People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahiya University, Jijel

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards Having Psycho-Pedagogical Support to Decrease Stress and Anxiety Faced by EFL Learners.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for Master Degree in Didactics of English

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2020/2021

Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled 'Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards Having Psycho-Pedagogical Support to Decrease Stress and Anxiety Faced by EFL Learners' is our own work and all the sources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not partially or fully copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

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Imane BAHA

I

Dedication

I gratefully dedicate this work to:

The most important people in my life, my precious parents: Rachida TITAH and Ibrahim

KHIARI, for their unconditional love, care, patience, guidance and constant support.

My lovely siblings: Imad and Bouchra, for their endless love, support and encouragement.

My dear sister-in-law: Nabila KORICH, for her constant help and support.

My beautiful niece and nephew: Jouri and Zayd, for being the source of my joy.

All my dearly loved family, for their support and encouragement.

My closest friend and partner: Imane BAHA, for making this research journey a fun and

special experience.

My beloved close friends: Khaoula BOUCHA, Amani ZITARI, Khaoula BOUSSENNA,

Noussaiba HADID and Taisei MATSUYAMA, for being the best friends I could ever wish

for.

My sweet teacher and friend Rokaia BEN MESSAOUD, for making me love and enjoy

learning English.

All my teachers especially Mr. A. BOUZENOUN, Mr. R. NAILI and Mr. I. FANIT, for

guiding me throughout the way and helping me get this far.

_ Khawla

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

My beloved parents: Samir and Samia NIBOUCHA who have been supporting me since

day one, thank you for your trust, care, love, and guidance.

My dearly loved sister and brother: Ines and Zineddine.

All my loyal friends with whom I shared precious memories.

All the teachers who taught me and for whom I have great respect especially Mr. A.

BOUZENOUN, Mrs. H. BOUHEDJAR, Mrs. Z. BOUCHAIR, Mr. R. NAILI, and Mr. I.

FANIT.

My friend and partner Khawla for her hard work and persistence in creating this work.

_Imane

Acknowledgements

*First and foremost, all praise goes to **ALLAH** the Most Merciful for giving us strength to fulfill this work.*

*We would like to express our wholehearted gratitude and appreciation to our supervisor **Dr. Abdeldjalil BOUZENOUN** for his constant support, motivation, insightful feedback, for providing us with a comfortable place to work on this research and for devoting his precious time for the realization of this work.*

*We would also like to express our sincere thanks to **Mr. Redouane NAILI**, for his valuable advice and continuous help.*

*Special thanks go to the board of examiners **Mr. Redouane NAILI** and **Mrs. Chadia CHIOUKH** for accepting to evaluate our work.*

On a personal level, we would love to present our profound thanks and appreciation for our beloved parents and siblings.

Thanks to everyone who believed in us and supported us in one way or another.

Abstract

Throughout the academic journey at the university, EFL learners undergo constant stress and anxiety when performing different academic activities which may serve as an obstacle to their learning development. To address this issue, this research aims at exploring students and teachers' attitudes towards having Psycho-Pedagogical Support as a solution to alleviate the problem of anxiety and stress for students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. With respect to that, it is hypothesized that if teachers and learners perceive Psycho-Pedagogical Support as a necessity to reduce anxiety and stress faced by EFL learners, they would be in favour of having such a team within the academic staff. To test this hypothesis, a questionnaire was administered to (241) randomly selected students from all levels and an interview was carried out with (9) teachers. These research tools were used to gather data to examine the different sources and effects of learners' anxiety and highlight learners and teachers' attitudes towards Psycho-Pedagogical Support. The findings of this study stated the three main sources of learners' anxiety at this department: tests, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation. They also revealed the negative impact of anxiety on EFL learners and highlighted teachers and students' positive attitudes towards Psycho-Pedagogical Support.

Keywords: Anxiety, EFL learners' attitudes, Teachers attitudes, Psycho-Pedagogical Support.

List of Abbreviations

CA: **C**ommunication **A**pprehension.

CORE-OM: **C**linical **O**utcome in **R**outine **E**valuative-**O**utcome **M**easures.

EFL: **E**nglish as a **F**oreign **L**anguage.

FLA: **F**oreign **L**anguage **A**nxiety.

FL: **F**oreign **L**anguage.

OQ-45: **O**utcome **Q**uestionnaire-**45**

PPS: **P**sycho-**P**edagogical **S**upport.

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<center>**General Introduction**</center>

1. Background of the Study

Ma and Wang (1997; cited in Michael, Baozhen, Kay, Gulan, Fengqin, & John, 2007) analyzed Chinese college students' attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help at the university. According to them, students showed noticeable hesitation and unwillingness to consult the psychologist even though they acknowledge the efficacy and importance of psychological counselling to overcome psychological issues they face. However, more research is needed in this matter to clarify why there are such contradictions in students' attitudes.

Another similar study was conducted by Al-Darmaki (2003), in which she investigated attitudes of Emirati students whose majors were different (mainly social sciences, law, and engineering) towards seeking psychological help. Al-Darmaki reported that students were relatively acceptant to the idea of having psychological support. She added that students majoring in social sciences had a more positive attitude towards consulting professional psychological help in comparison to those from other majors. Nevertheless, it was still unclear whether participants would seek help from the counsellor when needed.

One may notice that the two previously mentioned studies explored attitudes of learners from different faculties such as social sciences and engineering excluding EFL learners, even though the latter might be in more need for psycho-pedagogical support and counselling services as they may be particularly more vulnerable to anxiety due to their unfamiliarity with the foreign language and culture they are learning (culture shock).

As anxiety and stress are considered one of the major issues encountered by foreign language learners, it was crucial to think of strategies to cope with these issues. Therefore, several strategies that focus mainly on the teacher's efforts were suggested. However, in spite of using those techniques, the problem of anxiety and stress was still persistent (Tsymbal, 2017). Thus, the need for another solution such as the inclusion of psycho-pedagogical support at universities was raised.

In a descriptive study, Bouaffar (2012) shed light on the role of educational psychology in assessing and improving the effectiveness of teaching in an EFL classroom. According to Muhammad (2009; cited in Bouaffar, 2012), psychologists suggest that all institutions necessitate a guidance to support learners overcome their struggles inside and outside the institution. The author adds that psychologists stress the role of guidance in the learner's journey in which the counsellor is able to identify the problem and find a solution to it; moreover, the counsellor enables the learner to be at ease during the learning process. In addition to that, the guidance can assist the teacher to comprehend learner's actions and to cope with them. In this research paper, the author has focused on students and teachers' attitudes towards the role of psycho-pedagogy in the life of EFL learners; however, not much consideration has been paid to the actual integration of a psycho-pedagogical support, which in fact has been approved by psychologists, in order to help learners deal with problems such as stress and anxiety.

Studies consulted in this background can be only viewed as useful insights as they contain relatively relevant data. However, the conclusions and results they provide cannot be generalized and applied to the current study because they deal with samples with different cultural backgrounds than the current study's sample. As well as the attitudes they investigate are those of learners belonging to faculties other than the faculty targeted in this study.

2. Statement of the Problem

EFL learners undergo constant stress and anxiety as they continue to perform the different academic activities throughout their experience at the university. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) proposed three major causes for language anxiety namely, communication apprehension, tests, and fear of negative evaluation. According to them, this anxiety and stress have a double-edged sword effect on learners' performance as they can be motivating or hindering to students.

One way to overcome or at least decrease anxiety and stress faced by EFL learners is the presence of a psycho- pedagogical team at the university that would provide them with psychological support and create a comfortable environment to work in. However, regarding the absence of such a team at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, there is close to nothing documented on teachers and students' attitudes towards having psycho-pedagogical support to reduce anxiety as well as students' openness to psychological help-seeking. In this research paper, the following terms: PPS, counseling services and psychological/ psycho-pedagogical team are going to be used interchangeably.

3. Aims and Significance of the Study

The current study aims at enriching the understanding about the potential of including a psycho-pedagogical team within the academic personnel to decrease anxiety and stress is perceived by teachers and students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University. It also investigates whether students are willing to seek psycho-pedagogical support if such team existed at the university.

This study can be considered significant to both teachers and students, as it highlights their attitudes and perceptions about the necessity of including a psycho

pedagogical team within the academic personnel which will open new horizons for more research concerning this matter. It will also eventually voice these perceptions which will hopefully draw the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's attention into considering the inclusion of such an important team within the academic staff at universities.

4. Research Questions

The present study is designed to answer the following questions:

➢ How does anxiety affect EFL learners' academic performance and what are its sources?

➢ What are teachers and students' attitudes towards having PPS as a potential solution to reduce anxiety and stress?

5. Research Hypothesis

Based on the problem of the study and the research questions, it has been hypothesized that if teachers and learners perceive psycho-pedagogical support as a necessity to reduce anxiety and stress faced by EFL learners, they would be in favour of having such a team within the academic staff.

6. Research Methodology

Since this research investigates the attitudes of EFL students and teachers towards the inclusion of Psycho-Pedagogical Support to help student decrease stress and anxiety they face due to educational activities, it is descriptive and qualitative in nature. A

questionnaire has been administered to 241 students of English from all levels (First-year, Second-year & Third-year Licence; Master 1 and Master 2) at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University and an interview has been carried out with 9 teachers from the division of English as well.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

Concerning the structure of this dissertation, the current research paper is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter represents the theoretical part of the study, whereas the second one is devoted to the practical part.

The first chapter consists of two sections namely, 'Anxiety and Stress Faced by EFL Learners', which sheds light on anxiety definitions, sources, foreign language anxiety and anxiety effect on learners academic performance; the second section is entitled 'PPS and Common Strategies to Overcome Anxiety'; this section illustrates different strategies used by teachers and students to overcome anxiety in addition to PPS, its impact on anxiety and lastly the different attitudes held towards this support.

The second chapter serves as a description of study methodology and research instruments as well as an analysis and discussion of the results obtained. Furthermore, it states different pedagogical recommendations and limitations of the study.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Section One: Anxiety and Stress Faced by EFL Learners

Introduction

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Chapter One: Literature Review

Section One: Anxiety and Stress Faced by EFL Learners

Introduction

The word "anxiety" is most frequently used in nowadays' psychology to portray a perceptible but transient emotional condition marked by feelings of stress, worry and increased autonomic nervous system activity (Spielberger et al., 1972). It is commonly known that every single person experiences feelings of anxiety and apprehension at times due to several reasons, yet these feelings are often displayed by second language/FL learners and are said to cause a probably negative and damaging outcome on communication in the target language (Tanveer, 2007). In addition to that, these unpleasant feelings also occur during FL learners' testing situations which may lead them to poor performance (Horwitz, Horwitz&Cope, 1986). Many psychologists and foreign language researchers tried to discover the reasons behind this issue of FLA and its effect on learners' performance and input; therefore, the following review of the literature will tackle some of these important works.

1.1. Anxiety Definition

Anxiety is one of the rich debatable topics on which several definitions can be found. For instance, it is defined as an umbrella term that encompasses several emotions namely fear, nervousness and worry over undesirable future situations, and it is usually associated with some physical symptoms ('Treating and Preventing Adolescents', 2012). Anxiety can be beneficial in some cases when it is a normal reaction to a stressful situation; however, it

can become a serious disorder if it involves excessive emotions of fear nervousness and worry (Muskin, M.D., & M.A., 2021).

According to Speilberger (1983, as cited in Horwitz, 2010), anxiety refers to one's feeling of apprehension, nervousness, worry and tension. It is considered as a subjective reaction to stress (Vitasari, Abdul Wahab, Othman, & Awang, 2010) that is triggered when people face events that they perceive as a threat to their self-esteem or ego (Sarason, 1988 as cited in Harris & Coy, 2003). Moreover, anxiety is an inborn feeling that is associated with natural reactions towards stressful and unpleasant events (Bouhafs, 2017).

1.2. Types of Anxiety

1.2.1. Trait Anxiety

Trait anxiety is said to mirror a rather steady and established personality trait that creates distinct differences in anxiety proneness among people (Spielberger, 1966 as cited in Spielberger et al., 1972). In addition to that, it is a common habit of reacting with fear to many unwanted incidents (Spielberger, 1985 as cited in Taylor, Koch & Crockett, 1991). One might understand that every person has trait anxiety as an intrinsic characteristic; however, the level of its intensity varies from person to person.

1.2.2. State Anxiety

State anxiety represents the uneasiness felt by a person as a reaction to a specific situation that is faced at a particular instant (Ellis, 1999) which implies that it is a temporary anxiety condition that is experienced due to an anxiety-provoking spur (Spielberger, 1983 as cited in K. Horwitz, 2001). Spielberger (1966; cited in Spielberger et

al., 1972) provided a more detailed explanation to state anxiety as he referred to it as the multiple feelings and emotional responses that occur as a response to sensed danger in given situations. These responses are defined by nervousness and a heightened sensory capacity, yet are temporary, differ in severity, and may shift as time goes by. One may clearly notice the correlation between trait and state anxiety as they both complement each other owing to the fact that the former co-occurs to the latter.

1.2.3. Situation-specific Anxiety

Situation-specific anxiety is a term that is used to stress the constant and many-sided nature of different anxieties (MacInntyre & Gardner, 1991). These anxieties are awakened by a particular circumstance or experience like public speaking, class participation, or examinations (Ellis, 1999). Moreover, these unique forms of anxiety appear regularly and consistently (Otier & Al-Otaibi, 2019). Language anxiety is a situation-specific anxiety construct that is only relatable to a formal foreign language learning case (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). The latter leads to the conclusion that a situation-specific approach is the most suitable research method for foreign language anxiety, due to the multi-faceted experience of anxiety states that learners encounter in a foreign language learning classroom (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

1.3. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Language anxiety is one of the several manifestations of anxiety (Asif, 2017)which has numerous definitions offered by several researchers; this type of anxiety is considered as situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz E. K., 2010). That is to say, it only occurs in a certain situation such as being a student at a foreign/second language classroom. In the

report of young (1992), FLA was defined as a multiplex psychological phenomenon that affects the language learning process, either positively or negatively. Simply put, FLA is an anxiety that can be either a hindering factor to learners' language learning process as students facing this anxiety would avoid contributing in any academic activities, or a facilitating one that motivates learners to perform their activities properly.

Positive anxiety or the so-called 'facilitating anxiety' (Oxford 1999, as cited in Sabbah, 2018) is a kind of anxiety that is needed to accomplish tasks; it motivates students to push themselves further and to make more efforts to get their assignments done. On the other hand, anxiety can be debilitating (harmful) in the sense that it can hamper students' learning by creating a mental block to students' cognitive performance (Brown, 2001 as cited in Sabbah, 2018). However, it is necessary to point out that this research study will exclusively focus on the debilitating form of anxiety as it is investigating teachers and students' attitudes towards a potential solution to this kind of anxiety.

Furthermore, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) defined language anxiety as mixed feelings of apprehension and worry that are experienced when using or learning a foreign/second language, involving the various skills of language namely, speaking, reading and writing.

All the previously mentioned definitions build-up to one main claim which is that FLA is situation-specific anxiety that encompasses feelings of nervousness, apprehension and worry when the student is being exposed to foreign or second language contexts.

1.4. Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

Generally speaking, there are several sources and triggers of anxiety, and FLA is considered as one variety or manifestation of anxiety. Therefore, Horwitz et al., (1986)

made the distinction between FLA and the other varieties of anxiety by introducing three main sources of language anxiety which can be listed as following: communicative apprehension (CA), test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

1.4.1. Communication Apprehension (CA)

Horwitz et al. (1986) argued that *CA* can be manifested in different ways such as having difficulty communicating in groups or in pairs which are referred to as 'Oral Communication Anxiety', the fear of speaking in public also known as 'Stage Fright', and 'Receiver Anxiety' which deals with difficulties learners face when listening to vocal messages and learning spoken items.

This type of fear or shyness can occur to speakers using their mother tongue, foreign language or in both situations; however, it is more likely to occur as a greater obstacle in foreign or second language contexts, because foreign language learners are required to use a language in which they have a little control over (limited capacities are possessed) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

To resume, CA is an uncontrollable state of fear, discomfort and unwillingness to speak which learners experience when trying to interact in a certain communicative situation.

1.4.2. Test Anxiety

The second source discussed by Horwitz et al. (1986) is *Test Anxiety*. This source refers to a type of anxiety that originates from the fear of failure (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). It is mainly manifested as an unpleasant, negative emotion that takes place due to the exposure to a given task namely, tests, exams... etc (Young, 1991).

Young (1991) proposed that students become more anxious when teachers impose on them a greater degree of evaluation. That is to say, the highly evaluative the teacher is, the

more test anxiety is triggered among students. As students who suffer from test anxiety force some unrealistic academic standards on themselves, they view anything that is less than a perfect test performance as a total failure (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Therefore, test-anxious learners tend to undergo strong feelings of apprehension, nervousness and fear whenever they are faced with tasks in which they are expected to achieve high-level performances or attain good grade.

In essence, learners may set some unrealistic beliefs and goals in regard to language learning due to their fear of failure, which makes them prone to test anxiety and apprehension if they are not able to achieve those goals.

1.4.3. Fear of Negative Evaluation

The last source of FLA determined by Horwitz et al. (1986) as a permanent feature of most foreign language classes is *Fear of Negative Evaluation*. They viewed this source as similar anxiety to test anxiety but with a larger scope, as it is not only concerned with test-taking situations but rather with any other context that holds evaluation, for instance, communicating in a foreign language class, giving a public speech, job interviews.

For Horwitz et al.'s part, this anxiety is defined as a fear that arises from others' evaluation and the assumptions that one-self will be negatively viewed or misevaluated by others, in consequence to that learners start to avoid any evaluative situation. Similarly, Watson and Friend (1969) defined this source as 'the apprehension of others' evaluation, distress over their negative evaluation' (p. 449). In other words, this anxiety and apprehension emerges from learners' fear of being negatively judged by their peers.

Anxious students who suffer from fear of negative evaluation perceive themselves to be weaker or to have lower capacities than their peers, and constantly worry about how their classmates and teachers view them, i.e. they worry that their peers/teachers will look

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down on them or make fun of their answers (Young, 1991). Therefore, such learners are found to be more passive and reluctant in the classroom, as they withdraw from the different activities, avoid participation, rarely initiate conversation and fear speaking or presenting in front of their classmates or teachers.

1.5.   FLA Effect on Learners' Performance

As it was already mentioned in the previous studies which were consulted for this research paper, FLA can hold a positive effect on learner performance for the reason that this anxiety facilitates learning by alerting students and motivating them to work harder to improve their academic performance (Scovel, 1978). However, FLA can also debilitate learners' performance, as this anxiety, unlike the facilitating one, would push learners to adopt avoidance behaviour (Scovel, 1978). Furthermore, a fair number of studies argued that there is a clear negative correlation between anxiety and foreign language learning. For instance, Hou (2017) claimed that the higher students' anxiety is the less they hold positive attitudes towards FL learning because anxiety becomes an obstacle that hinders the progress of their learning process which will consequently bring about some dissatisfying language results. Additionally, a study made by Argaman and Abu Rabia (2002) discussed that students suffering from high levels of anxiety showcase some avoidance behaviours like neglecting tasks and putting off their homework. Similarly, Liu (2006) identified anxiety as a serious problem in foreign language classrooms. Furthermore, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) claimed that the most familiar type of anxiety is the debilitating one, and they added that this type is detrimental to learners' performance.

In other words, a certain amount of anxiety (a mild degree of anxiety) is actually needed so that language learners get motivated to work harder which, in turn, enhances

their performance in the classroom (Atas, 2015). However, an excessive amount of anxiety and stress is more likely to get learners demotivated, afraid to engage in academic activities which will, as a result, affect their performance negatively (Ewald, 2007).

Conclusion

Throughout the current section, one of the major elements present in any learning classroom and especially encountered by EFL learners was elucidated, the so-called *anxiety*. Firstly, this section provided a number of definitions regarding general anxiety and went through its three main sources: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. Then, it discussed the one manifestation of anxiety that is more likely to be found in foreign language classes which is FLA. In this regard, it presented definitions proposed by several researchers in the field. Moreover, the rest of the section was devoted to explain the major sources of foreign language anxiety namely communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Finally, the effect of foreign language anxiety on learners' performance was also tackled in this section.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Section Two: PPS and Common Strategies to Overcome Anxiety

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Section Two: Psycho-Pedagogical Support and Common Strategies to Overcome Anxiety

Introduction

A fair number of studies suggested that high levels of anxiety and stress can be considered as one of the most significant obstacles that debilitates EFL learners' performance and affects their academic outcome negatively (Aida, 1994; Chastain, 1975; Young, 1986). Therefore, it was crucial to call for effective solutions that would reduce learners' anxiety and, as a result, enhance their academic performance. In that regard, numerous research projects were conducted to explore suitable solutions to overcome EFL learners' anxiety.

In this section, some of these research projects are consulted and analyzed to investigate the common strategies used by teachers and learners themselves to overcome this issue. In addition to that, PPS is introduced as a new potential solution to help EFL learners cope with their anxiety and stress.

1.1.   Anxiety-reduction Strategies Definition

Anxiety reduction strategies are techniques used to decrease dread, apprehension and anxiety rising from different sources of a potential threat ('Anxiety Reduction', n.d.). Moreover, according to Key (2012) anxiety reduction techniques are a set of skills that individuals can acquire to help minimize anxiety and cope with its mental and physical symptoms.

1.2. Commonly Used Anxiety-reduction Strategies

As teachers and students can be viewed as the two main components that any FL classroom is based upon, they both may need to adopt some strategies and techniques to create a suitable learning environment in which students would gain knowledge and learn without undergoing high levels of anxiety and stress.

1.2.1. Teachers' Strategies

From an anecdotal evidence, teachers can be considered as the primary body that has a direct interaction with the student and regarding the fact that they have a noticeable contribution in the amount of anxiety FL students face (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; cited in Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013; Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012), one can fairly presume that they have a significant role and reducing learners FLA. In that respect, teachers are recommended to use certain strategies to alleviate this FLA:

Firstly, teachers should have certain knowledge about the factors that trigger learners' anxiety and recognize that their teaching methods and beliefs can be taken as one of these factors, if not one of the most significant ones (Atasheneh and Izadi, 2012). In that regard, Young (1991) claimed that it would be advantageous if teachers constantly reflect on their own teaching beliefs, as these beliefs may have a negative impact on learners' performance. Moreover, Alrabai (2014) argued that for a teacher to reduce learners' anxiety and stress, they have to acknowledge the legitimate existence of FLA first then try to use suitable strategies to help learners cope with this anxiety. Similarly, Aydin (2008) emphasized that teachers are supposed to be aware of FLA along with the differences affecting it such as gender differences and accordingly adopting strategies to reduce learners' anxiety. In other words, teachers need to acknowledge that students

undergo some psychological issues that they may have contributed to as a first step to reduce anxiety before adopting any anxiety-reduction strategies.

Furthermore, teachers need to provide low anxiety, friendly and supportive learning environment for students (Young, 1991; Cutrone, 2009; Burden, 2004; Foss and Reitzel, 1988) through humour, positive feedback, encouragement, praise and reassurance which will help boost learners' self-esteem and build their confidence. That is to say, teachers should encourage learners to be active in the classroom by praising them, giving them positive feedback and reinforcement and regularly reassuring them about their performance, to raise their self-confidence (Melouah, 2013). In addition to that, to create such a friendly and relaxing learning atmosphere, teachers need to constantly motivate their learners by helping them set attainable learning goals that are relatively hard yet achievable and encourage them to have realistic expectations (Dornyei, 1994).

Another strategy discussed by Hashemi and Abbassi (2013) is that teachers should use a positive approach to error-correction. In other words, when providing learners with corrective feedback, teachers should avoid interrupting the learner's answer to correct the error or pointing out their errors in a harsh manner in front of their peers. Instead, teachers should always reassure students that making mistakes is a part of the learning process and not a sign of failure, as well as provide them with the correction in a way that the learner is not spotlighted with the feedback.

With respect to learners' anxiety emerging from speaking activities, teachers should provide learners with a fair number of opportunities to practice speaking freely in the classroom (Alrabai, 2014), allowing them to express their learning preferences and to choose topics of their interests to discuss (Von Wörder, 2003; Barkat and Hadji, 2018), and encouraging them to practice English as much as possible outside classroom contexts

(Melouah, 2013) by joining English learning clubs and support teams for instance. Furthermore, a number of studies emphasized that incorporating entertaining speaking activities such as games, group work, role-plays and simulations is significantly useful in reducing learners speaking anxiety for the reason that these types of activities create a sense of solidarity and friendship between learners and their peers and eliminate the negative impact of harmful competition and fear of negative evaluation (Alrabai, 2014; Melouah, 2013; Von Wörder, 2003; Aydin, 2008).

Lastly, to reduce learners' test anxiety, teachers are advised to teach students the appropriate test-taking strategies, provide them with a suitable (pressure-free) test-taking atmosphere and always make test instructions clear and understandable for the learner (Alrabai, 2014). Besides, Harris and Coy (2003) suggested that teachers should design the regular classroom tests based on a standardized test format that learners are familiar with so that they will become more confident and less anxious when taking a test.

1.2.2. Students' Strategies

Foss and Reitzel (1988) proposed a number of strategies based on learner beliefs and perceptions. They asserted that by acknowledging their unreasonable beliefs and fears, students will be able to understand and accept anxiety-provoking situations and thereby perceive them more rationally and rather than fleeing, they will be able to embrace them. One of the techniques that support this idea requires the student to express his/her fears in front of his/her teacher and classmates and then proceed to write them on the board. This will enable the students to notice that many of their peers also suffer from the same anxiety as they do. The authors presented another strategy which consists of using an anxiety graph. In a graph, students are asked to illustrate their levels of anxiety in the different stages of oral interaction; consequently, they will realize that different stages of oral

interaction, arises different amounts of anxiety. This strategy enables the students to precisely recognize the nature of their anxiety, predict its peaks, and look at the situation more rationally. At last, journaling is introduced as another effective way to deal with FLA. According to the authors, journals help learners evaluate their actual skills, trace their feelings of nervousness in the language learning process, and determine their weaknesses and consequently build reasonable expectations. One might point out that the strategies mentioned may be very beneficial for EFL students if used as warm-up activities during oral expression sessions.

Crookall and Oxford (1991) recommended several practices that can help language learners cope with their anxieties. Among these practices, they offered that learners should indulge in supplemental instructions, work with a tutor, practice relaxation activities, and join a language club. In addition to that, they advised language learners to practice self-talk which they assume to be an effective means to deal with 'state anxiety'. The authors provided the example of making positive statements about oneself and productive self-talk such as saying 'I can handle this' before a performance. More activities were proposed by Crookall and Oxford (1991) namely, Agony Column, Ghost Avengers, and Anxious Photos that are used as games for young EFL learners to reduce anxiety. However, one might notice that these activities are more suitable for younger learners than university learners who are considered as emerging adults in the process of establishing their identities.

1.3.   Psycho-Pedagogical Support (PPS)
1.3.1. Definition

The term Psycho-Pedagogical Support (PPS), also known as counselling and guidance services, refers to centers that are supervised by multidisciplinary teams

comprising pedagogical psychologists, permanent as well as special education teachers, social workers, and speech pathologists. Their main role is to judge in the assessment and classification of students who require exceptional education services (Dimakos, 2006). Their services are also provided in the form of private conversations in an attempt to contemplate upon and fix an issue they are facing and the readiness of another person to help and cooperate diligently in solving that issue (Mcleod, 2013). Researchers proposed that students can gain from counselling the ability to adapt and deal with academic requirements (Mayes & McConatha, 1982; cited in Giovazolias, Leontopoulou & Triliva, 2010), discover carrier paths (Güneri, Iydin & Skovholt, 2003), and cope with personal and interpersonal distress (Coplik & Devito, 1986; cited in Giovazolias et al., 2010).

1.3.2. Psycho-Pedagogical Support's Impact on Reducing Learners' Anxiety

The issue of anxiety and stress is still persistent among EFL students in spite of teachers' efforts in reducing it using different approaches and techniques (Tsymbal, 2017). Thus, a good number of studies were conducted to test the impact of counselling services (PPS) on learners' psychological health and academic performance.

Several researchers emphasized the efficacy of PPS in treating learners' psychological issues, improving their performance and enhancing their academic success. For instance, the study conducted by Connell, Barkham and Mellor-Clark (2008) on seven United Kingdom's students counselling services, revealed that counselling is effective, as 70% of the clients (students) showed reliable improvement on the Clinical Outcome in Routine Evaluative-Outcome Measures (CORE-OM), a tool used to monitor the psychotherapeutic development of patients (students), solely from pre and post-therapy, while students who had a complete counselling course manifested even a more significant improvement. Similarly, additional proof of the effectiveness of university counselling was

presented by Murray, McKenzie, Murray and Richelieu (2016; cited in Biasi, Patriz, Mosca & De Vincenzo, 2016) in which 63% of students displayed a great improvement in CORE-OM scores. Additionally, Minami et al. (2009) also provided positive results regarding the effectiveness of university counselling services through the Outcome Questionnaire-45 (OQ-45) which is a questionnaire used to measure the progress of adult patients'(university students, for instance) psychotherapy. However, it is noteworthy that despite the fact that these three studies demonstrated the effectiveness of counselling services through analyzing the progress of the psychotherapeutic treatment based on the CORE-OM and OQ-45, the effect of this counselling on students' anxiety in specific and their academic performance is still somewhat unclear. Furthermore, Thompson (2014; cited in McKenzie, Murray, Murray, Richelieu, 2015) stated that in addition to counselling's role of providing support to learners to overcome psychological difficulties, it can assist learners to become competent and improve their academic performance. In that respect, McKenzie et al. (2015) summarized the effectiveness of counselling services as follows: it decreases distress, enhances academic performance and promotes learning flexibility in dealing with academic issues. Moreover, two papers by Rickinson and Rutherford (1995, 1998; cited in Waller, Mahmood, Gandi, Delves, Humphrys & Smith , 2005) claimed that counselling allows students to fulfill their academic degrees, as - according to them- students who withdraw from university are usually the ones who did not use counselling services.

Essentially, all the studies mentioned above displayed the positive effect of PPS/counselling services which reinforces one of the objectives of this research paper which is showcasing the importance of PPS as a potential solution for FLA; yet, they examined the effect of university counselling on the academic issues in a relatively vague way. For that reason more detailed research is needed. In addition, the samples analyzed in

these studies covered a single cultural orientation (they were mainly focused on the *United Kingdom's* counselling services); therefore, results obtained through these studies cannot be generalized, but rather taken into consideration as a reference for this current research paper.

1.3.3. Teachers and Students' Attitudes towards Psycho-Pedagogical Support

Various psychological factors play a major part in a person's choice to seek support, thus it is crucial to identify people's attitudes toward seeking help to achieve a successful collaborative work (Vogel, Wester, Wey & Boysen, 2005).

1.3.3.1. Students' Attitudes

Studies show that women are more receptive to psychological support than men do (Komiya, Good & Sherrod, 2000). Yet in some cases, individuals pay more importance to the counsellor's gender such as in the Kuwaiti study in which it was revealed that college students would rather seek psychological support from same-gender counsellors (Soliman, 1993). Individuals with great beliefs in interpersonal harmony (individuals who value intimacy, cooperation, respect, and acceptance in interpersonal relationships) are more open to seeking support (Kuo, Kwantes, Towson & Nansen, 2006). Moreover, people with high self-confidence and low depression demonstrate more positive attitudes towards psychological support (Al-Darmaki, 2003). Surprisingly, some individuals simply seek psychological support when they feel like it would appease their sufferings (Mechanic, 1975). In other words, these individuals rely primarily on their innate feelings and not on the different demographic variables that influence people's choice in seeking psychological support. Concerning negative attitudes, research revealed that people who seek psychological support and professional counselling are more susceptible to being stigmatized by others (Angermeyer & Dietrich, 2006). Unconscious assimilation of these

negative images (self-stigma) drives individuals to feelings of inadequacy (lack of self-efficacy) (Corrigan, 2004), consequently, they develop a fear of stigma which is assumed to be an obstacle to positive attitudes towards seeking psychological support (Komiya et al., 2000; Vogel et al., 2005). People with the inclination to avoid revealing personal worries (Cepeda-Benito & Short, 1998) and hurtful feelings (Komiya et al., 2000) tend to see psychological help-seeking negatively. Research demonstrated that a major part of students who experience mental problems are reluctant to seek support as a coping mechanism (Furr, Westefeld, McConnell & Jenkins, 2001), and this is potentially due to worry of being labelled as crazy (Sibicky & Dovidio, 1986). Furthermore, a large number of students favour dealing with their problems on their own (Giovozolias et al., 2010). It is noteworthy that students' negative attitudes towards psychological help-seeking are mostly centered on negative judgments from others. This is quite disappointing for the ongoing study owing to the fact that the Algerian society can be an extremely judgmental one, according to the way one can perceive it, at least.

1.3.3.2. Teachers' Attitudes

To reach a mutual collaboration between teachers and counsellors, teachers' attitudes towards psychological support for students must be identified.

Greek impressionistic evidence demonstrated that teachers have divided opinions on psychological support (Lytton, Kline & webster, 2006). Research in Singapore reported that teachers have a positive attitude towards psychological support and recognize the importance of having a counselling centre as well as appreciate counsellors' efforts and services to support students who are in distress (Steven & Ada, 2019). A British study highlighted that older teachers perceive the necessity of psychological support as less important. Notable reasons might either be their informal interference in counselling

students or little sensitivity to mental health needs. Moreover, a number of teachers admitted their unwillingness to collaborate if such a team existed (Lytton et al., 2006). Similarly, Greek research found that teachers seldom interact with school psychologists on a daily basis (Dimakos, 2006). One should point out that little research has been conducted on teachers' attitudes towards PPS, especially in a higher education context.

Conclusion

In short, this section presented a review of the different psycho-pedagogical coping strategies aimed at reducing foreign language learners' anxiety. At first, it focused on strategies centered on teacher and student efforts, then on strategies and services provided by a professionally trained team namely, psycho-pedagogical support (PPS). Additionally, this section provided a detailed description of PPS' impact on foreign language learners. In the end, it highlighted students and teachers' attitudes towards PPS.

Chapter Two: Fieldwork

Introduction

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2.4. Interview for Teachers

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Chapter Two: Fieldwork

Introduction

The present chapter deals with the practical part of the study. This chapter aims at testing whether the previously mentioned hypothesis is to be maintained or rejected; it is devoted to analyze and discuss the data gathered through two different tools; namely, a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers. Both tools were used to investigate the issue of anxiety faced by EFL learners at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University and to discover teachers' and students' attitudes towards having PPS to overcome this issue.

2.1. Data collection procedures

The first tool used in collecting data for this study is a questionnaire for students. This tool was administered online to students from all levels (First-year, Second-year and Third-year licence; Master 1 and 2) in order to investigate EFL learners' anxiety and to provide them with an opportunity to voice their attitudes towards having PPS at this university as a solution for their anxiety and stress.

Moreover, an interview was carried out with nine teachers, aiming at exploring teachers' thoughts and perceptions on PPS's integration to help students cope with their psychological issues. Teachers interviewed teach different subjects for different levels at the department of English language. Furthermore, the average length of each teacher's interview was approximately 20 minutes.

2.2.   Population and sampling

In the current study, the questionnaire was designed using Google forms and was administered to EFL learners at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. Out of a population of (1356) learners, a number of (241) randomly selected participant from all levels submitted their answers. On the other hand, the second tool used in this study, i.e. the interview was carried out with 9 teachers.

The selection of this particular population was based on the consideration that students from all levels are likely to experience anxiety throughout their academic journey. Therefore, the integration of PPS will be beneficial to learners at this university from all from all levels.

2.3.   Questionnaire for Students
2.3.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire administered to students was split up into three sections. The first section highlighted students' profile; The second one was designed to scrutinize the issue of anxiety faced by EFL learners at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University; while the third one was used to discover students attitudes towards the integration of PPS as a solution to this issue and their openness to seeking psychological help.

This questionnaire consisted of 14 questions which were of different types: open-ended, close-ended, and Likert scale questions.

Section one consists of two questions (Q1-Q2) that aim at collecting personal information about participants' gender and academic level. These questions were added to detect whether gender and students' level are potential factors affecting learners' decisions

on seeking PPS. While, Section two is based on a total of 6 questions which deal with the issue of anxiety and its effect on students' performance: **(Q3)** is about whether students feel anxious when performing the different academic activities; **(Q4, Q5)** highlight the effect of anxiety on students' performance (positive/negative); **(Q6)** focuses on the academic activities that trigger students' anxiety. On the other hand, section three is comprised of 7 questions: **(Q7, Q8, Q9)** are concerned with strategies used by teachers and their efficiency in reducing students' anxiety; **(Q10, Q11)** cover students' attitudes towards the usefulness of PPS in reducing anxiety; **(Q12, Q13)** deal with students' openness to seeking PPS's services, where students are asked to justify their answers; lastly, **(Q14)** is added to allow students to provide any comments related to the topic.

2.3.2. Analysis of Questionnaire for Students

- **Section One: Students' Profile**

Q1: I am a.

a) Male

b) Female

Table 1

Students' Gender

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	29	12%
b	212	88%
Total	241	100%

This question aims to investigate whether gender difference would affect learners' choice in seeking PPS. According to the data in table1, the vast majority (88%) were females while only a small minority (12%) of male students participated in the survey.

Q2: My academic level is

a) First-year licence ☐

b) Second-year licence ☐

c) Third-year licence ☐

d) Master one ☐

e) Master two ☐

Table 2

Students' Academic Levels

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	41	17%
b	50	20.7%
c	50	20.7%
d	50	20.7%
e	50	20.7%
Total	**241**	**100%**

The results from the table above demonstrate that students from the following academic levels: Second-year licence, Third-year licence, Master one and Master two share the same percentage (20.7%). However, only a percentage of 17% of participants were First-year students.

- **Section Two: Students' Anxiety**

Q3: I feel anxious when I perform my academic activities (presentations, debates, tasks, exams...etc)

a) Strongly agree ☐

b) Agree ☐

c) Neutral ☐

d) Disagree ☐

e) Strongly disagree ☐

Table 3

Classroom Anxiety

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	55	22.8%
b	113	46.9%
c	48	19.9%
d	15	6.2%
e	10	4.1%
Total	**241**	**100%**

The data in the table shows that a significant percentage (46.9%) of students agreed that performing the different academic activities triggers their anxiety, followed by a small percentage (22.8%) of students who strongly agreed. Moreover, almost (20%) of the participants remained neutral regarding the statement. Whereas, only (6.2%) of students disagreed and (4.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Q4: Anxiety affects my performance in different academic activities negatively

a) Strongly agree ☐

b) Agree ☐

c) Neutral ☐

d) Disagree ☐

e) Strongly disagree ☐

Table 4

The Negative Effect of Anxiety on Students' Performance

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	68	28.2%
b	110	45.6%
c	39	16.2%
d	20	8.3%
e	4	1.7%
Total	**241**	**100%**

The findings portray that nearly half of the participants (45.6%) answered with 'agree' and (28.2%) of them with 'strongly agree'. Furthermore, approximately 16% of the participants stayed neutral. On the other hand, a minority of participants (8.3%) responded with the fourth option 'disagree'. While less than 2% strongly disagreed that anxiety has a negative impact on their performance.

Q5: Anxiety affects my performance in different academic activities positively

a) Strongly agree ☐

b) Agree ☐

c) Neutral ☐

d) Disagree ☐

e) Strongly disagre ☐

Table 5

The Positive Effect of Anxiety of Student' Performance

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	12	5%
b	25	10.4%
c	56	23.2%

	108	44.8%
d	108	44.8%
e	40	16.6%
Total	**241**	**100%**

Looking at the results in the table above, a fair percentage of students (44.8%) claimed that anxiety does not have a positive effect on their performance. However, 23.2% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement as they stayed neutral. While, (16.6%) of students strongly disagreed with it. In addition to that, around (10.4%) of the whole sample agreed that anxiety affects their academic performance positively. Whereas, the 12 last participants strongly agreed.

Q6: Which of these academic activities trigger your anxiety?

a) Exams ☐

b) Oral presentations ☐

c) Classroom participation ☐

d) Open discussions and debates ☐

e) Tasks and homework ☐

Table 6

Triggers of Anxiety

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	45	19.23%
b	54	23.08%
c	3	1.28%
d	7	2.99%
e	1	0.43%
a+b	34	14.53%
a+c	2	0.85%
a+d	6	2.56%

a+e	**3**	**1.28%**
b+c	**11**	**4.70%**
b+d	**29**	**12.39%**
b+e	**2**	**0.85%**
c+d	**1**	**0.43%**
b+c+e	**1**	**0.43%**
b+c+d	**20**	**8.55%**
a+b+d	**9**	**3.85%**
a+b+c	**3**	**1.28%**
a+b+d+e	**1**	**0.43%**
a+b+c+d	**1**	**0.43%**
a+b+c+d+e	**1**	**0.43%**

The findings in the table regarding the academic activities which trigger learners' anxiety show that a significant percentage of participants (68.9%) consider oral presentations as an anxiety trigger [b=166 (b: 54)+(a+b: 34)+(b+c: 11)+(b+d: 29)+(b+e: 2)+(b+c+e: 1)+(b+c+d: 20)+(a+b+d: 9)+(a+b+c: 3)+(a+b+d+e: 1)+(a+b+c+d: 1)+(a+b+c+d+e: 1); 68%]. While, (43.6%) of the participants chose exams instead [a=105 (a: 45)+(a+b: 34)+(a+c: 2)+(a+d: 6)+(a+c: 3)+(a+b+d: 9)+(a+b+c: 3)+(a+b+d+e: 2)+(a+b+c+d: 1)+(a+b+c+d+e: 1); 43.6%]. Next, almost 1/3 of the sample (31.1%) [d=75 (d: 7)+(a+d: 6)+(b+d: 28)+(c+d: 1)+(b+c+d: 20)+(a+b+d: 9)+(a+b+d+e: 1)+(a+b+c+d: 1)+(a+b+c+d+e: 1); 31.1%] declared that open discussions and debates are the activities that trigger their anxiety. On the other hand, only (17.8%) of the participants asserted that classroom participation is the activity that causes anxiety and stress [c= 43 (c: 3)+(a+c: 2)+(b+c: 11)+(c+d: 1)+(b+c+e: 1)+(b+c+d: 20)+(a+b+c: 3)+(a+b+c+d: 1)+(a+b+c+d+e: 1); 17.8%]. The 9 remaining participants (3.7%) selected tasks and homework as their

anxiety-trigger [e=9 (e̲: 1)+(a+e̲: 3)+(b+e̲: 2)+(b+c+e̲: 1)+(a+b+d+e̲: 1)+(a+b+c+d+e̲: 1); 3.7%].

Others + Justification:

A minority of participants emphasised that activities that mainly focus on speaking skills are the most triggering to their anxiety; Moreover, they added that their anxiety is solely triggered by specific modules namely linguistics and civilization. Additionally, one participant stated that not having an answer to the teachers' questions is what triggers her anxiety.

- **Section Three: Anxiety-reduction Strategies**

Q7: Do your teachers use different strategies to reduce your anxiety?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Table 7

Teachers' Use of Anxiety-Reduction Strategies

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	85	35.3%
b	156	64.7%
Total	**241**	**100%**

According to the data in table 7, more than half of the sample (64.7%) claimed that their teachers did not use any kind of strategies to reduce anxiety faced by their students. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of students (35.3%) asserted that some of their teachers adopted different strategies to overcome this issue.

Q8:From the following list, what are the strategies used by your teachers to overcome your anxiety?

a) Provide a stress-free and friendly environment ☐

b) Avoid negative feedback and hurtful comments ☐

c) Consider learners' insecurities and fears and help them to overcome those ☐
insecurities

d) Offer words of encouragement and praise to boost learners' self-esteem ☐

e) Allow learners to express their learning style preferences and take these preferences
into consideration ☐

f) None ☐

Table 8

Teachers' Anxiety-Reduction Strategies

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	21	8.79%
b	14	5.86%
c	--	--
d	11	4.6%
e	3	1.26%
f	82	34.3%
e+d	3	1.26%
e+c	2	0.84%
c+d	1	0.42%
b+e	5	2.09%
b+d	19	7.95%
b+c	4	1.67%
a+e	8	3.35%
a+d	4	1.67%
a+c	4	1.67%
a+b	13	5.44%

b+d+e	**4**	**1.67%**
b+c+e	**1**	**0.42%**
b+c+d	**4**	**1.67%**
a+d+e	**3**	**1.26%**
a+c+e	**2**	**0.84%**
a+c+d	**4**	**1.67%**
a+b+e	**7**	**2.93%**
a+b+d	**6**	**2.51%**
b+c+d+e	**1**	**0.42%**
a+c+d+e	**4**	**1.67%**
a+b+d+e	**4**	**1.67%**
a+b+c+d	**2**	**0.84%**
a+b+c+d+e	**3**	**1.26%**

The findings illustrate the two mostly used anxiety-reduction strategies by teachers which are: providing a stress-free environment (35.7%) [b=87 (b:14)+(b+e: 5)+(b+d: 19)+(b+c: 4)+(a+b: 13)+(b+c+e: 1)+(b+c+d: 4)+(a+b+e: 7)+(a+b+d: 6)+(b+c+d+e: 1)+(a+b+d+e: 4)+(a+b+c+d: 2)+(a+b+c+d+e: 3); 36.1%] and avoiding negative feedback [a=86 (a: 21)+(a+e: 8)+(a+d: 4)+(a+c: 4)+(a+b: 13)+(a+d+e: 3)+(a+c+e: 2)+(a+c+d: 4)+(a+b+e: 7)+(a+b+d: 6)+(a+c+d+e: 4)+(a+b+d+e: 4)+(a+b+c+d: 2)+(a+b+c+d+e: 3); 35.7%]. However, 82 participants around (34%) picked option 'none' as their teachers did not any particular strategies to reduce their anxiety [f=82; 34%]. Besides, a slightly smaller percentage of participants (30.3%) stated that teachers often encourage and praise them in order to reduce their anxiety and boost their self-esteem [d=73 (d:10)+(e+d: 3)+(c+d: 1)+(b+d: 19)+(a+d: 4)+(b+d+e: 4)+(b+c+d: 4)+(a+d+e: 3)+(a+c+d: 4)+(a+b+d: 6)+(b+c+d+e: 1)+(a+c+d+e: 4)+(a+b+d+e: 4)+(a+b+c+d: 2)+(a+b+c+d+e: 3); 30.3%]. Followed by (20.7%) of participants declared that for the sake of helping learners decrease their anxiety, teachers allow them to express their learning preferences and take these

preferences into consideration [e=50 (e̲: 3)+(e̲+d: 3)+(e̲+c: 2)+(b+e̲: 5)+(a+e̲: 8)+(b+d+e̲: 4)+(b+c+e̲: 1)+(a+d+e̲: 3)+(a+c+e̲: 2)+(a+b+e̲: 7)+(b+c+d+e̲: 1)+(a+c+d+e̲: 4)+(a+b+d+e̲: 4)+(a+b+c+d+e̲: 3); 20.7%]. Whereas, less than (15%) said that their teachers try to discover learners' insecurities and fears and accordingly assist them to cope with these fears and insecurities [c=32 (c̲: 0)+(e+c̲: 2)+(c̲+d: 1)+(b+c̲: 4)+(a+c̲: 4)+(b+c̲+e: 1)+(b+c̲+d: 4)+(a+c̲+e: 2)+(a+c̲+d: 4)+(b+c̲+d+e: 1)+(a+c̲+d+e: 4)+(a+b+c̲+d: 2)+(a+b+c̲+d+e: 3); 13.3%].

Others? Please specify

The remaining (3.2%) of the participants pointed out that their teachers use some other anxiety-reduction strategies namely, using games and jokes to lighten up the atmosphere, allowing students to take short breaks when feeling anxious during the presentation, emphasising the importance of mistakes in the learning process and lastly incorporating group work.

Q9: Teachers' strategies are sufficient to reduce my anxiety.

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Table 9

Students' Views on the Sufficiency of Teachers' Strategies

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	70	29%
b	171	71%
Total	241	100%

The objective behind this question is to find out if teachers' strategies are sufficient to reduce learners' anxiety or there is a need for additional support to overcome this

problem. The findings state that the majority of participants (71%) chose the option 'No' regarding the sufficiency of teachers' strategies used to reduce anxiety. Whilst, (29%) of participants answered with 'Yes'.

Q10: If strategies used by teachers are not sufficient, do you think PPS would be helpful to reduce your anxiety?

   a) Yes ☐

   b) No ☐

Table 10

Students' Views on the Efficiency of PPS

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	197	81.7%
b	44	18.3%
Total	241	100%

This question aims to know students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of PPS in reducing anxiety and stress. The table demonstrates that more than (80%) of participants believed that PPS would be helpful to reduce anxiety.On the other, the remaining (18.3%) believe the opposite.

Please, explain

Participants who had a positive attitude towards the efficiency of PPS in reducing anxiety justified their answers saying that PPS would be more reliable than teachers as this team is professionally trained to deal with learners' mental issues and support their psychological well-being. Some others supported their choice arguing that most of their teachers do not use any anxiety-reduction strategies.

On the other hand, participants who claimed the opposite based their answers on three main arguments: teachers are more knowledgeable about students' struggles in the classroom; anxiety is a personal issue that one can overcome by him/herself and lastly one student argued that anxiety is beneficial; thus, no support is needed to overcome it.

Q11: PPS would be helpful to reduce my anxiety in the following academic activities (you can choose more than one answer)

a) Exams ☐

b) Oral presentations ☐

c) Classroom participation ☐

d) Open discussions and debates ☐

e) Tasks and homework ☐

Table 11

PPS' Effectiveness in Reducing Anxiety Stemming from Different Academic Activities

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	30	12.59%
b	33	13.79%
c	3	1.24%
d	5	2.1%
e	3	1.24%
d+e	1	0.41%
c+e	1	0.41%
c+d	3	1.24%
b+d	31	12.96%
b+c	9	3.73%
a+e	4	1.76%
a+d	6	2.59%
a+c	4	1.76%
a+b	28	11.6%

b+d+e	1	0.4%
b+c+d	38	15.8%
a+c+d	2	0.8%
a+b+e	5	2.1%
a+b+d	17	7.1%
a+b+c	4	1.7%
a+b+d+e	2	0.8%
a+b+c+e	1	0.4%
a+b+c+d	3	1.2%
a+b+c+d+e	7	2.9%
Total	241	100%

Considering the results above, most participants (74.3%) [b=179 (b: 33)+(b+d: 31)+(b+c: 9)+(a+b: 28)+(b+d+e: 1)+(b+c+d: 38)+(a+b+e: 5)+(a+b+d: 17)+(a+b+c: 4)+(a+b+d+e: 2)+(a+b+c+e: 1)+(a+b+c+d: 3)+(a+b+c+d+e: 7); 74.3%] chose oral presentations as the academic activities in which PPS would be helpful to reduce anxiety. Followed by (48.1%) of participants who believed that PPS would rather be helpful to reduce anxiety in the following activities: open discussions and debates [d= 116 (d: 5)+(d+e: 1)+(c+d: 3)+(b+d: 31)+(a+d: 6)+(b+d+e: 1)+(b+c+d: 38)+(a+c+d: 2)+(a+b+d: 17)+(a+b+d+e: 2)+(a+b+c+d: 3)+(a+b+c+d+e: 7); 48.1%]; moreover, nearly half of the sample (46.9%) [a=113 (a: 113)+(a+e: 4)+(a+d: 6)+(a+c: 4)+(a+b: 28)+(a+c+d: 2)+(a+b+e: 5)+(a+b+d: 17)+(a+b+c: 4)+(a+ b+d+e: 2)+(a+b+c+e: 1)+(a+b+c+d: 3)+(a+b+c+d+e: 7); 46.9%] agreed that PPS would be useful to reduce anxiety faced by learners during exams. While only a minority (10.4%) [e=25 (e: 3)+(d+e: 1)+(c+e: 1)+(a+e: 4)+(b+d+e: 1)+(a+b+e: 5)+(a+b+d+e: 2)+(a+b+c+e: 1)+(a+b+c+d+e: 7); 10.4%] stated that PPS would help overcome anxiety emerging form tasks.

Q12: If PPS existed at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, I would seek its help

When facing anxiety.

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

Table 12

Students' Openness to Seeking PPS

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	196	81.3%
b	45	18.7%
Total	241	100%

According to the findings in the table, most answers were centred on the option that participants would seek PPS when facing anxiety. Yet, near 1/5 of the sample (18.7%) opposed the idea of seeking help from such support.

Q13: When I face anxiety, I would rather seek PPS (please, answer if your answer for the pervious question was yes)

a) At the university ☐

b) At a university-related centre outside the university that provides these counselling services ☐

Table 13

Students' Preferences on PPS's Location

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a	153	63.5%
b	88	36.5%

	Total	241	100%

Looking at the table above, it could be seen that more than half of the participants (63.5%) stated that they favour having PPS at the university. Whereas, the remaining (36.5%) declared that they would rather seek its support outside the university.

Justification

Students who supported the idea of having PPS at the university defended their answers by stating that the integration of such support within the university would make it easier to reach. Whereas, students who favoured having PPS outside the university claimed that they prefer seeking psychological help away from their peers and friends so that they will not be judged, ridiculed at or suffer the stigma of being mentally ill.

Q14: Please add any other comment you may have related to this topic

Few students added a couple of useful comments related to this topic:

- Teachers should expand their knowledge concerning students' mental well-being and consider making efforts to create a stress-free learning environment.
- PPS should preserve students' privacy (students' identities should remain anonymous).

2.3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Questionnaire Analysis

The data gathered from the analysis of the questionnaire for students provided some useful answers that elaborated this paper's research questions. To begin with, the collected data highlighted that the great majority of students are convinced that anxiety has a negative impact on their academic performance whereas few of them asserted the opposite

(Table 4 and 5). Additionally, it showed that oral presentation, exams, open discussions and debates are the most prominent sources of anxiety for learners at this department, as they reported to feel high levels of anxiety and stress when performing these activities (See table 6).

Furthermore, a significant number of learners demonstrated positive attitudes towards the effectiveness of PPS as a potential solution to reduce anxiety (See table 10). Moreover, as was shown in table 11, learners believe that PPS would be especially beneficial in reducing anxiety emerging from speaking activities such as oral presentations, open discussions and debates. In addition to that, almost all students seemed open to seeking PPS services when they face anxiety and stress; however, some of the students who are open to seeking this support prefer to seek it outside of the university (See table 12 and 13)

2.4.   Interview for Teachers

2.4.1. Description of the Interview

The designed interview was carried out with nine teachers who teach different subjects at the English language department at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. The interview addressed to teachers was a semi-structured interview consisting of eight main questions; most of them contained sub-questions. The interview questions were designed to obtain data concerning the issue of anxiety faced by EFL learners at this university, strategies to overcome this issue and teachers and students' attitudes regarding having PPS as a potential solution to anxiety. Data gathered through this interview is going to complement the findings of the questionnaire administered to students.

2.4.2. Analysis of the Interview

Teacher 1:

This teacher declared that the majority of students faced the issue of anxiety (approximately 80%) and divided them into three categories: highly anxious students, students with average anxiety and students with little anxiety: '...you can have three categories: highly anxious, averagely anxious and less anxious students, but the majority are highly anxious' (Teacher 1). He also added that the majority of students are most anxious when dealing with activities that require the use of speaking skills. Moreover, According to him younger students (First and Second-year students) are more prone to suffer from anxiety than the older ones (Master students), for the reason that first and second-year students undergo more pressure as they have to deal with puberty, self-consciousness...etc: 'younger students are more anxious because they want to impose themselves, they face puberty and they are more self-conscious about themselves [...] the older people get, the less they become anxious' (Teacher 1).

To deal with the issue of anxiety, the interviewee claimed that he uses a number of strategies namely, using humour and jokes, avoiding harsh criticism, addressing students using their first names to create a friendly atmosphere: '... asking funny questions, the use of a lot of laughter, a lot of humour and avoiding criticism; I think it relaxes students' (Teacher 1). However, he clarified that teacher-centered techniques are not enough to overcome this issue.

Talking about the efficacy of PPS, this teacher agrees that PPS would be beneficial especially if it was integrated since early levels of learners' academic journey, according to him it can also be beneficial for university students who are residents at the university dormitory mainly because they lack family supportand have toendure poor living

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conditions at the dormitory. However, the teacher pointed that he personally thinks that students will not seek PPS even if it did exist within the personnel, and that is because of Algerians' perspective of mental health and seeking psychological help.

On the other hand and according to the interview data, this teacher made it very clear that if such support existed at this university, it should provide its services in cooperation with teachers. That is to say, the teacher should be constantly informed about students' mental health so that he/she could treat them accordingly.

Furthermore, this teacher demonstrated a couple of reasons why this support is not integrated at this university yet which can be summarized as follows: our society views any aspect that is related to mental health as a taboo that should not be discussed openly 'this topic is kind of a taboo [...] mental health is like that part of one's personality that is suppressed by our society' (Teacher 1); additionally, PPS is considered as a waste of money because it is viewed as an additional and unimportant service.

Lastly, the teacher commented concerning the integration of such a team within the university; he reported that PPS is an important service that should be integrated starting from primary, middle and secondary school to university.

Teacher 2:

Talking about the rate of anxiety among the EFL learners at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, this teacher averred that anxiety is very remarkable among students he taught over ten years of experience of teaching at this department. He briefly listed some of the main factors he believes are the source of anxiety namely; students' lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes and fear of being mocked/negatively viewed by their peers and teachers. He also claimed that First-year students are the ones who are most likely to face anxiety as they are not familiar with the new academic phase.

The teacher reported that he tried to implement some strategies to overcome this issue, even though he confirmed that he does not have sufficient knowledge when it comes to providing psychological support to students, mainly because he did not receive any proper training that allows him to deal with learners mental health: 'frankly speaking, I'm not that aware of psychological support [...] we did not have really a good training in teaching and psychopathological stuff' (Teacher 2). However, despite his limited knowledge regarding psychological support he asserted that he used a few strategies to help his students cope with stress and anxiety, such as providing a stress-free learning environment by allowing students to express themselves freely, avoiding harsh comments and any type of verbal harassment, reassuring learners that making mistakes is normal and accepted and similarly to what teacher one mentioned previously, this teacher considered calling students by their first name as another strategy to create a more friendly environment because according to him using learners' first names: 'eliminates that sort of teacher-student border' (Teacher 2).

According to the data gathered from the interview, this teacher elucidated that even though teachers use different strategies to help students overcome their anxiety, it is clear that it is not sufficient. Therefore, he had a positive attitude towards having PPS to help in reducing anxiety and similarly to what teacher 1 claimed, this teacher believes that this support will be especially advantageous for students who reside at the university's dormitory and for young students such as first and second-year licence students. He also clearly stated that PPS should provide its services in cooperation with teachers. That is, it should share some information about the students' psychological state to keep the teacher well-informed regarding students' mental health.

Discussing students' openness towards seeking PPS, this teacher seemed quite uncertain about learners' openness to seeking help from such support: 'I'm not sure to

what extent students will positively respond to such initiative' (Teacher 2). He also added that the main reason for that would be the social misconception Algerians have towards seeking psychological help to cope with mental issues. For his part, this support is not integrated yet because university students are perceived as responsible adults who can deal with their mental problems by themselves without the interference of any external support.

At last, the teacher suggested labelling the service (PPS) differently, guidance service for instance to make students more comfortable to seek its help or support.

Teacher 3:

This teacher revealed that a significant percentage (70%/80%) of EFL learners feel anxious when performing their academic activities. He mentioned two factors contributing to raising students' anxiety: students' introversion and extroversion; that is to say, unlike extroverts, introverted students tend to be reticent, passive, and in constant need of encouragement; additionally, students' awareness of their limited linguistic capacities. Concerning the academic levels that face anxiety the most, he chose first-year license students as the most susceptible to anxiety.

Similar to the statement of teacher 2 who bases his strategies on reassuring learners that making mistakes is acceptable, this teacher reported that he uses: '… strategies that have mostly to do with creating an environment in which it is unavoidable to make errors' (Teacher 3), in addition to encouragement and verbal support.

According to the interview data, this teacher agrees with teacher 1 and teacher 2 that strategies used by teachers are not enough to reduce learners' anxiety, thus, he believes that the integration of PPS would help solve this issue. Yet, he made it clear that the concept of PPS may be misunderstood by a category of people as it is uncommon in the Algerian culture. For that reason, he suggested that this support should be provided to students in groups rather than in individual sessions.

Talking about the integration of PPS as a separate service or a cooperative one with teachers, he declared that PPS should work in cooperation with teachers; however, a certain amount of learners' privacy should be preserved.

Moreover, he noted that some learners may seek PPS while others would probably prefer to 'bottle it up' (teacher 3) or counsel their teachers instead. Accordingly, he highlighted two factors that may potentially prevent learners from seeking help namely, the confidentiality issue and the negative perception of the Algerian society towards mental issues and psychological help-seeking.

Besides, similarly to what teacher 1 claimed, this teacher pointed out that PPS is still not integrated at the university due to financial reasons as education is already free in Algeria. More than that, the nature of the Algerian society as mentioned above is the biggest drawback. Yet, he trusts that it is high time for the introduction of such support because nowadays people have different mindsets.

Teacher 4:

Talking about the rate of anxiety among EFL learners, this teacher claimed that it would be very unfair to generalize since there are five different levels of EFL learners (License Year 1, 2, 3; Master Year 1, 2). Thus she picked first-year license students as the ones who are most likely to suffer from anxiety.

As revealed by the interview data, she confirmed that she indeed uses some strategies to reduce students' anxiety, mainly laughter, facial expressions, and body language to smoothen the atmosphere. Additionally, she relies on peer assessment by allowing her students to assess and evaluate their classmates' presentations; she believes that the over-use of teacher feedback tends to awaken their anxiety. The teacher argued that teacher-centered techniques are definitely not sufficient to decrease learners' anxiety. To support her argument, she went on explaining: 'because there are some students with very special

characters, namely introverted students. These students are shy to even utter a word in front of the teacher' (Teacher 4).

According to the interview data, she stated that she is doubtful about the efficiency of PPS in reducing learners' anxiety. She argued that most of them are adults which may potentially lead them to be tolerant to such support considering that they may have their own ways to cope with moments of distress. Still, she mentioned one situation in which PPS may possibly help EFL learners: 'this team may help them be more confident when it comes to classroom presentations and performances' (Teacher 4). Furthermore, the teacher made it clear that PPS's services are better to be provided cooperatively with teachers.

She declared that some students might seek PPS' assistance while others might not. She believes that it all depends on the nature of students, that is to say, extroverted students are more likely to seek PPS while introverted ones might possibly be reluctant to do so. She added that some students tend to isolate themselves even from their family members.

As far as the factors that may encourage or discourage learners from seeking PPS are concerned, the teacher mentioned that both the social context in which students have grown up and the social values imposed by society may impede them from seeking PPS. She provided the famous example of parents telling their children: 'do not tell your secrets to strangers' (Teacher 4).

Finally, she listed few reasons for which PPS is not yet integrated within the university personnel as she supposed that students are probably considered by the society as recipients of the language only and not as individuals who need care and support. Moreover, she made it clear that even the relationship between students and teachers is supposed to be that rigid relationship that consists of teaching and giving marks only: 'the rest is not at all appreciated, to be frank' (Teacher 4). In the end, she concluded that the Algerian society does not value individuals in general and not just the students.

Teacher 5:

This teacher asserted that the rate of anxiety and stress among the EFL learners at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University is considerably high as the majority of students especially first-year students at this department suffer from this issue: 'I believe that the level of anxiety at this department is pretty high' (Teacher 5).

She claimed that she always tries to build a friendly bond with her students to help them get rid of their anxiety and feel more comfortable when performing their academic activities. On the other hand, she made it very clear that the different strategies used by teachers to help learners cope with anxiety are not enough, for the simple reason that even though teachers use different strategies to solve this issue, a great number of students still suffer from it. Hence, the support of PPS is needed to complement teachers' efforts to support students' mental health. Furthermore, she declared that PPS should work together with teachers as a unit to help students cope with this issue.

The teacher was positive that if such a team existed, students would seek its support when needed, because according to her: 'students are becoming more open about their mental problems and seeking psychological help' (Teacher 5).

Finally, as it was already mentioned by teacher 1 and teacher 2, this teacher argued that the main reason this support is not integrated at this university yet is because of the Algerian mindset that is based on the thought that mental issues and psychological help-seeking are a sensitive topic that should not be discussed.

Teacher 6:

This teacher supported all the previous teachers' answers that the rate of anxiety faced by learners at the English department is fairly high as it is noticeable that the

majority of students undergo anxiety and stress. She also claimed that final levels namely, Master students are the ones who are more likely to feel anxious because of graduation and future career preparations.

Moreover, she made it very clear that she did not use any specific strategies to help students overcome their anxiety and stress other than trying to keep the learning environment friendly. In addition to that, she acknowledged that the strategies she uses cannot be considered as sufficient assistance for learners to cope with the anxiety they face during their academic journey. Furthermore, because she believes that these strategies are not enough to reduce learners' anxiety, she claimed that she is in favour of having PPS as a support body at this department.

According to the interview data, this teacher insisted that PPS should always provide its support in collaboration with teachers because students are more comfortable to share their struggles with someone they are familiar with: 'I think it would be better to have someone students are already familiar with to talk about their personal and psychological state rather than a stranger who they just met' (Teacher 5). She also added that if this support was not properly integrated, she assumes that learners will not seek its help when needed: 'if we do not do it the right way, most students will not seek it' (Teacher 6).

Speaking of factors that may hamper learners from seeking PPS if it was integrated at this university, this teacher proposed some of these factors namely, learners' unawareness of the importance of this support, their fear of opening up about their struggles and personal matters and one more factor that was also mentioned by teacher 2 as well: the social misconception towards PPS.

The interview's data revealed that this teacher is convinced that PPS is not integrated yet because she believes that supporting students mental well being is considered one of the teachers duties towards their students therefore another support team is not needed.

Teacher 7:

This teacher declared that she only had the chance to teach third-year license students and master students, thus she believes that she is not in a position to rate the level of anxiety among EFL learners. Accordingly, she noted that the level of anxiety among third-year students is particularly high yet, the reason behind it is rather the subject matter (linguistics) than the training itself. On the other hand, she did not notice any sign of anxiety among master students.

As revealed by the interview data, she clarified that the only strategy she uses to make students feel at ease is the regular use of questions such as: 'is it clear enough?' and 'understood?' which she claims to be very effective: 'these really make the students feel very comfortable and yes, I received very good feed-back like students telling me that I am going too fast and I was very flexible with that' (Teacher 7).

As stated in the interview, she believes that strategies that focus on teachers' efforts are probably not enough to solve the problem of students' anxiety. Although she herself never taught first and second-year students, she constantly heard that students at that period of their educational path are very anxious about the whole process including the teachers, the method of teaching, the subject matter, and self-discipline.

Talking about the effectiveness of PPS in reducing learners' anxiety if such a team is to be integrated at the university, this teacher trusts that it would have a positive impact on students given the fact that anxiety is the disease of the century. Additionally, she highlighted that instead of working independently, PPS need to work mutually with the

teacher to allow them to notice the different perspectives of the classroom and make the necessary changes.

She confessed that she is not sure whether students would seek PPS or not since she has never had a close relationship with them. Nevertheless, she assumed that through the years, awareness has been raised enough on the topic of mental health; hence, it is no longer a shame to talk about anxiety and other psychological problems. She explained: 'People are now standing out from the pack saying that they are bipolar […] I mean psychological diseases and illnesses are no longer a shame, so I think they are going to try it' (Teacher 7).

Concerning the factors that may motivate learners to seek PPS' services, the teacher mentioned social media and podcasts, as they allowed people to realize that mental illnesses are a normal issue that almost every person suffers from; Consequently, talking about them is no longer a shame. As for the factors that may prevent learners from seeking PPS' assistance, she suggested that the more serious the reason for students' anxiety is, the hardest it is for them to open up. She explained that some reasons for students' anxiety might be considered as taboo or cannot be approached by a stranger due to the fear of exposing personal information.

Lastly, she reported two reasons that may justify why PPS is not integrated within the university personnel namely, society's carelessness about the psychological well-being of the students as well as the belief that university students are old enough to handle their struggles on their own.

Teacher 8:

Similar to all the data gathered from the interviews held with the other teachers, this teacher confirmed that the rate of anxiety among EFL learners at this university is high, and according to her, it is continuously rising overtime. She claimed that students who

suffer more of this issue are those from what she referred to as 'transitional phases' namely, Third-year licence students and Master 2 students as they are moving up the academic levels and preparing for professional careers.

This teacher declared that she allows students to express themselves freely without any pressure or restrictions and always provides them with positive feedback and encouragement as strategies to reduce changing learners' anxiety. Nevertheless, she admitted that these strategies that mainly focus on teachers' efforts are insufficient to decrease students' anxiety and stress. Thereby, seemed very optimistic about having PPS to reduce learners' anxiety because she believes this team would in one way be more helpful to students than teachers who may intentionally or unintentionally overlook students' struggles, and in another, it would lessen the pressure put on the teacher who is expected to deal with such problems: 'this support will provide a healthy environment for students to cope with their anxiety and deal with what triggers it, unlike teachers who may neglect and belittle these anxiety triggers [...] it will also split the burden with the teacher' (Teacher 8).Additionally, this teacher stated that in case such a team was integrated at this university, learners are to be asked whether they are comfortable about PPS sharing their personal information with teachers: 'the most responsible thing to do is to report back to students on how much information should PPS share with their teachers' (Teacher 8).

Even though this teacher had a positive attitude towards having such support, she expressed her concern on learners' openness to seeking psychological support: 'honestly, I think that only few students would engage in such a thing, because discussing one's mental health is still a taboo' (Teacher 8). She furthermore suggested a few factors that she thinks would prevent learners from seeking this psycho-pedagogical support, according to her the main factor would be that the concept of mental health is considered taboo in the Algerian society. That is, Algerians would avoid and reject anything related to psychological issues

and mental health. Also, she believes that gender plays a role in affecting learners' openness towards seeking psychological help, i.e. females would be more open to seeking PPS because males tend to reject any help especially psychological ones considering it as a sign of weakness. Furthermore, she believes that the lack of awareness concerning the importance of PPS and seeking psychological help can also be considered as an aspect that might hinder learners from seeking this type of support.

According to the interview findings, this teacher assumes that PPS is not part of this university's personnel because it is viewed as an unnecessary body that none of the EFL learners would seek its services.

Teacher 9:

With regards to what the interview data disclosed, this teacher rated the level of anxiety among EFL learners as a medium. She also selected first and second-year license students as the levels who suffer from anxiety the most.

Talking about the strategies she uses to cope with students anxiety in the classroom, she revealed that she avoids forcing them to answer questions and interact in general. Instead, she works with the students who volunteer to talk and eventually hesitant students will feel more comfortable and may engage in participation. Moreover, she declared that teachers' strategies are not sufficient to reduce learners' anxiety owing to the fact that there are students who struggle from already existing disorders, for example, excessive shyness and lack of self-confidence which she believes cannot be solved through teachers' efforts. On the other hand, she claimed that PPS might be of great help to deal with such concerns.

This teacher suggested that PPS would provide better results in solving the issue of anxiety if the team proceeds to work collaboratively with teachers. She explained that teachers are supposed to share the difficulties they face in the classroom while the PPS team offers solutions and shares their psychological background with teachers.

If PPS was to be integrated at the university, she stated that not all the students would seek its support at the beginning due to its unfamiliarity. However, she asserted that over time and as the students who benefit from it share their experiences, more students would consider consulting its services.

Talking about the factors that may inhibit students from seeking PPS, the teacher mentioned the mentality of the Algerian people as the most prominent factor. She elaborated that students who seek PPS may be judged by others due to the negative perspective of the Algerian society on psychological disorders.

In the end, similar to the statement of teacher 6, she pointed out that university students are viewed as responsible adults with already developed personalities who are able to manage any obstacle they face. For this reason, society and education officials see no need in incorporating PPS within the university personnel.

2.4.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Interview Analysis

The analysis of the interview addressed to teachers allowed us to answer the previously mentioned research questions. The findings stemmed from the analysis demonstrated the negative impact of anxiety on learners, factors triggering this anxiety as well as teachers' positive attitude concerning the integration of PPS to reduce this anxiety.

To start with, Q1 and Q2 showed that most teachers believe that fear of negative evaluation, personality types (extraversion/introversion) and communication apprehension are the three main sources of anxiety in this department; furthermore, Q1 demonstrated teachers' deep concern regarding the high rate of anxiety among EFL learners, and that is because of the debilitating effect anxiety has on learners' academic performance and the inefficiency of teachers' strategies to overcome this issue.

Concerning the second research question, based on teachers answers to Q4 and Q5, it was very clear that teachers are in favour of the integration of PPS as a new solution to anxiety, as they all displayed a positive attitude towards the effectiveness of PPS particularly in Q4 and supported that answer by adding some last comments that indicated their dissatisfaction towards the lack of such support.

2.5.   Discussion of the Results

The findings obtained from the questionnaire and the interview, with respect to what was presented in the literature review, demonstrated the different sources that trigger learners' anxiety at the department of English and highlighted its effect on their performance. Moreover, it determined teachers and students' attitudes towards PPS to overcome the issue of anxiety EFL learners.

The attained results are in favour of the previously stated hypothesis holding the assumption that if teachers and learners perceive PPS as a neccesity to reduce anxiety and stress faced by EFL learners, they would have positive attitudes towards the integration of such a team within the academic staff. The collected data showcases the negative effect of anxiety on the vast majority of EFL learners' academic performance and highlights the major sources of this issue namely exams, oral presentations, classroom participation, open discussions and debates. Regarding students and teachers' responses, anxiety mostly holds a negative impact on students' performance which goes in line with MacIntyre and Gardner's (1989) study that revealed that the most familiar type of anxiety is the debilitating one which is detrimental to learners' performance. On the other hand, in few cases, anxiety can be beneficial as it motivates learners to work hard which is highly relevant to Scovel's (1978) findings that confirmed anxiety's facilitating effect on learning, by alerting students and motivating them to work harder. Furthermore, based on the

collected data which is consistent with (Horwitz et al., 1986; Ellis, 1999), it was revealed that the main sources of students' anxiety are speaking activities, exams and classroom participation. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), speaking activities trigger a type of anxiety referred to as communication apprehension. Additionally, exams and classroom participation were selected in second place as factors that trigger anxiety most; these two activities awaken certain situation-specific anxieties (Ellis,1999) namely, test anxiety for the former and fear of negative evaluation for the latter (Horwitz et al., 1986). Moreover, teachers added that personality types may also play role in triggering learners' anxiety.
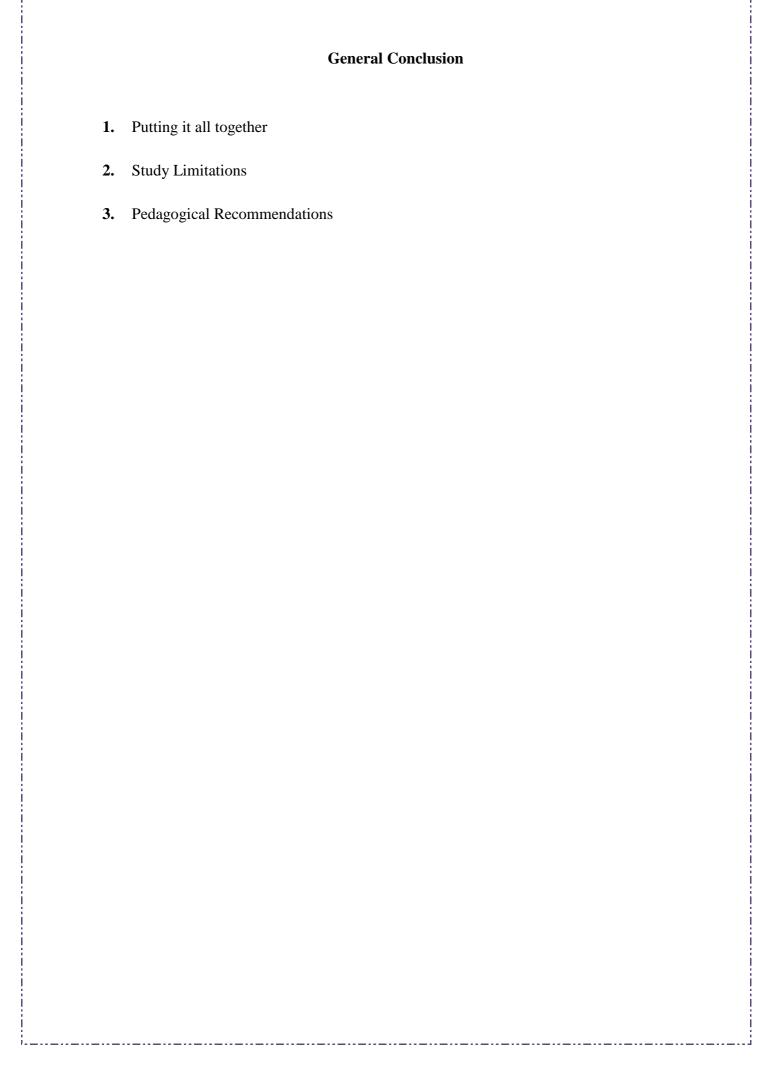
With respect to the sources mentioned above, teachers declared that they often try to create a friendly learning environment by using humour, addressing learners by their first names and avoiding harsh criticism as a strategy to help students cope with their anxiety. However, both teachers and the majority of students believe that these strategies are not totally effective in reducing anxiety. The latter goes hand in hand with the findings obtained by Tsymbal (2017) who argued that in spite of teachers' efforts in reducing anxiety using different approaches and techniques, this issue is still persistent among EFL learners.

On the other hand, the data obtained from the questionnaire and the interview portrayed teachers and students' approval of PPS's effectiveness in reducing EFL learners' anxiety. The results clearly showed that both teachers and a large part of students especially females agreed that PPS would be particularly beneficial to reduce students' anxiety stemming from speaking activities and exams. That is to say, they both hold a positive attitude towards PPS which is relevant to what was demonstrated in the literature: Steven and Ada (2019) reported that teachers have a positive attitude towards psychological support and recognize its importance; similarly Ma and Wang (1997; cited in Michael et al., 2007) claimed that students acknowledged the efficacy and importance of

psychological counselling. Nevertheless, unlike what was mentioned in the literature that students were hesitant and unwilling to seek PPS even though they acknowledge its effectiveness (Ma & Wang, 1997; cited in Michael et al., 2007), most students from the current study seem to be open to psychological help-seeking if such support is to be provided.

Conclusion

The chapter in hand which covers this study's fieldwork examined the results obtained from two research instruments, a questionnaire and an interview. The results maintained the study's hypothesis namely, teachers and students' positive attitudes towards the integration of PPS to reduce anxiety and stress and answered the two research questions. In that regard, the findings stressed the negative impact of anxiety on learners' academic performance and noted the main sources of learners' anxiety.

General Conclusion

1. Putting it all together

2. Study Limitations

3. Pedagogical Recommendations

General Conclusion

1. Putting it all together

The current study aimed at enriching the understanding about how the inclusion of a psycho-pedagogical team within university staff as a solution to anxiety and stress is perceived by teachers and students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University and investigating students' openness to seeking help from such a team. This study was divided into two parts: a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part of this study consisted of two sections.

To begin with, the first section shed light on the problem of anxiety and its types namely, trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. Furthermore, it highlighted the most prominent type of anxiety present at any FL classroom, FLA which is considered as a manifestation of situation-specific anxiety. It also discussed the main sources of FLA: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. At last, the impact of FLA on learners' performance was stressed.

On the other hand, the second section was devoted to investigate the different strategies used by teachers and learners to overcome anxiety. Moreover, it called attention to PPS as a new potential solution to cope with EFL learners' anxiety, for the reason that, this support is known to assist students in dealing with different academic requirements and coping with personal and interpersonal distress. Additionally, this section underlined the effectiveness of PPS in reducing learners' anxiety and enhancing their academic performance. Finally, it portrayed the different attitudes of students and teachers towards this support.

Concerning the practical part which was demonstrated in the second chapter, all of the data collection measures, procedures, population and sampling were tackled to investigate the problem of the study using an interview for teachers and a questionnaire for students to explore teachers and students, attitudes towards PPS. The results gathered through these research instruments were analyzed, discussed and interpreted thoroughly. To sum up, the obtained data revealed that both teachers and students held positive attitudes towards the effectiveness of PPS in reducing anxiety and confirmed learners' openness to seek PPS's help.

2. Study Limitations

Like any other research paper, a few obstacles and limitations faced the current study which can be illustrated as follows:

- ➢ One major limitation that this research faced was the lack of available resources related to the topic under study, mainly due to the lack of previous research related to this study.
- ➢ Due to the current situation (Covid-19), this study's fieldwork and data collection was hindered: It was challenging to administer the questionnaire to students from all academic levels and to find classrooms to interview teachers.
- ➢ The issue of generalisation: the findings of this study cannot be generalized regarding the limited number of sample representatives.

3. Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following pedagogical recommendations are suggested:

➢ Teachers should be sensitised towards the importance of their students' mental well-being and provided with proper training to be able to manage an effective friendly and low anxiety classroom.

➢ Raising learners' awareness about the importance of PPS and psychological help-seeking to overcome the social misconception around it.

➢ Education ministry should seriously consider the integration of PPS within universities considering its effectiveness in reducing mental issues and enhancing the academic performance of students.

➢ Providing extra services and special care for learners who reside at the university dormitory

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire for Students

Dear students,

We are conducting a research on students' attitudes towards having Psycho-Pedagogical Support (PPS)* at the university to reduce anxiety and stress they face. We would love to hear about your opinion on having such support and whether you are open to seek its help if PPS existed. This survey will help us contribute in making a more comfortable learning environment. The survey should only take 5 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous.

We really appreciate your input.

Psycho-Pedagogical Support (PPS)*: a team of psychologists and psycho-pedagogists that will provide learners with counselling services, to support the mental well-being of students and help them cope with anxiety, stress and other issues that they may face performing their academic activities.

- **Section One: Students' Profile**

1. I am a:

    - Male ☐

    - Female ☐

2. My academic level is:

    - First-year licence ☐

- Second-year licence ☐

- Third-year licence ☐

- Master one ☐

- Master two ☐

- **Section Two: Students' Anxiety**

3. I feel anxious when I perform my academic activities (presentations, debates, tasks, exams...etc)

- Strongly agree ☐

- Agree ☐

- Neutral ☐

- Disagree ☐

- Strongly disagree ☐

4. Anxiety affects my performance in different academic activities negatively

- Strongly agree ☐

- Agree ☐

- Neutral ☐

- Disagree ☐

- Strongly disagree ☐

5. Anxiety affects my performance in academic activities positively

- Strongly agree ☐

- Agree ☐

- Neutral ☐

- Disagree ☐

- Strongly disagree ☐

6. Which of the following academic activities trigger your anxiety:

- Exams ☐
- Oral presentations ☐
- Classroom participation ☐
- Open discussions and debates ☐
- Tasks and homework ☐
- Others (please specify): ☐

....

- **Section Three: Anxiety-reduction Strategies**

7. Do your teachers use different strategies to reduce your anxiety

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

➢ If yes, what are they?

....

8. From the following list, what are the strategies used by your teachers to overcome your anxiety?

- Provide a stress-free and friendly environment ☐
- Avoid negative feedback and hurtful comments ☐
- Consider learners' insecurities and fears and help them to overcome those insecurities ☐
- Offer words of encouragement and praise to boost learners' self-esteem ☐

- Allow learners to express their learning style preferences and take these preferences into consideration ☐

- None ☐

➢ Others, (please specify) ☐

  ....

9. Teachers' strategies are sufficient to reduce my anxiety

   - Yes ☐

   - No ☐

10. If strategies used by teachers are not sufficient, do you think PPS would be helpful to reduce your anxiety?

    - Yes ☐

    - No ☐

➢ Please explain:

  ....

11. PPS would be helpful to reduce my anxiety in the following academic activities (you can choose more than one answer)

    - Exams ☐

    - Oral presentations ☐

    - Classroom participation ☐

    - Open discussions and debates ☐

    - Tasks and homework ☐

12. If PPS existed at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, I would seek its help

When facing anxiety

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

➢ Please explain:

....

....

13. When I face anxiety, I would rather seek PPS **(please, answer if your answer for the pervious question was yes)**

- At the university ☐

- At a university-related centre outside the university that provides these counselling services ☐

➢ Please explain:

....

14. Please add any other comment you may have related to this topic:

....
....
....

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

APPENDIX 2

<div align="center">

Interview for Teachers

</div>

Thank you for being willing to take part in this interview; we assure you that you will remain anonymous.

1. According to you, how is the rate of anxiety among EFL learners at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia?
   - Which academic level(s) faces anxiety more?

2. What are the common strategies you use as a teacher to deal with the issue of anxiety in the classroom?

3. Do you think teacher-centred techniques (strategies that mainly focus on teachers efforts) used to reduce anxiety are enough to solve the issue?
   - If yes, how do you explain the persistence of this problem?

4. In your opinion, would the integration of PPS (Psycho-Pedagogical Support) within university personnel help reduce learners' anxiety?
   - Please elaborate.

5. If PPS was integrated at this university, would it be better if it provides its services separately or should it work in cooperation with teachers (PPS would share information concerning learners with teachers, provide them with professional pieces of advice)?

6. For your part, would learners at this department seek counselling from PPS if such support existed within university staff?

7. What are the factors that may encourage or prevent learners from seeking help if this support was provided?

8. Why do you think PPS is not integrated within the university personnel?

Résumé

En effectuant les différentes activités académiques, les apprenants de la langue Anglaise comme langue étrangère subissent constamment du stress et de l'anxiété au courant de leur parcours universitaire, ce qui peut affecter la qualité de l'apprentissage de la langue. Pour adresser ce problème, cette étude aspire à découvrir les attitudes des enseignants et des étudiants de l'Anglais à l'université de Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia vis à vis l'intégration d'un Soutien Psycho-Pédagogique visant à traiter le problème d'anxiété et stress. Concernant cette étude, on émet l'hypothèse que si les enseignants et les étudiants perçoivent le Soutien Psycho-Pédagogique comme une nécessité pour réduire l'anxiété des étudiants, ils seront en faveur de son intégration à l'université. Afin de tester cette hypothèse, un questionnaire a été aléatoirement administré à (241) étudiants de la langue Anglaise dont tous les niveaux y compris ainsi qu'une interview déroulé avec (9) enseignants. Les instruments de recherche utilisés servent à exposer les différentes sources de l'anxiété éprouvée par les étudiants et son impact sur ces derniers; de plus, ils révèlent les attitudes des enseignants et étudiants envers le Soutien Psycho-Pédagogique. Les résultats portent sur les trois sources principales engendrant l'anxiété chez les étudiants notamment, les tests, l'appréhension de la communication et la peur de l'évaluation négative. Les résultats démontrent aussi l'effet négatif de l'anxiété et le stress sur les étudiants et enfin, les attitudes positives des enseignants et de la majorité des étudiants envers le Soutien Psycho-Pédagogique.

Mots Clés : Anxiété, Attitudes des étudiants, Attitudes des enseignants, Soutien Psycho-Pédagogique.

ملخص

يتعرض طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للضغط النفسي والقلق بصفة مستمرة أثناء أدائهم لمختلف الأنشطة الأكاديمية مما قد يعيق تطورهم التعليمي خلال المشوار الجامعي. لمعالجة المشكل المطروح يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقصي مواقف الطلبة والأساتذة تجاه الحصول على فريق للدعم النفسي البيداغوجي كحل لمشكل القلق والضغط النفسي الذي يعاني منه طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى. من خلال هذا البحث تم افتراض أنه إذا كان كل من الأساتذة والطلبة يرون أن وجود فريق للدعم النفسي البيداغوجي ضروري للحد من مشكل القلق والضغط النفسي لدى الطلبة، سيؤيدون إدماج هذا الفريق ضمن الطاقم الجامعي. على ضوء ذلك ولاختبار مدى صحة هذه الفرضيّة تم توزيع استبيان على (241) طالب مختار عشوائياً من كافة المستويات كما أجريت مقابلة مع (9) أساتذة. تم استخدام أدوات البحث هذه لجمع البيانات اللازمة لاكتشاف كل من مصدر وتأثير هذا القلق والضغط النفسي على طلبة التخصص سابق الذكر بالإضافة إلى تسليط الضوء على مواقف الأساتذة والطلبة تجاه الحصول على فريق مختص للدعم النفسي البيداغوجي. قد بينت نتائج هذه الدراسة ثلاثة مصادر رئيسية لقلق طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية والمتمثلة فيما يلي: الاختبارات، رهاب التواصل والخوف من التقييم السلبي. كما أن هذه الدراسة وضحت بأن للضغط النفسي والقلق تأثير سلبي على طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وأكدت تأييد الأساتذة والطلبة لإدماج فريق مختص للدعم النفسي البيداغوجي للحول دون مشكل القلق والضغط النفسي الذي يعاني منه الطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القلق، مواقف الطلبة، مواقف لأساتذة، الدعم النفسي البيداغوجي.