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The Interface between Language Teaching Anxiety and Personal Intelligences among Pre-service and In-service EFL Teachers

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Abstract: English language teaching is considered as an anxiety-provoking profession for the novice members of the teaching community. Indeed, their perceptions and practices might be influenced by this variable. Despite the full attention allocated to the English learners' anxiety, teachers' anxiety seems to have remained untouched. The current study attempted to explore the pre-service and in-service English teachers' language teaching anxiety to see whether these two groups differed in terms of this trait. The study further aimed to investigate the possible relationship between pre-service and in-service English teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and their language teaching anxiety. To this end, a convenient sample of 120 pre-service and 120 in-service English teachers were asked to complete Capel's Teaching Anxiety Scale and answer the relevant items from McKenzie's Multiple Intelligences Questionnaire. The results of descriptive statistical analysis indicated the participants' seemingly high level of teaching anxiety. The analysis further demonstrated the significant negative correlation between the participants' interpersonal intelligence and their language teaching anxiety while no significant link was found between their intrapersonal intelligence and anxiety level. Moreover, the results of the independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference between pre-service and in-service English teachers in terms of their language teaching anxiety. The findings pointed to the necessity of informed educational actions to lower pre-service teachers' teaching anxiety and breed a more strategic generation of English teachers who are empowered to rise to the challenges in their teaching profession in order to achieve more desired outcomes.

Keywords: In-service English teachers, Interpersonal intelligence, Intrapersonal intelligence, Language teaching anxiety, Pre-service English teachers

Introduction

Teachers play a determining role in leading the students towards achieving their desired goals in educational contexts (Anderson, 2004). This underlies the significance of equipping the teachers with adequate bulk of knowledge and enhancing their teaching effectiveness and efficiency (Tshannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). To be ahead in their professional community and to thrive in their delicate and daunting career, teachers may be influenced by their personal traits (Erdem & Keklik, 2020). With the advent of communicative language teaching, the teachers' role was even more highlighted. Developing the language learners' communicative competence entails the teachers' command and control of the classroom procedures. All these responsibilities may result in the teachers' heightened level of anxiety (Kim & Kim, 2004). Accordingly, it seems worth allocating undivided attention to this affective variable which impacts their teaching practices (Khosravi & Saidi, 2014; Öztürk, 2016).

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In fact, the current emphasis on meeting the students' needs and offering learner-centered communicative courses even multiplies the teachers' challenges and puts them in an anxiety-provoking locus (Alipour & Gorjian, 2014). According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), the language class provokes the teachers into experiencing a high degree of anxiety. This might even be further aggravated when the teachers commence their job as the English teacher. Hence, pre-service teachers may need to make a strenuous effort to overcome this sense of tension in their initial teaching practices. Although the concept of foreign language student teacher anxiety has been conceived as a part of foreign language teaching anxiety (Merç, 2011), it has not been sufficiently investigated.

On the other hand, it has been substantiated in the existing literature that the pre-service and in-service EFL teachers' teaching anxiety was affected by their affective and personality-related characteristics (Can, 2018). In this sense, the teachers' interpersonal relations may influence their level of tension in EFL teaching settings (Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015).

Among a myriad of emotional roots underpinning the teachers' feelings of tension, their personal intelligences stand out. These intelligence types have been related to teachers' high sense of efficacy (Saidi, 2020) which might lower their anxiety in tackling the instructional and behavioral challenges in EFL classes. The existing literature has highlighted the urgent need to delve into the relationship between the English teachers' foreign language teaching and the psychological factors which may influence it (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). However, no study, to the best of our knowledge, has focused on investigating the possible link between EFL teachers' interpersonal intelligences and their anxiety. Accordingly, the current study pursued to respond to this call for further research in this area. Hence, the following questions were addressed:

1. In there any significant relationship between pre-service and in-service English teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and their language teaching anxiety?
2. Is there any significant difference between pre-service and in-service English teachers in terms of their language teaching anxiety?

Literature Review

Language Teaching Anxiety

Teaching anxiety is defined as the feeling experienced in both planning and presenting the educational sources (Gardner & Leak, 1994) which might derive from lacking the required knowledge and insufficient instructional and behavioral management skills (Akinsola, 2008). It is considered as "an emotional and affective state that a teacher feels tension due to personal, perceptional, motivational, and technical concerns before, during, and after teaching activities" (Aydin, 2016, p. 639). It might exert a lasting influence on the teachers' perceptions and practices, and thereby endangers the students' educational outcomes (Saidi & Bayatshahbazi, 2021). As Horwitz (1996) rightly asserted, it may hinder the teachers' progress in their educational planning and result in their ineffective interactions with the students. Hence, it acts as a determining factor which directly influences the quality of instructional practices. This might be even more vividly felt for pre-service English teachers who lack teaching experiences in real classes (Merç, 2010). It would be even far worse for the pre-service teachers who

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are non-native speakers of English as their "on-the-spot role … may complicate the situation" (Kim & Kim, 2004, p. 167).

As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) stated, non-native English teachers are always considered as advanced learners and thereby, might feel anxious given such requirements of their job as speaking in front of the students and presenting authentic samples of language (Kim & Kim, 2004). Their level of anxiety escalates so dramatically that inhibits their ability to employ innovative teaching approaches (Horwitz, 1996) which would in turn, overshadow the students' second language acquisition and motivation. This seems to justify the significance of inquiring into the pre-service English teachers' teaching anxiety since they would settle the students' fate in language classes to a great extent (Merç, 2015). Previous studies have referred to this notion as one of the commonest problems among pre-service teachers of English (Merç, 2004). It was shown to constrain their use of target language and pedagogical competency, and more importantly their job satisfaction (Horwitz, 1996; Tum, 2012).

Despite the vast numbers of studies on the language learners' anxiety (e.g. Russell, 2020; Prasetya, 2021), English language teachers' anxiety seems to have remained unexplored (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). In this regard, Merç (2018) underscored addressing the imbalance between the research on the learners' anxiety and the teachers' levels of anxiety in EFL educational contexts. Tum (2010) compared the foreign language teaching anxiety experienced by the pre-service and in-service English teachers and revealed their varying degrees of anxiety. Merç (2011) found out that teaching procedures and being observed by the mentors and teacher educators led to pre-service English teachers' anxiety. Similarly, Agustiana (2014) investigated the pre-service teachers' anxiety during the teaching practicum and referred to the participants' lack of experience and preparation as the major sources of their feeling of tension during teaching. Alipour and Gorjian (2014) also pointed to the highly anxiety-provoking nature of English classes for the instructors at the university level.

Furthermore, Aydin (2016) attempted to explore the language teaching anxiety experienced by pre-service teachers of English and revealed such factors as the teachers' personality, low level of English proficiency, demotivation, fear of negative evaluation as the sources of their anxiety before, during, and after their teaching practices. Likewise, Öztürk (2016) studied the foreign language teaching anxiety among non-native pre-service teachers of English and confirmed the influence of such factors as their teaching experience, knowledge of the target language, and students' behaviors on their level of anxiety. In addition, Can (2018) found out that the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural factors overshadowed the pre-service English teachers' language teaching anxiety. More recently, focusing on English for academic purposes courses, Saidi & Bayatshahbazi (2021) demonstrated the instructors' high level of language teaching anxiety. Taking into account the mounting anxiety due to the demanding role of an English teacher in programming and providing engaging and efficient classes and the tough task of teaching a new language (Brown, 2000), the current study attempted to unravel the pre-service and in-service English teachers' language teaching anxiety and to compare these two groups in terms of this variable locating the current study in mainstream educational context, public schools.

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On the other hand, a host of studies have unraveled the affective factors and personality traits as the roots of foreign language teaching anxiety among both pre-service and in-service EFL teachers (Aydin, 2016; Can, 2018; Sammephet & Wanphet, 2013). More specifically, Aslrasouli and Vahid (2014) referred to interpersonal relations as one of the anxiety-provoking attributes among both male and female English teachers. Khani and Mirzaee (2015) further demonstrated the link between the teachers' relations to their colleagues and their feelings of frustration and tension within the EFL teaching context. Furthermore, evidence has shown that overcoming the sense of tension requires developing and fostering the sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy (Alipour & Gorjian, 2014). In this regard, previous studies have linked the teachers' efficacy beliefs to their interpersonal skills and intrapersonal understanding of their capabilities and shortcomings (Saidi, 2020) which are represented in one's personal intelligence types in multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1983). The theory and its implications in educational settings are discussed below.

Multiple Intelligences: Theory and Practice

Intelligence has long been viewed as an unchanged construct (Smith, 2001) determined by an individual's performance on some intelligence quotient (IQ) tests. However, the traditional perspectives were challenged with the advent of Multiple Intelligences movement. This movement was launched by Howard Gardner (1983) and reached its peak by its strong premises which aimed to broaden "the scope of human potentials beyond the confines of IQ scores" (Armstrong, 2000, p. 1).

Revolutionizing the concept of intelligence in educational settings, Gardner (1983) redefined and recapitulated the term intelligence as individuals' flexibility and adaptability to confront oncoming problems and introduced nine major types of intelligence, namely verbal/linguistic, mathematical/logical, musical, visual/spatial, kinesthetic/bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, natural, and existential. He claimed that all people own at least eight types of intelligence in their distinct intelligence profiles (Gardner, 2005).

Since the multiple intelligence theory was proposed, a host of studies have dealt with it in real-world classes and demonstrated its major contributions to increasing the students' achievements in writing and reading activities (See Saidi, 2019). Notwithstanding the large bulk of studies on the language learners' multiple intelligences, the English teachers' multiple intelligences seem to have received scant attention. Previous studies have shown that the English teachers' linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences were associated with their self-efficacy beliefs in general English courses and English for academic purposes classes (Khosravi & Saidi, 2014; Saidi, 2020). Also, it was divulged that the English teachers' lesson plans were influenced by their dominant intelligence types (Dolati & Tahriri, 2017). In a more recent attempt, pre-service teachers' intelligence profiles were examined in terms of their gender, field of study, and year of college (Erdem & Keklik, 2020). The importance of identifying teachers' multiple intelligences lies in the fact that their awareness of their own MI profiles would promote their role as major "contributors to the overall development of students' intelligences" (Christison, 1999, p. 12).

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Given "the emotional labor of the profession" (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020, p. 54) and the implied link between the English teachers' personal characteristics and language teaching anxiety and considering the paucity of research on this notion, the current study primarily aimed to compare Iranian pre-service and in-service teachers of English in terms of their foreign language teaching anxiety. It further strove to explore the possible link between the EFL teachers' personal intelligences and their foreign language teaching anxiety to see if the EFL practitioners' interpersonal intelligence as "the ability to perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people" and "sensitivity to facial expressions, voice, and gestures" and intrapersonal intelligence as "having an accurate picture of oneself" and "the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding, and self-esteem" (Armstrong, 2000, p. 2) were associated with their foreign language teaching anxiety.

Material and Methods

Setting and Participants*:* The convenient sample of the study consisted of 240 participants who voluntarily took part in the study including 120 pre-service English teachers who were sophomore and junior students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in teacher training universities and 120 in-service English teachers who were teaching English in different metropolitan cities in Iran.

The pre-service English teachers sample included 81 male and 39 female participants aged between 19 and 25 years old while in-service English teachers sample consisted of 76 male and 44 female participants whose age range was between 26 and 35 years old. In order to control for the possible influence of the participants' teaching experience on their language teaching anxiety, only those pre-service teachers lacking teaching experience and those in-service teachers possessing one to four years of teaching experience were included in the sample. It is worth noting that the in-service teachers held BA in TEFL (95) or were MA students of the same field of study (25).

Instruments: To gather the required data, two questionnaires were used. First, to determine the participants' language teaching anxiety scores, Capel's (1997) Teacher anxiety Scale was employed. It includes 26 five-point Likert scale items whose responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The calculated Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.93 in the current study. The participants were also requested to provide their demographic information, namely gender, age, educational degree and major, and years of teaching experience.

Second, the relevant items to the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence types were extracted from the McKezie's Multiple Intelligences Questionnaire. It has had an internal consistency ranging from 0.85 to 0.93 in previous studies (Khosravi & Saidi, 2014; Razmjoo, 2008; Razmjoo, Sharagard, & Sadri, 2009, Saidi, 2019; Saidi, 2020). For each intelligence type, there are 10 five-point Likert scale items ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). With regard to the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were 0.89 and 0.86 for interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence types, respectively. It is worth noting that the questionnaires were given to two ELT faculty members to be checked in terms of clarity and relevance to ensure the validity of the instruments.

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Data Collection Procedure: Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and university and school closures, the questionnaires were sent to the participants as a Google Form on WhatsApp. They were asked to complete the questionnaires and were assured of the anonymity of the collected data.

Data Analysis: The study applied a correlational-comparative design and pursued the possible relationship between the participants' personal intelligences and their language teaching anxiety through conducting Pearson product-moment correlation test. In order to investigate the probable difference between pre-service and in-service English teachers in terms of their language teaching anxiety, an independent samples t-test was run. The independent samples t-test, as a parametric test, is used to compare the means of two independent groups (Pallant, 2001). The statistical analyses were done via SPSS (Version 25.00).

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the pre-service and in-service English teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and language teaching anxiety.

Table- 1. Descriptive statistics for personal intelligences and language teaching anxiety

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Interpersonal intelligence	240	28	49	39.50	7.52
Intrapersonal intelligence	240	29	49	38.50	7.35
Language teaching anxiety	240	56	110	67.00	25.94

The median values for both the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences were 25. According to Table 1, the mean values of the participants' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence types were 39.50 and 38.50, respectively, indicating a high level of personal intelligences. It demonstrated that the participants enjoyed a high degree of the ability to perceive their own and others' feelings (Armstrong, 2000).

On the other hand, the median value for the language teaching anxiety was 65. The descriptive statistics showed that the mean value of language teaching anxiety was 67.00, revealing a high level of language teaching anxiety. Indeed, the higher scores the participants gained on the language teaching anxiety scale, the higher levels of tension they perceived themselves to experience in their classes.

Relationship between Pre-service and In-service English Teachers' Personal Intelligences and Their Language Teaching Anxiety

To answer the first research question, a Pearson product-moment correlation test was run. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of correlation between personal intelligences and language teaching anxiety

Variable	Language teaching anxiety	Sig.
Interpersonal intelligence	-0.49*	0.02
Intrapersonal intelligence	-0.01	0.87

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According to Table 2, there was a significant negative relationship between the participants' interpersonal intelligence and their language teaching anxiety (r=-0.49, p≤0.05). Contrarily, no significant relationship was found between their intrapersonal intelligence and language teaching anxiety (r=-0.01, p p≤0.05). This indicates that high level of interpersonal intelligence is linked to lower degrees of language teaching anxiety. This means that teachers' ability to establish good rapport with their students would relieve them and facilitate a more relaxed state of teaching in their classes.

Difference between Pre-service and In-service English Teachers Considering Their Language Teaching Anxiety

To analyze the data, the homogeneity of the data was first checked via Levene's test of quality of error variances and the significance value of 0.67 was obtained which indicates that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated for the obtained scores. In order to explore the possible significant difference between the two groups of participants in terms of their language teaching anxiety, an independent samples t-test was run. Table 3 displays the results.

Table-3. Results of independent samples t-tests for pre-service and in-service English teachers

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
Language Teaching Anxiety	Pre-service	120	88.50	12.55	6.059	118	0.001
	In-service	120	43.50	7.93			

As Table 3 illustrates, there was a statistically significant difference between pre-service and in-service English teachers considering their language teaching anxiety (Sig.=0.001, p≤0.01). The findings revealed that pre-service English teachers experienced higher degrees of language teaching anxiety compared to the in-service participants. The mean value of 88.50 for the pre-service teachers pointed to their extreme levels of anxiety about teaching English. Contrarily, in-service teachers were less anxious. This led the researchers to conduct interviews with a convenient sample of pre-service teachers with regard to the underlying sources of tension. As a result, a sequential qualitative phase was added to enrich our understanding of the roots of pre-service teachers' language teaching anxiety.

Interview Results

The results of quantitative phase of the study revealed that pre-service English teachers perceived themselves to be highly anxious. Hence, a total of 20 pre-service English teachers were interviewed. They were asked two questions on WhatsApp audio calls due to the restrictions of contact resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19. Their responses were analyzed and the recurrent themes were extracted. In order to keep the gathered data anonymous, the interviewed participants were allocated codes from I1 to I20. Their sample quotes are reported using the codes.

The first question requested the pre-service teachers to state and expound on the possible sources of language teaching anxiety. All the respondents referred to the pre-service English teachers' lack of teaching experiences as the major underlying root of their anxiety.

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We have not taught English a lot; this is the main reason that pre-service teachers like me feel more anxious. (I2)

The pre-service teachers feel more anxious primarily because they do not have enough teaching experience. (I12)

We do not know how it feels like teaching English to junior and senior high school students in real-life schools. (I17)

Furthermore, the interviewees referred to the low number of practicum courses which prepare them for experiencing teaching in real-life situations.

We go to schools for a very short time and we are provided with theoretical knowledge. (I5)

The academic courses, I mean the ones in university, mostly provide us with an ideal picture rather than the real one of the future teaching context. (I10)

A limited number of practical courses makes us unprepared and hence, anxious about teaching. (I19)

The interviewees also attributed the pre-service English teachers' anxiety to the lack of contextual information. They stated that not being aware of the resources and restrictions in the future teaching contexts would make them worried about their profession.

I still do not know where I am going to teach; I mean, I do not know to which school I will be sent. (I7)

If I knew the limitations or equipment that exist in the school where I am going to teach, I would feel much better. (I20)

The second question elicited the respondents' suggestions and solutions for reducing the level of language teaching anxiety among the pre-service English teachers. They referred to such possible ways as providing more practical courses and longer periods of apprenticeship in the intended schools, giving them ample opportunities to observe the other experienced teachers' classes, and holding relevant workshops to expedite the pre-service teachers' professional development.

I think the number of credits for practical side of teaching is low in teacher training universities. These kind of courses with practical orientations must increase to make us more prepared. (I15)

If we are asked to observe the teachers who have been the top ones in their job, we can take models and use their experiences to increase our understanding of our career to decrease our anxiety. (I19)

The results of interviews demonstrated that teacher educators must be more concerned with offering practical courses to raise their awareness of the teaching context and career in order to lower their level of teaching anxiety. Moreover, the pre-service teachers can be encouraged to attend several school classes before they graduate as apprentice teachers in order to be more involved in putting the theoretical instructions and guidelines into practice. Indeed, they must be empowered before they are sent to schools. The results of qualitative data confirmed the findings of previous studies which referred to the pre-service teachers' lack of teaching experiences as the primary source of anxiety (Agustiana, 2014; Merç, 2014; öztürk, 2016).

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Discussion

The study showed that pre-service and in-service English teachers' interpersonal intelligence was negatively associated with their language teaching anxiety. However, no significant relationship was noticed between their intrapersonal intelligence and the anxiety they might experience in their classes. Moreover, the results revealed a significant difference in that pre-service English teachers experienced a much higher degree of anxiety.

The high level of language teaching anxiety among the pre-service English teachers may imply their concerns with the efficiency of their teaching practices (Khosravi & Saidi, 2014). In this regard, the results were in line with those of Alipour and Gorjian's (2014) study which pointed to the English instructors' anxiety in their classes. Having no experience of real-world classes, the pre-service English teachers might be worried about the unpredictable incidents which may be sparked off by the students (Wu & Badger, 2009). According to Merç (2010), both pre-service and in-service EFL teachers had some degrees of foreign language anxiety. However, the roots of their anxiety might differ as the pre-service teachers have no experience of handling real classes. In this sense, the findings confirmed the results of previous studies (Tum, 2010, 2012) which unraveled the high level of anxiety among EFL practitioners. Furthermore, the pre-service English teachers' lack of teaching experience might account for their high levels of foreign language teaching anxiety. This cause has been underlined in numerous studies previously conducted in this regard (Agustiana, 2014; Aydin, 2016; Öztürk, 2016).

On the other hand, the significant negative relationship between interpersonal intelligence and language teaching anxiety testified to the crucial role of the English teachers' understanding of their students' feelings, needs, and moods (Armstrong, 2000). Indeed, being able to discern the students' emotional and affective conditions and demands would expedite the English teachers' informed decisions in the educational dilemmas (Aliakbari & Heidarzadi, 2015), and lead to establishing and maintaining efficient interactional patterns in English classes. These all would relieve and reduce the teachers' tension and enhance their confidence to handle the classes more competently and effectively. In this sense, the findings were commensurate with those of previously conducted studies which disclosed the positive link between this intelligence type and university instructors' efficacy beliefs (Khosravi & Saidi, 2014; Saidi, 2020). Undoubtedly, being interpersonally perspicacious would promote the teachers' ability to take on and rise to the possible unanticipated challenges (Alipour & Gorjian, 2014). Given the unfolded relationship between pre-service teachers' low levels of foreign language teaching anxiety and their high levels of self-efficacy (Merç, 2015), and considering the positive link between EFL instructors' interpersonal intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs (Khosravi & Saidi, 2014; Saidi, 2020), one might draw this conclusion that developing interpersonal relations and nurturing a comfortable and socially secure educational contexts would promote the teachers' sense of efficacy and thereby, might minimize their anxiety. In line with the findings of this study, in this regard, the important role of the individual factors in facilitating or debilitating the teachers' control of their anxiety has been highlighted in the existing literature (Aydin, 2016; Aydin & Ustuk, 2020; Can, 2018; Sammephet & Wanphet, 2013). Nevertheless, the significantly higher degrees of language teaching anxiety among the pre-service

English teachers might be positively interpreted in that their concerns might function as an impetus stimulating their constant and conscious effort to prepare themselves for their future responsibilities (Saidi & Bayatshahbazi, 2021).

The findings of the study enrich the existing sparse literature on English teachers' teaching anxiety. The results also have far-reaching implications for pre-service teacher training courses in teacher training colleges and universities. In this regard, the instructors of teaching methodology and related courses are recommended to adopt a pedagogical approach which strive to develop and boost the pre-service English teachers' interpersonal skills, and thereby, alleviate their possible tension. Furthermore, involving pre-service English teachers in meaningful, accountable, and productive and practical activities is suggested to raise their consciousness about their own capabilities and lower their teaching anxiety. One place where they can receive training would be relevant workshops to improve their interpersonal intelligence and consequently, lower their teaching anxiety. To this end, practicum courses need to be revisited and taken more seriously. The policymakers and stakeholders are advised to take heed of the emotional labor of teaching a foreign language and have a more considerate prospect of the psychology of language teachers in designing teacher training curriculum (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020).

Conclusions

The study unveiled the contributing role of interpersonal intelligence in lowering language teaching anxiety among both pre-service and in-service EFL teachers. This may highlight the utmost significance of establishing rapport with the students to minimize the tension resulting from unanticipated issues which might be encountered. The prominence of this link calls for conducting more studies on the possible sources of tension to remove the affective filters that debilitate the effective and efficacious teaching practices.

To continue this line of research, qualitative techniques, namely observations and focused group discussion, can be used to provide a deeper and thicker account of the possible influential factors on the pre-service English teachers' anxiety. Furthermore, the possible link between personal intelligence and teaching anxiety can be investigated among the pre-service and in-service teachers in various fields of study.

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