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EFL Teachers' Apprehension: a Study of Antecedents and Ramifications

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Abstract

This study explored teacher apprehension by collecting self-report data from language teachers. The qualitative data for this study were collected via semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions, diary, and observation. The antecedents of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' apprehension comprised attitudinal factors, organizational factors, classroom management, and L2-related factors. The ramifications of EFL teachers' apprehension included attitudinal factors, job-related factors, stress coping strategies, and smart classroom management. The multitude of the antecedents of EFL teachers' apprehension was clustered in the light of three broad conceptualizations: trait vs. state, internal vs. external, and controllable vs. uncontrollable dimension. The consequences were subsumed under facilitative and debilitative effects.

Keywords Antecedents · Apprehension · EFL teachers · Qualitative study · Ramifications · Triangulation

Introduction

Teaching is a challenging and stressful profession as the teachers need to be trusted by the students and establish themselves in a school community. Undergoing multiple challenges has been found to put teachers at risk of leaving the profession or burnout (Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015a). One of the determinants of teacher

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attrition and burnout concerns the emotional side of teaching, in particular, the anxiety associated with different aspects of the profession (Ghanizadeh & Ghonsooly, 2014). As Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed, anxiety is the personal feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. When it comes to interactive professions such as teaching, a subdivision of anxiety called apprehension appears a more relevant notion. Indeed, anxiety is a general term which can take different forms in various situations and contexts (Kerney & McCrosky, 1980). Apprehension is defined as the situation-specific anxiety about the future, especially about dealing with something unpleasant or difficult (Kyriacou, 2001). The distinguishing feature of apprehension lies in its anticipation of unpleasant or unfavorable events. Another distinctive attribute of apprehension is that it is highly associated with fear or anxiety about communicating with people, as it is interchangeably used with *communication apprehension* (Kyriacou, 2001). Just as anxiety refrains some people from performing successfully in science or mathematics, many people find foreign language teaching, especially in classroom situations, mainly stressful (Kim & Kim, 2004); therefore, it is a general or umbrella term covering all domains and settings (Horwitz et al., 1986).

It is believed that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers should dare to move out of their comfort zone, so they ought not to be anxious in classroom interactions. Even though it has been said that anxiety in classroom interactions should not put a strain on teachers, having difficulty speaking with people in both groups or individually or listening to or comprehending a spoken message are signs of communication apprehension by which a teacher may feel anxious (Horwitz, 1996). Given that language classes are characterized by a high proportion of interaction and communication, EFL teacher apprehension can lead to a deterioration in teachers' functioning and effectiveness. Teachers who naturally have trouble in stimulating an interactive classroom environment and in establishing rapport are more likely to experience even greater hardship performing in a foreign language class where they should have high control of the communicative situation and act as a role model for their students in speaking and using foreign language (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010; Williams & d Buren, 1997).

Previous research on teacher anxiety has predominantly focused on the construct in general, and not on teacher apprehension in particular (e.g., Conley & Glasman, 2008; Merç, 2011; Kyriacou, 2010; Kim & Kim, 2004). These studies examined teacher anxiety from different perspectives, such as symptoms of language teachers' anxiety (Merc, 2011), the relationship between personal features, and the levels of anxiety experienced (Kunt & Tüm, 2010). Nonetheless, it appears there is a dearth of research on teachers' communication apprehension, or teacher apprehension typically. The present research aimed at delving into sources and consequences of EFL teachers' apprehension.

Conceptual Framework

The first line of discussions and analysis of teacher anxiety and stress emerged during the 1960s. In 1977, a review of research on teacher stress was published in *Educational Review* by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe. Ever since teacher stress has gained a significant interest in research throughout the world. When it comes to the process of teaching, we may confuse the following words: apprehension, stress, and anxiety. Although they can be considered synonymous, from a psychological point of view, they are defined in sundry ways.

As Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed, anxiety is the personal feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Additionally, teacher stress may be defined as the experience gained by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspects of their work as a teacher (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977). Stress is considered as a negative emotional experience being triggered by the teacher's perception that their work situation constituted a threat to their self-esteem or well-being (Kyriacou, 2010). Kyriacou (2001) indicated that most teachers appear to face a period of self-doubt, disenchantment, and reconsideration, in which their concerns are either fixed with them continuing their job as a teacher or tempted them to leave their job. Huberman (1993, as cited in Kyriacou, 2010) reported that amongst the most common reasons quoted for leaving teaching were fatigue, nervous tension, frustration, difficulties in adapting to pupils, personal fragility, and routine.

As discussed earlier, apprehension is another relevant notion, albeit distinctive in some respects. The distinguishing features of teacher apprehension concern its juxtaposition with anxiety about the future and fear of communicating with people. Given that these two features penetrate to the language teaching profession to a great extent, in this study, this subdivision of teacher anxiety was explored.

The conceptual framework of the study derives from the widely recognized conceptualization of anxiety (trait vs. state) as well as Weiner's (2000) multidimensional model of psychological analysis (locus, stability, and controllability facets of human attributes). The study of anxiety is associated with two complementary concepts: a psychophysiological state (state anxiety) and a personality trait (trait anxiety). State anxiety reveals the psychological and physiological momentary reactions immediately related to a specific task at a specific time. In contrast, the term trait anxiety reflects a less dynamic characteristic of personality, recounting individual differences related to a tendency to present state anxiety (Endler & Parker, 1990). In other words, these two concepts are generally used to distinguish people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations from those who are anxious only in particular situations.

According to Weiner's (2000) theory, there are three facets into which individuals' attributes can be categorized: locus, stability, and controllability. Although the model was primarily proposed for explaining the attributions of success and failure, it has been generalized to analyze other human characteristics and attributes (Ghanizadeh & Ghonsooly, 2014). Locus refers to the location of an attribute (internal vs. external): whether inside (e.g., aptitude) or outside of the actor (e.g., extrinsic motivation). Stability refers to the duration of the source of an attribute (stable vs. unstable). Controllability reflects the extent to which an attribute is subject to volitional alteration (controllable vs. uncontrollable).

As stated earlier, previous studies demonstrated that causes and sources of teacher anxiety are multidimensional encompassing a variety of emotional, cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational factors (e.g., Conley & Glasman, 2008; Ghanizadeh, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2004; Kyriacou, 2010; Merç, 2011). This, in turn, demonstrates the critical role teacher anxiety can play in teacher functioning and accordingly in students' achievement, engagement, and well-being, given that an anxious teacher would, by and large, impart this negative mood to his/her students and would depreciate the class environment and all facets of learning. The present research aims at delving into a subdivision of teacher anxiety—apprehension—which is plausibly pertinent to EFL teachers' profession with its two main features of anticipation of stress and communicative fear. It goes without saying that an indispensable aspect of foreign language teaching is its communicative nature and frequent interactions among teacher and students. What is more, even though some of the factors

which might lead to teacher apprehension were explored in previous research, as far as the authors are concerned, there was no thorough study delving into the multitude of possible antecedents as well as ramifications of EFL teachers' apprehension; The current study, thus, takes the initiative to investigate the multidimensional nature of EFL teacher apprehension. To do so, a triangulated qualitative study integrating semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions, observation, and diary was conducted. In particular, the following research questions were formulated in this study:

1. What are the antecedents of Iranian EFL teachers' apprehension?
2. What are the ramifications of Iranian EFL teachers' apprehension?

Method

In the present study, a triangulated qualitative method was utilized. The merit of exploiting more than one method of data collection is that it gives the research more validity and provides an opportunity for the findings of one method to be double-checked with the other. To do so, semi-structured interviews, diary, open-ended questions, and the teaching behavior observation were applied.

Participants and Data Collection

Participants of the Interview

The participants for the interview phase were nine non-native teachers—six female teachers and three male teachers. Seven out of ten participants had an MA degree in English Language teaching, and the remaining had BA degrees in English Language teaching (age ranged from 22 to 33 years). Their years of teaching English would vary from 3 to 11 years, with the mean of 6.5 years of teaching experience. They were drawn from 5 different language institutes located in various parts of Mashhad, Iran.

They were chosen based on a convenience sampling among EFL teachers teaching English in Language Institutes in Mashhad, Iran, after a succinct explanation of the objective of the research. To collect reliable data, the respondents were also reassured on the issue of confidentiality to facilitate a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere. Additionally, the researchers alleviated them by letting them know that their ideas would be used for the purpose of the study, not for judging them in the context of teaching. A number of participants were willing to share their fears and perceptions with the researcher on how tough the situations get throughout the class every now and then; hence, it took half an hour for them to bring their ideas together and express their feelings. For a few applicants, it took about 10 min to convey their messages. Auspiciously, the interview caused one of the participants to find deeper truths with herself, dug deep down, and asked herself: what is inside my heart and inside my head, who do I want to be as a teacher because I always wanted to be a number one in my career; so, I have to think outside the box and leave my comfort zone.

In order to create an initial rapport, the researchers helped them feel relaxed and encouraged them to open up by giving them a brief example and some more explanation about it. A semi-structured interview method was employed in this study. This type of interview is flexible in that the interviewer has the freedom to raise new questions in accordance with

what the interviewee says, or to have the interviewee elaborate on a response (Dornyei, 2007).

This interview centered on four pre-planned questions: (a) do you ever feel anxious over your profession? (b) Can you envisage areas and events which would cause you while teaching? (c) What are the reasons behind your being anxious and stressed while teaching? (d) How you can mollify yourself and cope with your stress when you are under pressure during the class? (e) What are the influences of stress you experienced while teaching on your performance.

Moreover, follow-up questions were asked depending on individual's responses as well. The final closing question was asked which allow the respondent to have the final opinions. All interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' permission. All interviews took place in the Language institutes. Table 1 encapsulates the background information of the ten participants for whom pseudo names were selected.

Participants of the Open-Ended Questions

Furthermore, 10 teachers were selected randomly to complete the following open-ended sentence: In my classes, I feel anxious and fearful when…

In order to save time, they were granted this chance to send their answers 4 days later via email. Similarly, they were told that their views were kept confidential to feel comfortable so as to express themselves. The number of participants and their brief information are shown in Table 2 (for confidentiality purposes, pseudo names were inserted).

Participants of the Diary

To give weight to the present study, three experienced teachers, commenced keeping a diary explicating the situations in which they felt stressed-out, anxious, or fearful in their classes. The teachers were selected based on their willingness to take part in the study. They were first asked whether they had undergone apprehension in their teaching. In order to record diary studies, a group was formed in Telegram which is a social networking application. Both interval-contingent and event-contingent methods were applied. They shared their ideas on the subject twice a week, and it lasted about a month. They also had a

Table 1 Background Information of the 10 Interviewees

Participant	Gender/age	Highest degree	Years of experience
Faride	Female/23	MA in English Teaching	3
Mahboube	Female/32	MA in English Translation	11
Elahe	Female/32	MA in English Teaching	6
Narges	Female/30	MA in English Teaching	10
Mohammad	Male/28	BA in Civil Engineering	5
Rasoul	Male/22	BA in Teacher Education	4
Farzane	Female/32	MA in English Teaching	6
Elnaz	Female/29	MA in English Teaching	5
Susan	Female/31	MA in English Teaching	5
Mojtaba	Male/22	BA in English Teaching	3

Table 2 Background information of the 9 participants

Name	Years of experience	Gender	Educational level
Maryam	6	F	BA, Management
Fahime	3	F	BA, English Translation
Akram	4	F	MA, English Teaching
Fateme	3	F	BA, French
Homeira	1	F	Graduate student, English Teaching
Mahsa	1	F	BA, English Literature
Sara	1	F	Graduate student, English Teaching
Samira	2	F	Associate Degree, English Teaching
Najla	2	F	BA, English Translation

meeting at the end of the month so as to report on their experiences and discuss the issues. They felt relieved to exchange their viewpoints in order to apply them in their classes to see if those remedies could work.

Participants of the Observation

To complement the data collection and gain more comprehensive information, four classes in different levels were observed. The teachers included two male teachers and two female teachers, two upper intermediate levels and two lower intermediate levels. Although it is normally perceived that when a colleague participated in a class just as a member of it, the teacher could not feel comfortable and might not act naturally; all four teachers willingly and readily welcomed being observed. Indeed, given that the observer—one of the researchers—was a colleague of the observed teachers, she was welcomed and treated as an insider.

Data Analysis

In order to scrutinize the qualitative data in this study, the responses that were collected, using the interview, observation, and diary protocols, were tabulated and analyzed utilizing MAXQDA 10 software. It actually provides the researcher with ultimate classifications and visual maps which are of paramount importance when it comes to analyzing the qualitative data. In the first place, the data which were gathered through the interviews were transcribed, and then, the transcriptions were assiduously coded. To do so, the data were first reviewed and analyzed by the researchers so that concepts emerged. The concepts were then grouped in more general categories. Then the relationship between the categories was studied, which is called axial coding. The associating process in axial coding is based on the expansion of one of the categories. The causal conditions generated the formation of the axis. These conditions are a set of classes and characteristics that affect the main category (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). All the coded data were well discussed by the two researchers of the present study as well as two other colleagues (EFL university professors).

Secondly, the data were numbered in terms of two general classifications: antecedents and ramifications, each of which comprised three sub categories which were labeled as Interview, diary, and observation.

Thirdly, in accordance with the information collected from transcriptions, fundamental sentences were identified and discussed. It should be taken into consideration that in order to ensure that all interviewees expressed their opinions and feelings thoroughly, a number of interviews were conducted in Persian; the language which is spoken in Iran. Fourthly, the identified key sentences were matched with the identified codes.

Results

The Model of the Antecedents of Teachers' Apprehension

The codes gathered from the three sources were classified into four main categories comprising the antecedents of teachers' apprehension as (1) attitudinal factors, (2) organizational factors, (3) classroom management, and (4) L2-related factors, which include 15 subcategories as is shown in Fig. 1.

Figure 1 demonstrates what the antecedents of teachers' apprehension are.

As indicated by Fig. 1, the four main categories of EFL teachers' apprehension contain a number of subcategories. For instance, attitudinal dimension of teacher apprehension encompasses teachers' low level of self-esteem, students' demotivation, and students' perceptions of interest and challenge. To present a vivid picture of the yielded categories and subcategories, each dimension is tabulated and the corresponding definitions and examples of the protocols are displayed in Appendix 1.

It should be taken into consideration that the data were collected using three methods, diary, interview, observation; that is why in some examples in Appendix 1, sentences start addressing he or she.

The frequency of the identified codes and sub-codes were then computed. As can be seen, the most paramount codes can be listed as follows:

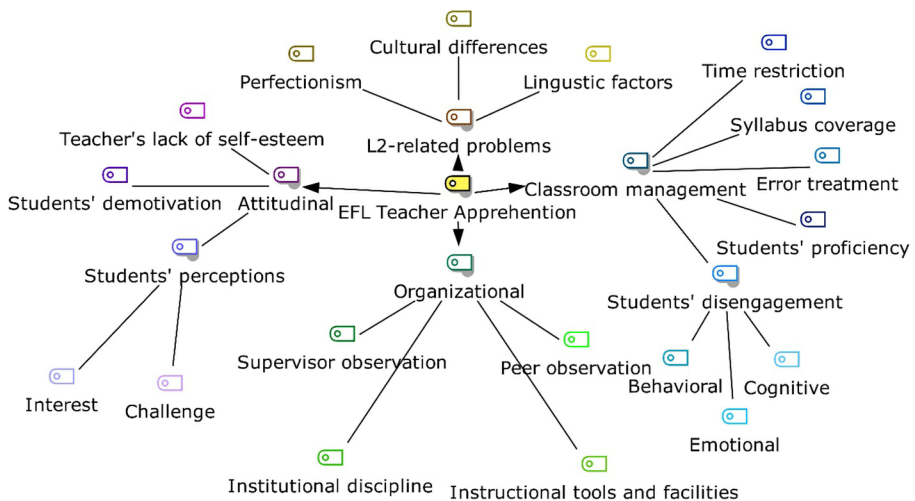1. Teachers' lack of self-esteem (attitudinal, $n = 39$)

Fig. 1 The model of the antecedents of EFL teachers' apprehension

2. Linguistic factors (L2-related factors, $n = 34$)
3. Emotional (classroom management/students' disengagement, $n = 7$)
4. Challenge (attitudinal/students' perceptions, $n = 6$)
5. Syllabus coverage (classroom management, $n = 6$)
6. Students' proficiency (classroom management, $n = 6$)
7. Cognitive (classroom management/students' disengagement, $n = 5$)

It is inferred from the above frequency counts that attitudinal factors came in the first place and out of which, it was the teachers' low self-esteem which had the greatest frequency amongst other factors. Linguistic factors, a sub-factor of L2-related problems, occupied in the second place which include linguistic differences such as pronunciation differences between the target and native language and teachers' lack of proficiency in face of teaching the skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as two systems, vocabulary and grammar.

The multitude of the antecedents of EFL teachers' apprehension can be clustered in the light of three broad conceptualizations:

1. a. Trait (T) b. State (S)
2. a. Internal (I) b. External (E)
3. a. Controllable (C) b. Uncontrollable (U)

The trait vs. state antecedents can be presented as follows (Table 3):

As indicated in Table 3, most antecedents have a state nature.

Another broad category concerns the internal/external dimension, as represented in the following table (Table 4).

As Table 4 reveals, most antecedents are external in nature (14 external, 4 internal).

To get even a more vivid picture of the nature of the emerged codes for apprehension, they were categorized according to the controllability locus. Table 5 portrays the controllability dimension of the antecedents.

As can be seen in Table 5, 10 out of 18 factors are uncontrollable and the rest are controllable.

The Model of the Ramifications of Teachers' Apprehension

By the same token, information collected from interviews, observation, and diary on the ramifications of teachers' apprehension were classified into five general categories: (1) attitudinal factors, (2) job-related factors, (3) smart classroom management, and (4) stress-coping strategies. By and large, they are composed of 15 subdivisions which are indicated in the following figure (Fig. 2).

As shown in Fig. 2, a vast spectrum of factors was detected as the ramifications of teachers' apprehension. The most striking result emerged from the data is that "Efficacy," either its enhancement or its decline, was amongst the highly-mentioned factors resulted from apprehension. The examples are provided in Appendix 2 to clarify the above-mentioned points (see Appendix 2).

The list below basically shows the most frequent codes resulted from teachers' apprehension are as follows:

Table 3 Trait vs. state antecedents

Codes	Type	Example
L2-related factors/linguistic factors	S	Teachers felt solicitous if they had spelling errors
L2-related factors/cultural differences	S	Not knowing enough about the target culture caused the teacher to feel apprehensive
L2-related factors/perfectionism	T	Teachers' being perfectionist to make the students 100% interested in the subject-matter
Attitudinal/teacher's lack of self-esteem	T	Teachers' feeling dissatisfied with themselves due to lack of knowledge
Attitudinal/students' demotivation	S	Students' demotivation
Attitudinal/students' perception/challenge	S	Running boring classes
Attitudinal/students' perception/interest	S	When students' curiosity leads a teacher to go beyond the normal level of the class
Classroom management/syllabus coverage	S	Keeping up with the syllabus
Classroom management/error treatment	S	Punishing the students
Classroom management/students' proficiency	S	Gifted students who can take the control of the class
Classroom management/students' disengagement/behavioral	S	When her students got tired and asked their teacher to change the topic and it wasted time
Classroom management/students' disengagement/cognitive	S	She was afraid of the situation when absent learners did not take the responsibility of their learning
Classroom management/students' disengagement/emotional	S	She lost control of the class but she pretended everything is okay

Table 4 Internal vs. external antecedents

Codes	Type	Codes	Type
L2-related factors/linguistic factors	I	Organizational/peer observation	E
L2-related factors/cultural differences	E	Organizational/institutional discipline	E
L2-related factors/perfectionism	I	Organizational/instructional tools and facilities	E
Attitudinal/teacher's lack of self-esteem	I	Classroom management/time restriction	E
Attitudinal/students' demotivation	E	Classroom management/syllabus coverage	E
Attitudinal/students' perception/challenge	E	Classroom management/error treatment	I
Attitudinal/students' perception/interest	E	Classroom management/students' proficiency	E
Organizational/supervisor observation	E	Classroom management/students' disengagement/ behavioral	E
Classroom management/students' disengagement/cognitive	E	Classroom management/students' disengagement/ emotional	E

1. Efficacy (attitudinal, $n = 15$)
2. Planning and preparation (smart classroom management/ self-regulation, $n = 14$)
3. External/uncontrollable attributes (attitudinal, $n = 13$)
4. Emotion (stress coping strategies, $n = 13$)
5. Emotional control (attitudinal, $n = 12$)

As with the antecedents, ramifications were broadly classified into two categories: (a) facilitative and (b) debilitative. Facilitative factors consist of those factors which bear a positive impact on teachers' effectiveness and include attitudinal factors (efficacy, emotional control, resilience, intrinsic interest), smart classroom management (procrastination, self-regulation: self-monitoring, planning and preparation, classroom management), job-related factors (effectiveness, job motivation), and stress coping (task).

Debilitative factors which have a negative and obtrusive effect on teachers' effectiveness contain attitudinal factors (efficacy, emotional control, external or uncontrollable factors, avoidance goal orientation), smart classroom management (self-regulation: classroom management), job-related factors (effectiveness, job motivation, commitment, burnout), and stress coping strategies (emotion and avoidance).

Interestingly enough, some codes bear both negative and positive impacts which indicate stress and apprehension not only have a negative effect on teachers but also cause the teachers to change for the better. Table 6 shows the consequences with either deliberative or facilitative or both impacts.

Discussion

This study explored the antecedents and ramifications of EFL teachers' apprehension. Based on the identified codes obtained via a qualitative triangulated method integrating interview, diary, and open-ended questions, antecedents and ramifications each were classified into four main categories and a host of subcategories. Among the yielded categories for antecedents, attitudinal factors and linguistic factors exhibited the highest frequency. To

Table 5 Controllable vs. uncontrollable antecedents

| Codes	Type	Codes	Type
L2-related factors/linguistic factors	C	Organizational/supervisor observation	U
L2-related factors/cultural differences	C	Organizational/peer observation	U
L2-related factors/perfectionism	U	Organizational/institutional discipline	U
Attitudinal/teacher's lack of self-esteem	C	Organizational/instructional tools and facilities	U
Attitudinal/students' demotivation	C	Classroom management/time restriction	U
Attitudinal/students' perception/challenge	C	Classroom management/syllabus coverage	C
Attitudinal/students' perception/interest	C	Classroom management/error treatment	C
Classroom management/students' proficiency	U	Classroom management/students' disengagement/behavioral	U
Classroom management/students' disengagement/cognitive	U	Classroom management/students' disengagement/emotional	U
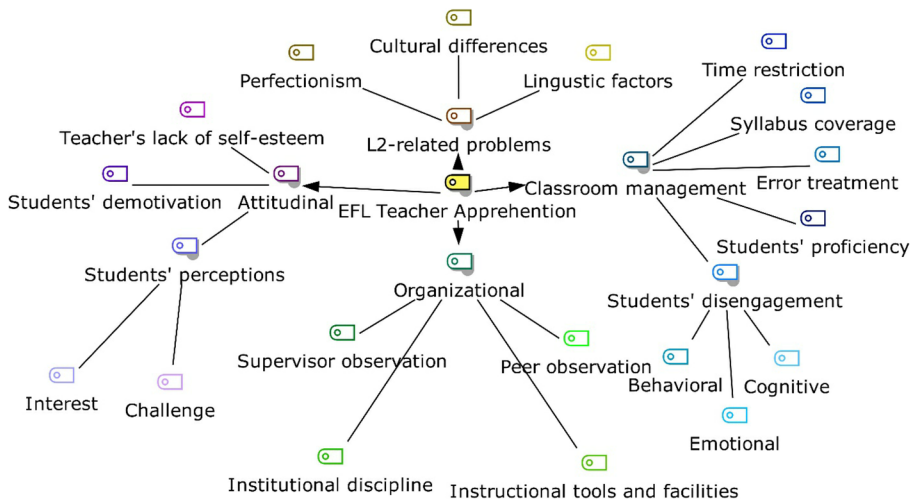
Fig. 2 The model of the ramifications of EFL teachers' apprehension

get a more exclusive picture of the antecedents, they were broadly categorized into three types of loci: state vs. trait, internal vs. external, and controllable vs. uncontrollable.

Trait antecedents are those which are defined as a particular quality in someone's character, while state antecedents are a temporary way of being and are more situation-based. Trait characteristics tend to be a more stable and enduring pattern of behavior or attribute. In this study, it was found more antecedents exhibited a state property. This is good news implying that the sources or reasons of apprehension can cause short-term anxiety which can simply be alleviated. Not surprisingly, the teaching profession is inherently stressful, since it is mingled with unexpected and unpredictable circumstances which inevitably might result in stress and tension. Another broad category concerned the internal/external dimension. As was revealed, the frequency of external factors exceeded the internal factors. External factors refer to the ones which cause a teacher to feel apprehensive, for example, classroom management (error treatment), attitudinal factors (teachers' lack of self-esteem), and L2-related factors (perfectionism and linguistic factors). On the other hand, internal factors address those factors which a person may find in himself which lead him to feel stressed. It depends on the situation on how one can manage it or whether it is controllable or not. The higher frequency of external factors implies that a teacher has the less capability to take control of his feelings whenever necessary. It is quite understandable when one comes across an external factor which may cause him to feel apprehensive, it is virtually difficult to deal with the situation and manipulate or manage it effectively.

Concerning the controllability locus, as mentioned earlier, 10 out of 18 factors were uncontrollable. The instances were as follows: when students are reluctant to engage in the activity due to some emotional (they had a hectic day, so they feel tired), cognitive (they do not do the homework), and behavioral factors (they pretend that the part is not interactive); when teachers' classes are observed by the supervisor or their colleagues; when there is something wrong with the institutional tools like TV; or the classes are observed, using a CCTV. This finding is also promising given that control over even an aversive stimulus can produce alterations in mood and behavior; hence, the controllability of teacher apprehension would make it more prone to cognizant amendments and the profession would be ultimately more humanistic and efficient.

Table 6 Examples of the codes with positive and negative impact

Code	Positive effect	Negative effect
Efficacy	I try to raise my self-confidence to cope with my stress	It makes me not be the one who I really am
Emotional control	Being a positive and pretentious person, I try to pretend that I am relaxed	I feel a lump lodged through my throat
Classroom management	To check my spelling errors, I get my students to look up a dictionary	The stress makes me fall behind the syllabus
Resilience	Teachers found deeper truths within herself and tried her best to be resilient	
Procrastination	I will shift the answer for the coming session, in other words, I postpone it	
Self-Monitoring	It resulted in having reflection in and on action	
Planning and preparation	I get prepared by taking notes of some relevant sentences before the class	
Task	To make the students cope with their stress, I give them pair quizzes	
Avoidance goal orientation		It causes me to have a shaking voice
Commitment		When a teacher was stressed, all she wanted was to finish the session
Burnout		I feel I cannot concentrate on my job
Effectiveness		I resign myself to mediocrity
Job motivation		It makes my teaching less effective
Avoidance		I was teased by the learners

When it comes to discussing the ramifications of teacher apprehension, decline in sense of self-efficacy beliefs was found to be the most frequent factor. Teacher self-efficacy refers to "the teacher's disbelief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 22). Self-efficacy beliefs can be developed via four main sources of influence, including mastery experience or performance outcomes: Positive and negative experiences can influence the ability of an individual to perform a given task. If one has performed well at a task previously, he or she is more likely to feel competent and perform well at a similarly associated task (Bandura, 1997), vicarious experience: People can develop high or low self-efficacy vicariously through other people's performances. A person can watch another perform and then compare their own competence with the other individual's competence (Bandura, 1997), social or verbal persuasion: Self-efficacy is influenced by encouragement and discouragement pertaining to an individual's performance or ability to perform (Redmond, 2010), and arousal or physiological and emotional states: People experience sensations from their body, and how they perceive this emotional arousal influences their beliefs of efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Psychological and affective states encompass stress, anxiety, and excitement. Hence, a teacher's stress and anxiety and inability to modify negative debilitative states to positive facilitative states would depreciate their beliefs in their professional capabilities.

The broad categorization of ramifications into facilitative and debilitative impacts yielded confounding results. Intriguingly, some codes demonstrated both negative and positive consequences which indicate stress and apprehension not only have a negative effect on teachers but also can cause the teachers to change for the better and inspire more deliberation and refinement. Taking the emotional control into account, to cope with someone's stress, one pretends that he is relaxed, he actually fakes it, until he makes it. On the other hand, when a teacher makes a mistake, he may quite feel that he would lose his face.

Efficacy, emotional control, effectiveness, job motivation, and classroom management were found to be among factors which had either negative or positive impacts. In contrast, external or uncontrollable factors, resilience, intrinsic interest, procrastination, self-monitoring, planning and preparation, and tasks were the factors with positive impacts. Last but not least, avoidance goal orientation, commitment, burnout, and avoidance factors had negative impacts.

As opposed to what the researchers expected, positive consequences also emerged from the categorization, although the debilitative factors outnumbered the facultative ones.

Conclusions

The present research took the initiative to explore the antecedents and ramifications of a subdivision of teacher anxiety—apprehension—which is plausibly pertinent to EFL teachers' profession with its two main features of anticipation of stress and communicative fear. Foreign language teaching is inherently mingled with frequent interactions among teachers and students. Two models emerged out of the triangulated qualitative data. The multitudes of the antecedents of EFL teachers' apprehension were clustered in the light of three broad dimensions: trait vs. state, internal vs. external, and controllable vs. uncontrollable dimension. It was demonstrated that state, external, uncontrollable antecedents outweighed the trait, internal, and controllable ones. The good news is that factors which can come under the category of state anxiety could be mended as they are temporary. Unlike internal

factors which contribute to teachers' apprehension and are presumably fixed, external factors can be readily recognized and cured. The consequences were subsumed under facilitative and debilitative effects with the debilitative ones exhibiting higher frequency. Here comes another promising evidence divulging the contribution of apprehension to the teaching profession.

The findings of the present study put forward significant implications for teachers by informing teachers of the sources of their anxiety. This information can stimulate them to restrain the antecedents which are internal, state, and controllable in nature. By so doing, they are expected to create a stress-free and enjoyable classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

Furthermore, institute and school authorities should endeavor to fashion their educational systems so as to support their teachers in cooperative and well-equipped settings. Teacher educators and authorities are also recommended to equip teachers with teacher education programs that will raise their conciseness of job-related anxiety and emotional side of teaching. They should also develop training programmes which seek to pinpoint debilitative apprehension and enable teachers to modify them to the ones which have regulatory and strategic functions. These programs are expected to help the teachers cope with their stress and give them the bravery to discard the mask of superiority and not to feel rotten during the class.

Appendix 1. Conceptualization of Factors and Sub Factors of the Antecedents of EFL Teachers' Apprehension

Antecedents	Sub factors	Operational definition
Attitudinal factors	teachers' low self-esteem	The person's overall subjective assessment of his or her own value. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self
Example	• Not being praised by the students	• Gifted students who can take the control of the class
	• Being an unexperienced teacher, he was extremely stressed-out	• Any tricky mishap that can hinder the teacher's being efficacious
	• Having difficulty in building up a good rapport with the learners	• Teachers' feeling dissatisfied with their level of knowledge
Attitudinal factors	Students' demotivation	The forces that diminish students' inspiration to learn or the absence of the forces that derives effective learning (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015a)
Example	• She felt apprehensive on how to teach the learners who are unmotivated and how to make them understand the subject-matter	
Attitudinal factors	Students' perceptions: challenge	Perceptions of classroom activities are the processes by which we receive and interpret information in the classroom. Students see the class activities challenging if, for instance, they lead to solving problems (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015b)

Antecedents	Sub factors	Operational definition
Example	• Running boring classes	• When students' curiosity leads a teacher to go beyond the normal level of the class
	• Students' being expectant	When her students got tired and asked their teacher to change the topic since it wasted time
	• Not to have an interactive class	• Disturbing students who blurt out some nonsense or personal questions
Attitudinal factors	Students' perceptions: Interest	Perceptions of classroom activities are the processes by which we receive and interpret information in the classroom. Students see the class activities interesting when, for instance, the teacher devises interesting activities Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015b)
Example	• Inactive and unenthusiastic students	
Organizational factors	Supervisor observation	
Example	• She is afraid of being judged by the supervisor	Being observed by the supervisors
Classroom management	Students' disengagement: emotional	Student engagement in school has been operationalized so as to see the extent to which students are committed to school and motivated to learn. Emotional engagement refers to the extent to which students feel a sense of belonging and the degree to which they care about their classes (Fredricks et al., 2004)
Example	• Students' not being curious and flexible	• Students' demotivation
Classroom management	Students' disengagement: cognitive	Cognitive engagement refers to the students' volunteer efforts for understanding and mastering the classroom tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004)
Example	• Teachers monitor the students over time and see they have not improved their skills • She lost control of the class but she pretended everything is okay	• She was afraid of the situation when absent learners did not take the responsibility of their own learning
Classroom management	Students' disengagement: behavioral	Behavior engagement is defined in terms of both participation in the learning environment as well as positive conduct, such as following the rules, adhering to classroom norms, and the absence of disruptive behavior such as skipping school or getting into trouble (Fredricks et al., 2004)
Example	• How to manage an inadvertent argument • When some reasons question teachers' authority in the class	• Noisy students
Classroom management	Students' proficiency	

Antecedents	Sub factors	Operational definition
Example	• Learners' characteristic differences	• Gifted students who can take the control of the class
	• Students with different learning styles	• Mixed classes
Classroom management	Time restriction	
Example	• The warm-up part took a lot that he escaped the time	• Keeping up with the syllabus
Classroom management	Syllabus coverage	
Example	• She felt anxious if she fell behind the syllabus and had difficulty managing the time	• Having too much work to cover in a session
	• Lack of time to cover all the materials in a session	
Classroom management	Error treatment	The input the learners receive after their oral or written production which is an indication to the learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect
Example	• Reproaching the students	
L2-related factors	Linguistic factors	
Example	• Students' questions that u r not sure of the answer	• Teaching grammar when the teacher is not pre-planned
	• Teaching grammar and running panel discussion classes are the most difficult to teach	• Writing is the most difficult skill to teach if the teacher is not good at writing
	• She felt solicitous if she had spelling errors	
		The striving towards high standard in teaching as well in students' language learning
Example	• Obsessive–compulsive disorder	• Not up-to-dated with new stuff
	• Teachers' being perfectionist to make the students 100% interested in the subject-matter and class	
L2-related factors	Cultural differences	
Example	• Not knowing enough about the target culture caused her to feel apprehensive	

Appendix 2. Conceptualization of Factors and Sub Factors of the Ramifications of EFL Teachers' Apprehension

Ramifications	Sub factors
Attitudinal factors	Efficacy
Example	• I indoctrinate myself to come to this belief that being an experienced teacher, I can teach without preparation before the class (+) • I should prove myself by teaching the students well (+) • It makes me not to be the one that I really am (−) • It makes me not have confidence in me (−)
Attitudinal factors	Intrinsic interest

Ramifications	Sub factors
Example	• To manage time and give variety to different tasks, I use new teaching methods (+) • I try to come up with new ideas to cover the listening parts (+)
Attitudinal factors	Emotional control
Example	• I feel a lump lodged through my throat (−) • It makes me not have confidence in me (-)
Attitudinal factors	Avoidance goal approach
Example	• When I was stressed, all I wanted was to finish the session (−) • It seemed like I lingered teaching the vocabulary part (−/+) • To screw the learners up, I change the task and I shift it to the task on which I'm keen (−/+)
Attitudinal factors	Resilience
Example	• I found deeper truths within myself and tried her best to be resilient (+) • Using a sudden self-regulation, I try to raise my self-confidence (+)
Attitudinal factors	External/uncontrollable factors
Example	• I feel blue (−) • I feel as though I lost my face (−)
Job-related factors	Burnout
Example	• I feel I am not knowledgeable enough (−) • I resign myself to mediocrity (−)
Job-related factors	Effectiveness
Example	• The learners can have a say on how to make the tasks more interactive (+) • I try to engage the students more (+)
Job-related factors	Job motivation
Example	• It gives me this opportunity to learn new things (+) • I was teased by the learners (−)
Job-related factors	Commitment
Example	• Honesty is the best policy. if I feel morose, I share this secret with the learners while entering the class (+)
Stress-coping strategies	Avoidance
Example	• I whitewash it by having the learners check the vocabulary (−/+) • I will shift the answer for the coming session, in other words, I postpone it (−/+)
Stress-coping strategies	Emotion
Example	• I had a monotonous tiring speech while explaining the grammar rules (−) • Feeling anxious, I use baffling words (−)
Stress-coping strategies	Task
Example	• To make the students cope with their stress, I give them pair quizzes (+) • I try to use natural language rather than bombastic words (−) • To increase the learners' motivation, I try to monitor their development each session by asking some questions and giving them some quizzes (+)
Smart classroom management	Self-regulation: classroom management
Example	• To engage the learners and make them enthusiastic, I play videos for them (+)
Smart classroom management	Self-regulation: planning and preparation
Example	• I try to be armed to the tooth to answer students' questions (+) • I try to expand my vocabulary (+) • The teachers should have powerful arsenal vocabulary (+)

Ramifications	Sub factors
Smart classroom management	Self-regulation: self-monitoring
Example	• I found deeper truths within myself and tried my best to be resilient (+)
Ramifications	Sub factors
Smart classroom management	Procrastination
Example	• To screw the learners up, I change the task and I shift it to the task on which I'm keen (−/+) • I try to deviate the learners and focus them on something else, for example pictures (−/+) • I will shift the answer for the coming session, in other words, I postpone it (−/+)

Ramifications	Operational definition
Attitudinal factors	The teacher's disbelief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 22)
Example	
Attitudinal factors	Beliefs concerning personal interest in the profession
Example	
Attitudinal factors	Strategies for controlling and regulating affect, mood, and emotions
Example	• Students' smiles assuage my anger (+)
Attitudinal factors	Goals not to do worse than others as a teacher and not to teach worse than before (Mascret et al., 2014)
Example	
Attitudinal factors	Teacher resilience refers to the process of, capacity for, and outcome of positive adaptation as well as ongoing professional commitment and growth in the face of challenging circumstances (Mansfield et al., 2014; Araghian & Ghanizadeh, 2021)
Example	• To control the class, I try to be resilient (+)
Attitudinal factors	Student engagement in school has been operationalized so as the extent to which students are committed to school and motivated to learn. Emotional engagement refers to the extent to which students feel a sense of belonging and the degree to which they care about their classes (Fredricks et al., 2004)
Example	• It causes me to have shaking voice (−)
Job-related factors	Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding or stressful. It is a multidimensional construct with three related constructs: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment. (Maslach et al., 1996)
Example	• I feel emotionally exhausted burnout (−)
Job-related factors	
Example	• It makes my teaching less effective (−)
Job-related factors	Gob motivation including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation inspires an employee to purse work-related tasks or goals (Fernet, et al., 2008)
Example	• Cultural elements made her not feel in her elements (−)
Job-related factors	The state or willingness of being obligated or emotionally impelled by teaching as well as the relative strength of the teachers' identification with the institution (Jo, 2014)
Example	• I put myself in my learners' position (+)

Ramifications	Operational definition
Stress-coping strategies	Avoidance-oriented coping refers to responses designed to avoid dealing with stressful situations, such as distracting oneself with other situations (e.g., shopping) or through interacting with other persons (Endler & Parker, 1990)
Example	• I put the learners through the mills so as not to ask me irrelevant questions (−/+)
Stress-coping strategies	Emotion-oriented coping refers to responses directed toward oneself rather than the problem at hand. An individual using this coping style may respond to a difficult situation by becoming emotionally distressed or engaging in fantasy activities (Endler & Parker, 1990)
Example	• It has a bad impact on my accent; therefore, I feel as if I lost my voice (−)
Stress-coping strategies	Task-oriented coping refers to responses directed at either problem resolution or cognitively reframing the meaning of the stressful situation (Endler & Parker, 1990)
Example	
Smart classroom management	Classroom management refers to all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place (Wong & Rosemary, 2001)
Example	• To manage time and give variety to different tasks, I use new teaching methods (+)
Smart classroom management	The extent to which a teacher has an assigned or self-directed goal, a plan, and a framework for reflection and evaluation to achieve the goal
Example	
Smart classroom management	Process of monitoring one's own performance in teaching and making instructional changes when necessary (Yesim et al., 2009)
Example	• As a teacher, I agonize over on how to reprimand my students (+)
Smart classroom management	Avoidance or delay of doing a task that needs to be accomplished
Example	

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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