the emotional labour of second language teaching. In S. Mercer & A. Kostoulas (Eds.), *Language teacher psychology* (pp. 141–157). *Multilingual Matters*. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783099467-013>
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford University Press.
- Lee, J. C. K. (2022). Teachers' professional identity and emotions: Implications for well-being. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(1), 25–45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09613-5>
- MacIntyre, P. D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(1), 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1995.tb05418.x>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (2020). Language teachers' coping strategies during the COVID-19 conversion to online teaching: Correlations with stress, wellbeing and negative emotions. *System*, 94, 102352. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102352>

- Mercer, S. (2023). Language teacher well-being in the private sector: An ecological perspective from Malta. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(3), 457–478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820973510>
- Mercer, S., & Gregersen, T. (2020). *Teacher wellbeing*. Oxford University Press.
- Onan, M., & Aydın, S. (2024). Well-being, burnout, and teaching anxiety among EFL teachers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1397665. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1397665>
- Oxford, R. L. (2016). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: Self-regulation in context* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wang, H., Burić, I., Chang, M.-L., & Gross, J. J. (2023). Teachers' emotion regulation and related environmental, personal, instructional, and well-being factors: A meta-analysis. *Social Psychology of Education*, 26, 1281–1320. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-023-09810-1>
- Yin, H., Huang, S., & Chen, G. (2019). The relationships between teachers' emotional labor and their burnout and satisfaction: A meta-analytic review. *Educational Research Review*, 28, 100283. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.100283>
- Zembylas, M. (2021). The affective impact of teacher identity: Critical perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 99, 103277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103277>