



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Like student like teacher? Taking a closer look at language teacher anxiety

Julia Goetze 

University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S.
Email: julia.goetze@wisc.edu

Abstract

This article takes a comparative look at language teacher anxiety (LTA) vis-à-vis students' language classroom anxiety (LCA) and contends the benefit of pursuing and expanding LTA research. Specifically, the paper first traces the development of LTA inquiry from its inception in the 1990s until today and highlights how it historically aligned with and, more recently, diverges from LCA research. After establishing LTA as an idiosyncratic variable in instructed language learning and teaching contexts, I grapple with the questions of whether and why LTA merits further research attention and suggest that the pursuit of LTA research is not only beneficial to examine the role of teachers' emotions in instructed language learning but also for the advancement of three other flourishing domains in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). These include the diversification of theoretical frameworks through which language classroom emotions can be examined, the advancement of research methodologies, and the role of emotions in social justice-centered approaches to language teaching (e.g., pedagogies of discomfort).

Keywords: anxiety; language teacher anxiety; language classroom anxiety; individual differences

On September 20, 2022, the United States Preventive Service Task Force (USPSTF) recommended that all adults younger than sixty-five regularly be screened for anxiety (U.S. Preventive Service Task Force, 2022). According to the USPSTF, more than half of the adult United States population experiences a form of anxiety disorder throughout their lives. These disorders are characterized by the experience of persistent feelings of dread, intense fear, discomfort, and/or worry that interfere with a person's everyday life, such as avoiding places, objects, (groups of) people, and actions that might be triggering. Specifically, it is the perceived inability to cope with a situation that results in anxiety, which manifests in avoidance behaviors or other behavioral disturbances. While anxiety disorders are marked by their persistence, the occasional and fleeting experience of an anxious feeling state is considered a normal part of life (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.). Despite the difference in perpetuity, occasional anxiety also manifests as worries, feelings of fear and discomfort, and the potential for avoidance behaviors (Zeidner & Matthews, 2011).

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Considering anxiety is commonplace in the contemporary human experience, it is no surprise that anxiety is frequently reported among students and teachers in various educational contexts, ranging from primary to postsecondary, including private and public institutions, and encompassing many disciplines (Zeidner, 2014). In education, educational psychology, and public health, a plethora of studies has provided empirical evidence for the common presence of anxiety among students across many educational levels and disciplines and its negative link to performance (e.g., Zhang et al., 2019), achievement (e.g., Barroso et al., 2021), and mental health (Pekrun et al., 2018). However, Arnold and Brown (1999) suggested that “[t]here are few, if any, disciplines in the curriculum which lay themselves open to anxiety production more than foreign or second language learning” (p. 9), arguing that students’ awareness of their limited ability to express themselves in the target language makes them more prone to experience anxiety than in a math or science class. Indeed, a comparison of recent meta-analyses of achievement and general academic, foreign language, and math anxiety respectively (Barroso et al., 2021; Seipp, 1991; Teimouri et al., 2019) shows a marginally greater effect for the anxiety-achievement link in foreign language (FL) classrooms ($r_{general} = -.21$; $r_{FL} = -.36$; $r_{math} = -.28$).

Students’ language classroom anxiety is one of the most frequently investigated affective variables in instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) (MacIntyre & Wang, 2022) and multiple research syntheses traced its research evolution from the 1970s until today (e.g., MacIntyre, 2017). Student anxiety research has been carried out in a multitude of research paradigms, and theoretical frameworks and empirical research have produced a host of findings regarding its role in learning outcomes, language skill development and performance, cognitive processing, and its relation to other individual differences, such as personality, gender, motivation, or other emotions (for a recent overview see MacIntyre & Wang, 2022). It is also methodologically complex, ranging from observational to experimental designs, using cross-sectional or longitudinal approaches, employing qualitative, quantitative, dynamic, and mixed research methodologies, and including a range of target languages, educational levels, and institutional contexts. In the past two years, this body of research has been extended to include investigations into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and findings indicate a higher frequency and higher levels of anxiety among language learners since early 2020 (Resnik et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought teacher anxiety, burnout, emotional labor, and stress into the spotlight around the world (Gómez-Domínguez et al., 2022). Notably, a recent study found that teachers reported a greater prevalence of anxiety symptoms compared to other professions during the COVID-19 pandemic, with teachers in remote instructional environments being more affected than those in traditional classrooms (Kush et al., 2022). While the pandemic seems to have made more visible teacher stress, burnout, and emotional labor, teacher anxiety has garnered research attention in education and educational psychology for decades (Keavney & Sinclair, 1978). While no systematic review of teacher anxiety has been conducted yet (Pekrun et al., 2018), educational research has continuously linked it to teachers’ classroom goals (Schutz et al., 2007), students’ disruptive (mis)behavior in the classroom (Ferguson et al., 2012), and to teachers’ perception of negative relationships to their students (Klassen et al., 2012). Educational psychologists provided evidence for the influence of teacher emotions on teachers’ classroom behaviors and students’ perception thereof (Frenzel, 2014), showing that students evaluate teaching behaviors and effectiveness more negatively when teachers reported to have experienced anxiety in the classroom (Frenzel et al., 2016).

Anxiety research that focuses on foreign and second language teachers has taken a narrower approach and examined the variable through the same lens as language student anxiety, namely with a focus on nonnative teachers' confidence in their target language use in the classroom (e.g., Horwitz, 1996). These studies established triggers and effects of language teachers' anxiety, such as target language-related (avoidance) behavior(s) within language classrooms. However, such an approach suggests that teachers who are (highly) proficient and/or (highly) confident users of the target language are not prone to anxiety in their classrooms. This assumption contradicts findings in education that consistently linked teacher anxiety to sociocognitive, sociocultural, and affective factors outside of language use. Only recently, SLA researchers started to consider the role of sociopolitical factors (Song, 2018), institutional contexts (Song & Park, 2019), work-life balance (Fraschini & Park, 2021), and individual emotion regulation capacities (Dumančić et al., 2022) and broadened the scope of their increasingly interdisciplinary examinations of foreign language teacher anxiety. These studies consistently showed that factors outside of teachers' target language use substantively contributed to their experience of anxiety. These findings in combination with existing research in education and educational psychology complexified the understanding of the variable and called into question the initial and still persistent assumption of the similarity between students' and teachers' anxious experiences in the language classroom.

I take this recent complexification as a starting point and take stock of what is known about language teacher anxiety today. In the first part, I trace the development of language teacher anxiety research, contrast it with students' language classroom anxiety in ISLA, and compare it to general teacher anxiety research in education. However, it is important to note that this paper is not a systematic review of the existing literature in all three domains but rather aims to introduce the reader to the current state of language teacher anxiety research in ISLA and to highlight seminal findings in adjacent fields. The goal is to advocate for a reconceptualization of language teacher anxiety that establishes it as an idiosyncratic variable in instructed language learning and teaching contexts that is distinct from students' language classroom anxiety. In the second part, I discuss how such a reconceptualization can substantively shape the future (inter)disciplinary research agenda in the domain of language teacher-centered anxiety scholarship in (instructed) SLA theoretically, methodologically, and pedagogically.

Are Language Teachers Just Anxious Learners? Looking Back and Rethinking Language Teacher Anxiety

Teacher anxiety in language classrooms has received significantly less attention than students' anxiety even though both variables have a sizeable impact on student learning. In the early 1990s, Elaine Horwitz was the first to introduce the teacher-centered variable in a series of conference presentations (Horwitz, 1992, 1993) before she published a seminal article on language teacher anxiety in 1996. In her initial work, Horwitz focused on anxiety of nonnative teachers of the target language and drew connections between teachers' and students' anxiety regarding their spoken target language use in the classroom. She argued that many language teachers (in the United States context) are nonnative or seminaive speakers of the target language, which affords researchers to think of them as advanced language learners. Framed in this way, she presents a convincing argument why teachers' anxiety can be conceptualized as advanced students' anxiety in instructed learning settings, a construct she had introduced with colleagues just a few years earlier (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Students' foreign language classroom anxiety is most frequently defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). It is frequently measured with the thirty-three-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986), whose items draw on the concepts of communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Early examinations of the validity of the FLCAS determined that the instrument primarily measures anxiety in relation to spoken target language use (Cheng et al., 1999), which also plays a major role in Horwitz' initial discussion of language teacher anxiety. In her 1996 article, she argues that while language teachers can plan target language use for the content they present in their classes just as their peers in math or history, they must always be ready to spontaneously produce unplanned target language utterances. Especially in language classrooms where spontaneous target language use is valued and expected, classroom discussions can be unpredictable, presenting nonnative teachers with unforeseen communicative challenges that can lead to vocabulary lapses or a heightened awareness of lack of fluency. Teachers might perceive these challenges as threats to their self-concept as competent communicators and proficient language users, which can lead to reticence, panic, and target language avoidance (Horwitz et al., 1986). Consequently, Horwitz suggests that nonnative teachers' target language use-related anxiety can have negative effects on the effectiveness of their instruction. She provides empirical evidence from highly anxious pre- and in-service language teachers, who reported that they (would) avoid target language intensive activities in their classrooms even if they believed the activity is beneficial for student learning. Based on this evidence, Horwitz hypothesizes that teachers' target language use-related anxiety can have serious implications for student learning, especially if a model of SLA that favors greater learner exposure to the target language is assumed (Krashen, 1985), and the idea of emotional contagion (Elfenbein, 2014) is adopted. In the United States context, professional language teacher associations such as American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) strongly recommend the implementation of communicative approaches to language teaching and learning, encouraging "that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom" (ACTFL, 2010). Such target language use policy recommendations have the potential to affect language teachers' anxiety and subsequent (avoidance) behaviors in their classrooms and beyond, which might impact students' anxiety as well via emotional contagion. During emotional contagion, classroom participants register and adopt each other's emotional states. Recent empirical evidence for the transmission of enjoyment between a teacher and students showed positive effects on students' motivation and engagement (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). While no empirical studies for the contagion of anxiety between teacher and student(s) exist yet, the negative effect of anxiety on student performance and achievement has been well established (Teimouri et al., 2019; Zhang, 2019).

While teachers can be affected by target language use-related anxiety, Horwitz (1996) concedes that target language use-unrelated factors such as student misbehavior, disrespect, inflexible institutional performance standards, and a complaining public can *equally* activate or contribute to language teachers' anxious experiences in their classrooms. This claim is strongly supported by existing research in education, which defines teacher anxiety as "anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities" (Gardner & Leak, 1994, p. 28),

thereby distinguishing it from student anxiety. Teacher anxiety research in education grew out of a surge in general anxiety research in psychology that connected anxiety with individuals' impairments to perform specific tasks (Sarason, 1957). Psychologist Charles Spielberger (1966) put forward a theoretical differentiation between state and trait anxiety, defining *trait anxiety* as a general behavioral predisposition and *state anxiety* as a situational occurrence that arose only in specific circumstances, such as during a specific task performance (e.g., solving a math equation). As a result, state anxiety research in relation to various situations and tasks surged, and teaching was no exception. The assumption was that teachers' state anxiety in the classroom was linked to teaching behaviors that negatively affect the quality of instruction regardless of content area (Coates & Thoresen, 1976). However, teachers were differentiated into preservice and in-service teachers according to their career stage, assuming that with increased (situational) familiarity and experience, teachers and their classroom practice would be less impacted by their anxious experiences. Beginning teachers were thought to experience anxiety due to the complexity of teaching tasks and learning contexts and the uncertainty of target outcomes for the teaching profession (Parsons, 1973). In contrast, experienced teachers were believed to be more certain of their performance standards, but they experienced anxiety in situations where they are unable to determine whether they are fulfilling the performance expectations sufficiently (Parsons, 1973). To measure teacher anxiety, Parsons (1973) introduced the Teaching Anxiety Scale (TAS), which is a self-report instrument that is still widely used in the field of education today. The TAS consists of thirty-three statements about teachers' reactions to teaching, that are rated with five-point Likert-type scales and categorized into emotional reactions to teaching situations (e.g., *I feel uncomfortable when I speak before a group*) and attitudes towards teaching as a profession (e.g., *I feel certain I really want to be a teacher*). Early TAS-based research validated the instrument with teachers of different career stages and uncovered systematic differences between them, linking preservice teachers' anxiety to their (in)ability to maintain discipline in the classroom and to build positive relationships with students, their (lack of) subject matter knowledge, their (in)ability to prepare and deliver well-structured lessons, and the quality of relationships with faculty members, school officials, and/or parents. In contrast, in-service teachers' anxiety was linked to time pressure due to professional demands, challenging relationships with students, large class enrollments, financial constraints, and the lack of educational or professional development resources (Coates & Thoresen, 1976). Put differently, early career teachers' anxiety was linked to intra- and interpersonal microlevel concerns about professional relationships and performance measures, whereas more experienced teachers' anxiety was related to macrolevel concerns at the institutional level, such as resource allocation, career trajectories, and enrollment policies. Despite these differences, educational research established that anxiety occurs "with considerable frequency" (Coates & Thoresen, 1976, p. 175) among teachers at all stages of their career regardless of their content area of expertise.

Although Horwitz (1996) acknowledges these target language use-unrelated aspects, her initial focus on target language use-related factors has strongly shaped language teacher anxiety research in ISLA to this day. However, it is important to note that she did not introduce the teacher-centered anxiety construct as foreign language teacher anxiety, but as *foreign language anxiety*, delineating it in name from classroom participants (i.e., teachers) and (instructional) contexts. Upon closer inspection, the construct appears to be capturing anxiety caused by target language use by nonnative speakers more generally, which can be adapted to various target language use situations. In

that sense, language teachers are one but not the only target group to which the concept *foreign language anxiety* can be applied. Based on the assumption that foreign language anxiety is situation-specific, Horwitz (2008) introduced the Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS) to measure the construct in classroom teaching situations. The TFLAS is an eighteen-item self-report instrument that has become a common measure of language teacher anxiety in the field of ISLA. Empirical studies have identified a three-factor structure for the TFLAS, including apprehension of speaking the target language, fear of negative evaluation, and confidence in target language competence, which has been validated across multiple contexts (Liu & Wu, 2021; Machida, 2016). In other words, the TFLAS measures target language use-related dimensions of language teaching anxiety and does not capture target language use-unrelated factors (e.g., classroom management) that might contribute to language teachers' anxious experience as well. Consequently, existing studies of language teacher anxiety in ISLA focus almost exclusively on target language use-related anxiety of nonnative teachers, leaving the anxious experiences of native, bi/multilingual, and/or highly proficient teachers, as well as target language use-unrelated anxiety dimensions and their effects on teaching behavior and practice un(der)explored (Ozdemir & Papi, 2022).

While the resulting body of research has contributed important insights into the emotional complexities of language teaching, the above overview suggests that language teacher anxiety might be more closely aligned with the situation-specific anxiety construct of teaching anxiety in education, which includes teacher role-specific concerns such as classroom management, rather than with students' language classroom anxiety, which includes student role-specific concerns about assessment and performance of language skills such as speaking. In fact, ISLA scholars consistently found that preservice language teachers reported anxiety in connection to limited language skills, limited content knowledge, lack of confidence in class preparation, classroom management, student profiles, and relationships with mentors (Merç, 2011; Tım, 2014; Yoon, 2012), while in-service language teachers reported perceived lack of competence in the target language, specific teaching situations, amount of workload, inadequate lesson preparation, and institutional pressures (Kim & Kim, 2004; Liu & Wu, 2021). Notably, these findings mirror the findings for general teacher anxiety in education with the exception that nonnative language teachers at all career stages also report target language-related aspects of their work as anxiety-provoking, calling into question whether conceptualizing language teacher anxiety as primarily linked to confidence and self-efficacy beliefs in target language use and competence captures the entire picture when the variable is investigated. Instead, the current state of research across multiple fields suggests that two situation-specific anxieties co-occur in (nonnative) language teachers, namely a target language use-related anxiety and a general teaching anxiety, which raises questions of how these two anxieties might be (inter)related and how they manifest and affect nonnative, native, and/or highly proficient teachers of the target language and their teaching practices.

To date, only Liu and Wu (2021) looked at both situation-specific anxieties in the same study. The authors investigated Horwitz's foreign language anxiety of teachers, using the TFLAS, and general teacher anxiety, measured by the TAS, in 151 Chinese college EFL teachers and looked at similarities and differences in sources and effects of teachers' foreign language and teaching anxiety respectively. Teachers in the study reported distinct triggers for each anxiety type. For example, triggers for general teaching anxiety ranged from classroom-specific (e.g., students not working hard) to psychological (e.g., worry about self-development) to institutional (e.g., pressure from

promotion), whereas foreign language anxiety triggers were exclusively related to confidence in target language use and competence in the classroom (e.g., spoken English not being good enough). At the same time, the authors do not report idiosyncratic effect(s) of each anxiety type, instead asserting that the effects of language teachers' anxiety regardless of its type range from decreased motivation and devotion to work to depression and worsened health to increased nervousness to insomnia and procrastination, among others. Their results also show that both anxiety scales elicited equal means on the five-point Likert-type scales from the entire sample ($M_{TAS} = 2.79$, $SD = .39$; $M_{TFLAS} = 2.61$, $SD = .57$), indicating similar levels of both situation-specific anxieties in the participating teachers. Additionally, both scales were strongly correlated ($r = .682$, $p \leq .01$), which raises further questions about the distinctiveness of the two anxiety constructs.

These findings are noteworthy for four reasons. First, language teachers conceptually distinguish between the task of using a foreign language and the task of teaching in their classrooms and can identify distinct triggers for the respective task-related anxieties. In other words, language teachers have an explicit awareness that not all the anxiety they experience in a classroom is target language use related. Second, nonnative language teachers report both situation-specific anxieties at equal levels, lending support to Horwitz's (1996) original claim that target language-related and unrelated factors contribute *equally* to language teachers' classroom anxiety experience. Third, the reported findings suggest that the anxiety type has no differentiating influence on the effect that anxiety has on teachers' behavior. That is, both types of anxiety can equally impact teachers' classroom practice, which could subsequently affect students' perception of teaching behavior, quality, and effectiveness (Frenzel et al., 2009). Fourth, language teacher anxiety directly and negatively affects teacher attitudes, well-being, and health. Considering that anxiety occurs frequently over a teacher's entire career span, this is a concerning finding, and the effects and potential links to teacher burnout, attrition, and teacher shortages (in the United States) still remain underexplored.

Other recent studies further support the claim that language teacher anxiety is only partially linked to target language use. For example, Khajavy et al. (2018) examined a group of nonnative EFL teachers in Iran and identified the inability to answer student questions, supervisor observations, and a lack of preparation as key antecedents of their anxiety, all of which are target language use unrelated. Similarly, Frascini and Park (2021) looked beyond the language classroom and found anxiety tied to individual language teachers' evaluations of their work/life balance, their job performance reviews, and their job security. Song (2018) investigated language teacher anxiety in a sociopolitical and socioeconomic paradigm, making visible the political and economic forces that underlie the construction and circulation of teacher anxiety at an institutional level. Lastly, Song and Park (2019) examined the relationship between ideology and EFL teachers' anxiety in South Korea in a sociopolitical paradigm, uncovering the tension between ideologically shaped social structures and teachers' agency in emotional experiences, which affects their professional development.

Taken together, the (a) limited applicability of students' language classroom anxiety to the language teacher population as a whole, (b) empirical evidence in education for the existence and prevalence of target language-unrelated anxiety across teachers' entire career span regardless of content area, (c) recent findings in ISLA that language teachers equally experience and distinguish between language-related and unrelated anxiety, and (d) interdisciplinary data that show that both types of anxiety have a negative effect on teachers' well-being, health, and teaching practice, it seems clear that the construct of

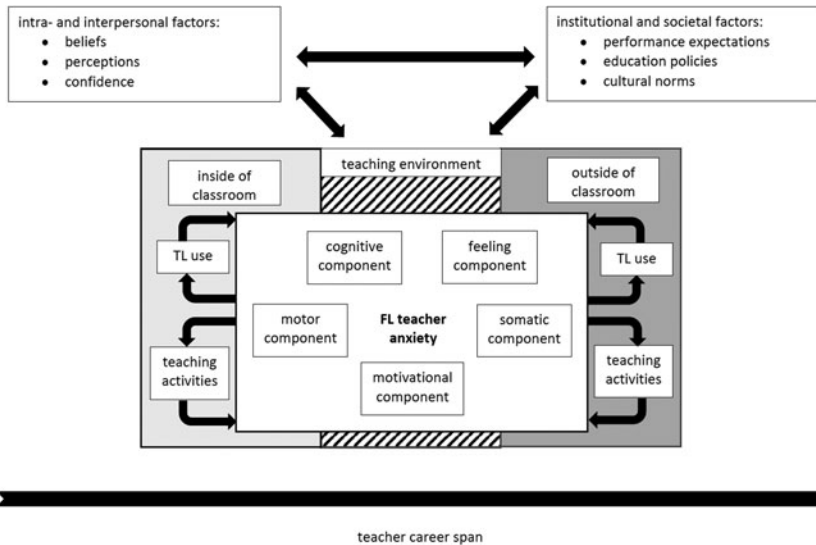


Figure 1. Visualization of proposed language teacher anxiety reconceptualization.

language teacher anxiety needs to be refined and would benefit from a move towards a more interdisciplinary definition that enables scholars to investigate its effect on student learning and teachers' health and well-being more comprehensively. Therefore, instead of continuing to conceptualize language teachers' anxiety narrowly as advanced language learners' anxiety, foreign language teacher anxiety is perhaps more accurately defined as a multicomponential and multidimensional affective construct that is experienced as a negative feeling state during communicative challenges in the target language and teaching-related activities inside and outside of the classroom, either separately or simultaneously. It is activated and shaped by intra- and interpersonal microlevel factors, such as perceptions of teacher-student relationships or confidence levels, and by institutional and societal macrolevel factors, such as performance expectations and local education policies, and it is likely to change in intensity and composition throughout a language teacher's career span (see Fig. 1 for a visualization). Refining language teacher anxiety in this way captures the nature of the variable more accurately and impacts the future research agenda of the construct. However, the question remains how exactly such a reconceptualization advances future language teacher anxiety research and the field of language teacher emotions and (instructed) SLA as a whole.

Where Do We Go From Here? The Future of Language Teacher Anxiety Research in (Instructed) SLA

In the following, I briefly outline four ways of how adopting the refined construct of language teacher anxiety can shape the future (inter)disciplinary research agenda that encompasses conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical directions. First, the new construct affords a more comprehensive investigation of the variable and its role in instructed educational settings. The refined construct explicitly invites the inclusion of teachers of *all* linguistic backgrounds, *all* career stages, and *all* target

languages who operate in a variety of instructed language learning and teaching settings in future studies. Specifically, adopting the interdisciplinary anxiety construct allows future research to focus on *both* target language and teaching-related components and to examine their in(ter)dependencies and effect(s) either cross-sectionally or over time. Possible research questions include whether both construct components manifest in all language teachers, how both anxiety components develop and interact over time, whether systematic differences in the anxiety between native and nonnative language teachers exist, and to what degree the effect(s) of their anxious feeling state on teaching behavior and student learning differ between language teachers of different backgrounds across multiple contexts. These questions are important since not much is known about the role of general teaching anxiety in language classrooms, the anxiety of highly proficient and confident language teachers at any career stage, and their effects on teaching practice and (mental) health and well-being. Findings of such studies could inform the enhancement of teacher training or professional development programs that facilitate more individualized emotional and practical coping strategy development that prepare language teachers to handle and overcome teaching- and/or language-related challenges inside and outside of their classrooms, thereby also contributing to improved well-being and health for language teachers and to potentially more flourishing learning environments for students (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

Second, a refined anxiety construct also affords a diversification of emotion theories that can be used to investigate the role of classroom emotions in language teaching and learning. Like its student counterpart, language teacher anxiety research has predominantly been carried out in a basic emotion paradigm (Ekman, 1984), in which anxiety is a universal emotional state that manifests in specific somatic reactions (e.g., sweating), facial expressions (e.g., frowning), or (avoidance) behaviors (e.g., fidgeting). In recent years, student-centered anxiety research has included dimensional theories of emotions, such as Pekrun's (2006) Control-Value-Theory (CVT) of achievement emotions. Dimensional theories assume axial taxonomies along which emotions are conceptualized and differentiated. For example, CVT assumes a three-dimensional taxonomy that includes an object focus, value, and control as key dimensions, in which anxiety is an emotion that emerges from the uncontrollability or uncertainty over the attainment of success or the prevention of failure. While language teacher anxiety could be conceived as an achievement emotion in the sense that teachers are trying to achieve teaching ideals or performance standards, componential emotion theories might be a suitable alternative for future investigations into the variable. The basic premise of componential emotion theories is that emotional episodes emerge from continuous changes in multiple physiological and psychological subsystems, including the motivational component (i.e., action tendencies), the somatic component (i.e., physiological reactions), the motor component (i.e., expressive behavior), the feeling component (i.e., the subjective experience of feelings), and the cognitive component (i.e., evaluations of the person-environment interactions) (Fontaine et al., 2013). The most prominent componential theory is appraisal theory, which has been used extensively in cognitive psychology and general education to investigate emotion causation. Appraisals are cognitive evaluative processes of the environment that assess both the significance of a situation for well-being and the ability to cope with the situation along a number of dimensions (Lazarus, 1966). They constitute the central component in the emotion activation process, and abundant empirical evidence suggests that appraisal patterns have unambiguous one-to-one relationships to discrete emotions (Scherer, 2001). For example, anxiety results from high appraisals of a situational significance, low appraisals of

congruence between the actual and an ideal situation, and low appraisals of one's ability to cope psychologically with the actual situation (Smith & Lazarus, 1993).

Appraisal theory ideally lends itself to investigating classroom situations that language teachers find anxiety-provoking and to systematically trace teachers' anxiety from its trigger to the feeling state. Importantly, appraisal theory sheds light on emotion causation, allowing researchers to examine what leads teachers to evaluate teaching situations in a way that triggers anxiety, and it affords the systematic exploration of individual differences in the appraisals of specific teaching situations. Additionally, educational psychologists have successfully used appraisal theory to expand their model of teacher emotions to include behaviors resulting from an emotional state such as anxiety (Frenzel et al., 2009). Some ISLA scholars have already begun to apply appraisal theory to investigations of language teacher anxiety (Fraschini & Park, 2021), the complexity of language teachers' emotional experiences in their classrooms (Goetze, 2023), and language teachers' emotion regulation capacities (Dumančić et al., 2022). This delivers insightful results that show the applicability and usefulness of the theory across various language learning and teaching contexts and making it a promising framework in which language teachers' emotional antecedents, triggers, experiences, and effects can be examined comprehensively in the future.

Third, the inclusion of two situation-specific anxiety dimensions in the refined language teacher anxiety construct is likely to trigger methodological changes in the research domain as well. Currently, language teacher anxiety research is dominated by cross-sectional designs that employ quantitative survey methods, complemented with semistructured interviews or open-ended questions, and qualitative diary studies that take snapshots of teachers' emotional lives or employ a longitudinal case study approach. These studies are informative regarding the general intensity of teachers' anxiety, as well as its triggers and perceived effects. However, these research designs often ignore the situational character of the variable. Language teacher anxiety is a situation-specific emotional phenomenon that occurs (repeatedly) within the same situation, whereby situation can refer to an environment or a task performance. This significant feature of the variable is not captured by the currently favored data elicitation and data collection methods in ISLA. For example, an item on the TFLAS might elicit the average amount of anxiety a teacher experiences when speaking the target language in front of a class. However, the item fails to capture that such ratings fluctuate across different classroom situations in which the same task is performed. Language teachers might enjoy delivering previously prepared content in the target language but may completely freeze when they must produce spontaneous utterances in conversations with students, colleagues, or supervisors. In other words, nuances in the specificity of classroom situations are not represented in current data elicitation methods or data collection tools of language teacher anxiety.

As an alternative, anxiety studies in psychology and education offer insights into situation-based emotion elicitation methodologies, which could be adopted in future ISLA studies, especially in combination with appraisal theory. Situation-based methodologies use different kinds of standardized stimuli to activate mental images in research participants. These mental images serve as the basis for emotion elicitation. These standardized stimuli can range from text-based to video-based to virtual reality-based vignettes that aim to facilitate the (re)creation of an internal (emotional) sensation either based on, or in lieu of, previous experience (Finke, 2014; Wraga & Kosslyn, 2002). Appraisal-based emotion research in psychology and education has predominantly employed text-based vignettes, which have proven to be a valid and reliable

elicitation method for anxiety (Schorr, 2001), and combined them with quantitative data collection methods based on appraisal frameworks (e.g., Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This is promising for future language teacher anxiety research for multiple reasons. First, the elicitation method is situation-based and therefore closely aligned with the nature of the situation-specific anxiety construct(s). Second, multimedia vignettes are an efficient, versatile, and (cost-)effective way to develop standardized, reusable, and inclusive stimuli and they can be adapted to various voiced or signed languages in multimodal research setups. Lastly, vignette methodology reduces the complexity of recruiting large samples of language teachers from intact in-person classrooms and offers a feasible alternative to repeatedly creating the same classroom situation in natural environments for data elicitation and data collection purposes without significantly affecting the validity and comparability of findings.

Fourth, the new understanding of teacher anxiety has the potential to advance our insights into the role of emotions in critical pedagogical approaches to foreign and second language teaching. As more language programs grapple with their responsibility to address topics of (de)colonization, systemic oppression, and social (in)justice, more teachers report anxieties and discomfort when they are asked to implement critical pedagogies that center around these issues (Ross & Dowland, 2019). Interestingly, many emerging critical pedagogies bring to the fore new ways of knowing and center around (negative) affect and emotions like anxiety, requiring teachers to be in or create a state of discomfort in their classrooms to enable classroom participants to explore their value and belief systems using emotional epistemology. For example, a pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999) that aims to raise an awareness of (in)justices and structures of oppression is based on the assumption that established social norms are tied to emotional responses. By critically examining and challenging established norms, classroom participants experience an emotional reaction that can reveal their stance and the importance of the norm to the individual. The main premise of the pedagogy is that the emotion(s) one experiences when norms are challenged “contributes to either the reproduction or transformation of the social norms that create injustices” (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012, p. 43). It might not be surprising that language teachers experience increased anxiety when they are asked to critically question the cultural or linguistic norm(s) of the target language and culture they teach, regardless of whether they are a native speaker or member of the target community. After all, encouraging students to critically examine and question social norms in their dominant language and culture is already challenging and asking students to reveal their private affects in emotionally charged public environments like classrooms can lead to unpredictable outcomes that can bear professional consequences. However, it is not clear whether teachers’ anxiety in critical language classrooms relates to the language or teaching-related dimension of their anxiety or whether it is a separate dimension altogether. On one hand, nonnative speaker teachers might feel more comfortable to critically examine norms of a community they are not a member of. On the other hand, native speaker teachers might feel less aware of dominant linguistic norms, which might lead to an increase in uncertainty in their language use in the classroom. At the same time, teachers’ anxiety may be caused by an uncertainty regarding students’ emotional and behavioral reactions to critical class content and an emotion-focused pedagogical approach. To shed light on these questions, future studies could develop vignettes around critical language classrooms that are designed to elicit teachers’ anxiety, and findings could be used to either further refine the anxiety construct in critical pedagogy contexts or to develop and improve teacher trainings and preparation for work in critical world language curricula.

Returning to the Now of Language Teacher Anxiety Research

To conclude, I want to return to the now of language teacher anxiety research by paying tribute to Elaine Horwitz, who was a true trailblazer in anxiety research in ISLA. Almost thirty years ago, she called for a prioritization of the acknowledgement and serious consideration of language teacher anxiety, and she stressed the work that was needed to systematically decrease it. Today, our understanding of the variable has advanced from a narrower discipline-specific, language-related concept to that of an interdisciplinary, multicomponential construct that includes two situation-specific anxieties: foreign language anxiety and teaching anxiety. What has not changed is the need to prioritize and reduce anxious experiences in language teachers, as they impact both student learning experiences and teachers' well-being and (mental) health.

By developing a refined construct of language teacher anxiety, I traced how developments of anxiety research within ISLA and adjacent fields enhanced our initial understanding of the variable over time, and I hope to have highlighted the value of Elaine's pioneering work in the domain. By offering four possible directions of future research, I do not claim that these are the only or even the most important directions in which the field of language teacher anxiety might develop. Instead, I aim to encourage researchers to look beyond students' language classroom anxiety and invite them to embrace a related and yet distinct construct with promising and multifaceted opportunities to develop original and meaningful research. Overall, I hope to have shown that the pursuit of language teacher anxiety research can be equally as important and rewarding as students' classroom anxiety research and that it is worth a closer look.

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