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**INVESTIGATING SAUDI PRACTICUM TEACHERS’
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ONLINE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHING ANXIETY**

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the perception of Saudi practicum teachers about online foreign language teaching anxiety. A lot of practicum teachers face difficulties in teaching English as a foreign language for several reasons. One reason which is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) will be discussed in this research. The participants of the research will be 20 Saudi female practicum teachers of Applied Linguistics department at Yanbu University College (YUC). They are native Arabic speakers, and they are considered high-intermediate in English. An online questionnaire will be designed by the researcher and given to the participants to investigate their perceptions about online foreign language teaching anxiety by including both close-ended and open-ended questions.

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The researcher

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION:

Saudi EFL practicum teachers usually struggle in their practicum classes. Most of the Saudi practicum teachers have difficulties in teaching EFL classes online because of several reasons. Anxiety, lack of both online and formal classroom teaching experience, and limited language competence are a few of these reasons.

According to the UNESCO (2014), education is an important tool for the achievement of progress in a changing world, and a major element in national development process. Thus, education is considered one of the crucial elements in societies' development and civilization.

Of course, teachers are the main building block of a cultured and educated community and “the key that unlocks this door of education” as Modebelu and Duvie stated (2012, P.145). Therefore, teachers all around the world have always been interested in developing the teaching methods and strategies through time. As Njoku and Modebelu (2019, p. 2) asserted, educators are the foundation of a strong knowledgeable nation as they are “role playing vital roles in ensuring achievements of instructional objectives in educational institutions”.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the world witnessed a huge growth in the field of technology. Even though the internet has existed for 30 years, the integration of the internet with the field of pedagogy has not been accepted and acknowledged until recently (Mohammed & Al-Karaki, 2008). So, in order to explore this new aspect of

teaching, researchers and educators started doing experiments on both teachers and students to discuss the pros and cons of this new medium of instruction.

Statement of the Problem:

Saudi practicum teachers have difficulties in their practicum teaching experience.

The reasons behind these difficulties might be nervousness, low level of language proficiency, and lack of practice. Therefore, these problems that face the practicum teachers might have a strong impact both on practicum teachers' experience and on students' understanding of the curriculum.

Purpose of the Study:

This research was designed to investigate the perceptions of Saudi practicum teachers about online foreign language teaching anxiety and the reasons that affect the level of anxiety in their experience. Furthermore, this research provided practicum teachers with the knowledge to overcome foreign language teaching anxiety and will develop their efficiency in teaching EFL online by providing various strategies that practicum teachers used to overcome their foreign language anxiety.

Importance of the study:

The importance of this study lies in its potential contributions to the fields of foreign language education, online teaching, and teacher development, particularly in the context of Saudi Arabia. Here are some key reasons why this study is valuable:

1. **Addressing Online Teaching Anxiety:** By examining online foreign language teaching anxiety, this study sheds light on a specific area of teaching anxiety that has become increasingly relevant with the shift to online education. Understanding the causes and manifestations of anxiety among practicum teachers is crucial for developing targeted interventions and resources to support their mental well-being and teaching effectiveness.
2. **Enhancing Teacher Preparation Programs:** The findings of this study may inform teacher preparation programs by identifying the specific challenges that foreign language practicum teachers face in an online setting. This knowledge can guide curriculum developers in designing programs that address these challenges, such as integrating training in online classroom management, digital tools, and language proficiency enhancement.
3. **Improving Foreign Language Teaching Effectiveness:** Anxiety can negatively impact teaching effectiveness, particularly in foreign language contexts where teachers may already feel less confident. By understanding the factors that contribute to teaching anxiety, this study can help educational institutions implement strategies that foster confidence and reduce anxiety, ultimately improving language instruction quality and student outcomes.
4. **Contextual Insights for Saudi Arabia:** There is limited research on online foreign language teaching anxiety specifically among Saudi practicum teachers. This study fills a gap in the literature, providing culturally relevant insights that consider the unique educational and social context of Saudi Arabia. These findings can inform local education policies and practices that better support Saudi educators in their online teaching roles.

5. Promoting Teacher Self-Efficacy and Well-Being: The study highlights the importance of self-efficacy and effective coping mechanisms in managing teaching anxiety. By emphasizing these factors, it can encourage educational institutions to prioritize teacher well-being, offering professional development in areas like stress management, self-confidence, and resilience-building. Supporting teachers' mental health can lead to more positive teaching experiences and improved student engagement.

6. Guiding Future Research: This study provides a foundation for further research on foreign language teaching anxiety in online settings and across different cultural contexts. The insights gained from this research can inspire studies that examine similar issues in different regions, demographics, and teaching environments, expanding our understanding of online teaching dynamics globally.

In summary, this study is important because it not only addresses a timely issue in education but also offers practical implications for enhancing teacher training, supporting mental health, and improving language education practices within the Saudi context and beyond.

Research Questions:

This study answered the following questions:

- What were the Saudi practicum teachers' perceptions about online foreign language teaching anxiety?
- What were the reasons of anxiety that affect Saudi practicum teachers'

performance in teaching the foreign language online?

- What were the strategies that practicum teachers use to overcome their foreign language anxiety (FLA)?

Research hypothesis:

Based on the study's focus on Saudi practicum teachers' perceptions of online foreign language teaching anxiety, here are some potential research hypotheses:

1. Primary Hypothesis:

- H1: Saudi practicum teachers experience higher levels of foreign language teaching anxiety in online environments than in traditional classroom settings.

2. Secondary Hypotheses:

- H2: There is a significant relationship between Saudi practicum teachers' self-efficacy in English proficiency and their levels of online foreign language teaching anxiety, with lower self-efficacy associated with higher anxiety.
- H3: Saudi practicum teachers who employ coping strategies (e.g., extensive lesson preparation, peer support, relaxation techniques) report lower levels of foreign language teaching anxiety in online settings.
- H4: Saudi practicum teachers' preference for online teaching over traditional teaching is negatively associated with their levels of foreign language teaching anxiety.

3. Exploratory Hypotheses:

- H5: Saudi practicum teachers who perceive strong student engagement report lower levels of anxiety in online foreign language teaching.

- H6: Teachers with more online teaching experience report lower levels of foreign language teaching anxiety than those with less experience.

Each of these hypotheses can guide the investigation into specific aspects of foreign language teaching anxiety and help identify factors that may influence anxiety levels among practicum teachers in online environments.

Theoretical model:

1. Framework of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)
 - Foreign Language Anxiety Theory: This theory, typically applied to language learners, can be adapted to the context of teachers. It suggests that anxiety stems from concerns about language proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension.
 - Online Teaching Context: The shift to online platforms introduces unique challenges, such as managing technology, which can increase anxiety due to unfamiliarity with digital tools or reduced ability to gain student engagement.
2. Key Components of the Model
 - Internal Factors:
 - Language Proficiency Concerns: Anxiety may arise from self-perceived inadequacies in English language skills, including fear of making mistakes in grammar or pronunciation.
 - Self-Efficacy: Teachers' belief in their ability to successfully conduct online classes affects anxiety levels. Higher self-efficacy is associated with reduced anxiety.
 - Professional Identity and Competence: Practicum teachers' desire to be viewed as

competent educators may increase anxiety, especially when teaching in a non-native language.

- External Factors:

- Technology and Environment: Managing online tools and classroom environments, such as handling technical difficulties, influences anxiety. Limited interaction with students can hinder teachers' ability to build rapport, leading to heightened anxiety.

- Feedback and Evaluation: Teachers may feel anxious about evaluations from mentors and students, as well as judgments from parents. The potential for misunderstandings or negative feedback in a virtual setting can intensify this anxiety.

3. Coping Mechanisms

- Preparation and Practice: Practicum teachers employ strategies like mock sessions, thorough lesson planning, and self-evaluation to mitigate anxiety.

- Professional Development and Support: Building technology skills and seeking guidance from mentors are practical ways for teachers to increase confidence in their online teaching abilities.

- Community and Peer Support: Teachers can alleviate anxiety by sharing experiences and learning from peers or observing other educators in online teaching environments.

4. Outcomes of the Model

- The model predicts that teachers' anxiety levels may decrease as they become more accustomed to the online format and develop specific coping strategies. Positive adaptation to online teaching can result in higher engagement, better student-teacher rapport, and increased satisfaction with teaching outcomes.

This model can guide future research into how different internal and external factors influence foreign language teaching anxiety in online settings and offer insights into targeted strategies for supporting practicum teachers. This framework could also be refined by examining the impact of these factors over time and incorporating longitudinal data from practicum teachers.

Chapter two:
Literature review

Introduction to Literature Review:

The shift to online education has transformed the landscape of foreign language teaching, posing distinct challenges for educators, particularly those still in training. For Saudi practicum teachers, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in an online environment introduces new stressors, including managing digital platforms, engaging students virtually, and navigating linguistic proficiency concerns without the support of a physical classroom. This transition has amplified foreign language teaching anxiety, a concept typically explored in relation to language learners but now increasingly recognized as affecting teachers as well.

Foreign language teaching anxiety encompasses feelings of nervousness, fear of making language mistakes, and apprehension about students' comprehension and engagement, all of which can be heightened in an online context. This literature review examines the foundations of foreign language anxiety theory, the effects of self-efficacy and coping mechanisms on teacher anxiety, and previous studies on the online teaching experiences of EFL educators. By exploring these concepts, this section provides a theoretical basis for understanding the unique challenges faced by Saudi practicum teachers in online EFL instruction and identifies potential strategies to alleviate their anxiety.

Dependent and independent variable:

Dependent Variable

- **Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety:** This is the primary outcome the research aims to measure. It reflects the level of anxiety that Saudi practicum teachers experience while teaching English as a foreign language in an online environment. This variable could be measured through responses on anxiety-related items in the questionnaire.

Independent Variables

1. **Teaching Modality (Online vs. Traditional):** This refers to the teaching environment (online vs. traditional) and could affect the level of foreign language teaching anxiety experienced by teachers.
2. **Self-Efficacy in English Proficiency:** This reflects the teachers' confidence in their English language skills and their ability to teach effectively, which is hypothesized to influence anxiety levels.
3. **Coping Strategies:** This includes any methods the teachers use to manage their anxiety, such as lesson preparation, peer support, and mindfulness techniques.
4. **Preference for Online Teaching:** This represents teachers' attitudes toward online teaching, which may impact how comfortable or anxious they feel in the online teaching environment.
5. **Teaching Experience in Online Environments:** This refers to the amount of experience teachers have with online teaching, which may influence their anxiety levels.

By examining these independent variables in relation to foreign language teaching anxiety, the research aims to understand the factors that contribute to or mitigate anxiety among Saudi practicum teachers in online settings.

Definitions of Key Concepts:

Online teaching and learning. It is education that is practiced through the use of the internet and it has many types present today such as correspondence courses, Telecourses, CD-ROM courses, online learning, and mobile learning (Stern, n.d). Online education is becoming an important long-term strategy for many postsecondary institutions (Kim & Bonk, 2006). But it actually requires more than mastery of a software program. It is all about realizing and being aware of the impact of this kind of education on the learning process (Palloff & Pratt, 2013).

Practicum. A course of study designed especially for the preparation of teachers and clinicians that involves the supervised practical application of previously studied theory (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Foreign language anxiety. Anxiety when associated with learning a foreign language is termed as second/foreign language anxiety related to the negative emotional reactions of the learners towards foreign language acquisition (Al-Saraj, n.d).

Previous Studies in the Literature

A study was conducted by Yoon (2012) to investigate the reasons behind foreign

language anxiety, which is a common problem among non-native pre-service ESL teachers (NNPSET). Fifty-two pre-service ESL teachers from the public university in Seoul, South Korea, participated in this study during their teaching practicum. In the first quantitative data, the researchers used an online questionnaire that included 24 statements using the Likert scale. The results of this questionnaire were reported using descriptive statistics. For the qualitative data, two open-ended questions were obtained to elicit further information from the participants. These two methods were used based on the Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to find out the most influential factor of language anxiety and which factor affects NNPSET while teaching. Finally, the researcher found that four major factors affected NNPSET while teaching. The most influential factor was *language anxiety on using English in the class*. The other three factors were *language anxiety based on self-confidence*, *language anxiety about class preparation*, and *language anxiety overcome with efforts*.

A study was conducted by Kim (2002) to investigate teachers' perceptions about teaching English through English (TETE). Also, the goal of this study was to identify the difficulties that these teachers face and the strategies they use. Furthermore, this study examines their reaction toward teaching English through English. The participants of the study were 53 teachers (14 elementary school teachers, five middle school teachers, and 34 high school teachers). They were 27 female participants and 26 male participants. The researcher used a questionnaire for collecting the participants' background information and used another open-ended questionnaire to investigate more about the participants' experience in teaching English through English. After analyzing the data, the research showed that the differences in the participants' field of education, years of experience,

and gender did not have a strong impact on teachers' perceptions. On the other hand, the experience of using English in the classroom had a significant impact. So, teaching experience was not important, but the experience of teaching English through English in the classroom was the most important factor.

Another study was conducted by Salehi & Marefat (2014) with the aim to investigate the effects of foreign language anxiety and test anxiety on foreign language test performance. Also, this study was conducted to see whether there was any relationship between foreign language anxiety and test anxiety. The participants of this study were 200 EFL students. They were pre-intermediate level. The researchers used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and the Test Anxiety Scale to measure foreign language anxiety and test anxiety. After finishing the questionnaires, the scores were correlated with the students' final exam grades. Both foreign language anxiety and test anxiety had negative correlation with the exam grades, statistically. Also, correlation analyses indicated a strong positive relationship between foreign language anxiety and test anxiety. In conclusion, this study shows that language anxiety and test anxiety are related to each other.

A study was conducted by Talidonga and Toquerob in the Philippine. The focus of the study was on the Filipino teachers and how they dealt with anxiety during COVID-19 outbreak. The researchers developed study tools to find the impact of COVID-19 to the teachers on how they were dealing with the online education quarantine. Two-hundred and eighteen teachers volunteered to participate in this study prior to the online administration of the instrument created by the Department of Education which was an online platform for virtual lessons that teachers and students nationwide can use as a

substitute for the actual classrooms. An online questionnaire was designed by the researchers to investigate the practices, perceptions, and experiences of Filipino teachers on the COVID-19 outbreak which contained 25 questions. The results showed that the teachers found ways to cope with the new changes. So, the survey showed that teachers practiced online learning, communicated with the community, adhered to government instructions, and found purposeful activities to deal with anxiety after the suspension of school activities in the country due to the pandemic.

Hauser, Paul, and Bradley (2012) conducted a research study that examined the relationships between changes to computer self- efficacy (CSE) and computer anxiety and the impact on performance on computer-related tasks in both online and face-to-face mediums. The participants were students in a junior level Management Information Systems (MIS) class at a medium-size public University in the Southeast U.S.A. The participants were 129 males and 111 females. The researchers collected the  questionnaires from 205 students in face to face classes. Then, they collected 35 questionnaires from online classes. The students were given database tasks to solve within a set time frame. Then, they were asked to fill the questionnaires to test their anxiety level. As a result, the study shows that transactional distance was indeed acting as an anxiety-reducing mechanism.

Previous studies had been conducted either to investigate the teachers' perceptions of teaching EFL, or to measure the foreign language anxiety effect on EFL students. There are no studies investigated Saudi practicum teachers' perceptions about online foreign language teaching anxiety. Also, few studies of this field had been carried out in Saudi Arabia. This study is different from the previous studies in the way that it

will investigate Saudi practicum teachers' perceptions whose mother tongue is Arabic.

While the participants of the previous studies have other different native languages.

Besides, this study will focus on the participants' perceptions using online questionnaires to collect the data, while the previous studies used questionnaires and pre-tests.

Theoretical framework of the study:

This study investigates the experience of online foreign language teaching anxiety among Saudi practicum teachers, drawing on theories from foreign language anxiety, online teaching, and self-efficacy. The framework synthesizes these perspectives to understand the unique challenges that arise in teaching a foreign language in a digital environment.

1. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) Theory

- Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), a well-established concept in language education, is defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with language learning and use (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). In the context of teaching, FLA can manifest as a fear of making mistakes, concerns about pronunciation or grammar accuracy, and anxiety over students' comprehension and evaluation.

- Components of FLA: FLA comprises three primary elements: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). For practicum teachers, communication apprehension may stem from interacting in a non-native language, fear of negative evaluation may arise from judgments by students or mentors, and test anxiety can be reflected in the pressure to perform accurately in front of an audience.

- This study posits that FLA influences practicum teachers' self-confidence and comfort in teaching English online, where immediate feedback is limited, potentially intensifying apprehension.

2. Transactional Distance Theory

- Transactional Distance Theory (Moore, 1993) explains how physical and psychological distance in online education can impact communication and engagement. This theory asserts that online education inherently involves a "transactional distance," a gap in understanding and interaction that can lead to feelings of isolation, disconnection, and anxiety.

- For practicum teachers, transactional distance may increase anxiety due to the challenges of gauging students' comprehension, managing online communication, and handling technology. Conversely, it may also reduce physical presence anxiety, giving teachers a sense of safety and control that traditional settings may lack.

- This theory provides a framework for understanding how the online format can both exacerbate and alleviate aspects of foreign language anxiety, depending on individual teacher preferences and adaptability.

3. Self-Efficacy Theory

- Self-Efficacy Theory, introduced by Bandura (1997), suggests that individuals' belief in their capabilities influences their actions, motivation, and emotional states. Teachers with high self-efficacy in language skills and online instruction are likely to experience less anxiety and greater resilience in challenging teaching scenarios.

- Practicum teachers' self-efficacy in this study may be impacted by their prior experiences with online teaching, language proficiency, and confidence in managing digital tools. Low self-efficacy in any of these areas may lead to heightened anxiety, whereas high self-

efficacy can contribute to adaptive strategies for managing foreign language anxiety.

4. Coping Theory

- Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) describes the strategies individuals use to manage stressful situations, with approaches generally categorized as problem-focused or emotion-focused coping. In this study, practicum teachers' responses to online teaching anxiety can be analyzed through the lens of coping theory to understand how they manage their stress.

- Problem-focused coping might include actions like preparing extensively, practicing language skills, or troubleshooting technological challenges. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, could involve strategies like self-talk, relaxation techniques, or seeking support from peers or mentors.

- Coping theory highlights how adaptive coping mechanisms can influence teachers' levels of anxiety, satisfaction, and overall efficacy in online teaching.

Integration of Theories in the Study

In this study, foreign language anxiety, transactional distance, self-efficacy, and coping theory combine to create a framework that explains Saudi practicum teachers' experiences and responses to online teaching anxiety. This model proposes that:

- FLA is a core contributor to teachers' anxiety in online teaching, especially in relation to linguistic competence and performance.

- Transactional distance influences anxiety by altering traditional interaction patterns, creating a new set of challenges for engagement and connection with students.

- Self-efficacy affects how confident teachers feel in their ability to succeed in an

online environment, with higher self-efficacy linked to lower anxiety.

- Coping strategies are used by teachers to manage their anxiety, adapting both problem- and emotion-focused techniques to maintain teaching quality and personal well-being.

By examining these theoretical elements, the study provides a comprehensive view of how Saudi practicum teachers perceive and address the challenges of online foreign language teaching. This framework also suggests that interventions aimed at building self-efficacy, reducing transactional distance, and teaching effective coping strategies may alleviate anxiety, thereby improving online teaching experiences and outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methodology:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Saudi practicum teachers regarding foreign language teaching anxiety in online settings. Given the complexity of anxiety as both a psychological and situational factor, a mixed-methods approach was selected to capture the depth and breadth of practicum teachers' experiences. This methodological approach enables the study to quantify levels of anxiety and confidence while simultaneously exploring the nuanced, subjective factors contributing to anxiety in the online teaching environment.

The methodology is organized to examine both measurable aspects of teaching anxiety and teachers' personal experiences and coping strategies. First, a quantitative component uses a Likert-scale questionnaire to assess the prevalence and intensity of specific anxiety triggers. This is followed by a qualitative component, where open-ended questions provide participants with the opportunity to describe their unique challenges and the strategies they employ to manage anxiety in virtual classrooms. Together, these methods allow for a comprehensive analysis of how Saudi practicum teachers perceive and respond to the pressures of teaching English as a foreign language in an online setting. This section outlines the participants, data collection instruments, procedures, and data analysis techniques employed to achieve the study's objectives.

Research design:

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to examine the perceptions and experiences of Saudi practicum teachers regarding online foreign language teaching anxiety. This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to teaching anxiety, as well as the coping strategies that practicum teachers use to manage their anxiety in an online environment.

1. Population (participants):

The study involves 22 Saudi female practicum teachers from the Applied Linguistics department at Yanbu University College, Saudi Arabia. Participants are native Arabic speakers with high-intermediate proficiency in English, ranging in age from 22 to 25 years. The selection criteria ensure that all participants have recent experience teaching EFL in an online setting, enabling them to provide relevant insights into online foreign language teaching anxiety.

2. Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to participants via WhatsApp. The questionnaire comprises two sections:

- Quantitative Section: This part includes a Likert-scale questionnaire with 10 statements related to foreign language teaching anxiety. Statements measure factors such as nervousness when speaking English, concerns about making mistakes, confidence levels, and satisfaction with online teaching. Responses range from “Strongly Disagree” to

“Strongly Agree.”

- **Qualitative Section:** The second section consists of two open-ended questions designed to explore the reasons behind the teachers’ anxiety and the specific strategies they employ to cope with this anxiety. This qualitative component allows participants to elaborate on their experiences and provides deeper insights into the challenges and adaptive techniques used.

3. Data collection Procedure

The online questionnaire was designed using Google Forms, ensuring ease of access and response. Participants were asked to complete both sections of the questionnaire, with responses recorded and securely stored for analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine mean responses for each item, while the qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify common themes related to sources of anxiety and coping strategies.

4. Data Analysis (Method of analysis)

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Mean scores for each item in the Likert-scale questionnaire were calculated to identify trends in teachers’ anxiety levels and perceptions of online foreign language teaching. Items with lower mean scores indicate higher levels of anxiety, while higher mean scores reflect positive attitudes or lower anxiety levels.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic analysis was applied to the open-ended responses to categorize and interpret participants’ descriptions of anxiety triggers and coping mechanisms. This approach allowed for the identification of recurring themes, such as fear of making mistakes, technology-related challenges, and adaptive strategies, providing a richer understanding of the context of online teaching anxiety.

5. Research Design Justification

A mixed-methods design is particularly suitable for this study as it captures both the measurable aspects of teaching anxiety (through quantitative data) and the subjective experiences of practicum teachers (through qualitative data). This combination provides a well-rounded view of online foreign language teaching anxiety and helps reveal the complexity of the issues faced by Saudi practicum teachers in digital learning environments.

In summary, this research design enables an in-depth exploration of the factors contributing to online foreign language teaching anxiety and the ways in which practicum teachers cope, offering valuable insights that may inform teacher training programs and anxiety management interventions in similar educational contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR:
PRACTICAL STUDY

Data analysis:

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Saudi practicum teachers' experiences with foreign language teaching anxiety in an online environment.

1. Quantitative Data Analysis

- **Descriptive Statistics:** The quantitative data from the Likert-scale questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends in teachers' anxiety and confidence levels. For each of the 10 statements, the mean score was calculated to determine overall responses.
- **Mean Scores:** Lower mean scores on items (e.g., nervousness when speaking English or fear of judgment) indicate higher levels of anxiety, while higher mean scores on items related to confidence and satisfaction suggest lower anxiety and a more positive attitude toward online teaching.
- **Data Interpretation:** The calculated means provided insight into areas where teachers experience the highest levels of anxiety, such as concerns about language accuracy and student engagement. Conversely, areas with higher mean scores, such as satisfaction with teaching and a sense of connection with students, revealed aspects of online teaching where teachers felt more confident.

2. Qualitative Data Analysis

- **Thematic Analysis:** Responses to the open-ended questions were

analyzed using thematic analysis to identify and categorize recurring themes. This method allowed for a deeper exploration of the specific sources of anxiety and coping strategies used by practicum teachers in online teaching.

- Coding Process: The responses were coded to identify themes, which included categories such as “fear of making language mistakes,” “technical and time management challenges,” and “judgment from mentors or students.” These themes were used to explore the primary triggers of anxiety.

- Coping Strategies: Themes related to coping strategies were also coded and analyzed. Examples of identified strategies include “extensive lesson preparation,” “peer observation,” and “self-calming techniques,” illustrating the methods teachers used to manage anxiety and enhance their teaching effectiveness.

3. Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

- By synthesizing the quantitative and qualitative findings, a more holistic picture of the teachers’ experiences was developed. For instance, quantitative data showing moderate anxiety about student engagement was supported by qualitative data indicating that teachers struggled with gauging comprehension and maintaining connection in a virtual classroom.

- This integrated approach helped validate and explain the quantitative data, while the qualitative insights provided context and depth, revealing personal factors and adaptive behaviors that influenced teachers’ experiences.

The mixed-methods analysis enabled a thorough examination of foreign

language teaching anxiety among Saudi practicum teachers. The quantitative analysis highlighted the prevalence and degree of specific anxiety triggers, while the qualitative analysis offered rich insights into the challenges and coping mechanisms. Together, these findings contribute to a deeper understanding of online foreign language teaching anxiety and inform recommendations for supporting practicum teachers in digital educational settings.

Questionnaire

The participants were given an online questionnaire consisting with two parts.

Section one. this section contained three questions aimed to collect information about the participants' background and to make sure that they were involved in doing their practicum online. The participants were asked to inform the researcher with their age and nationality.

Section two. the participants were asked to answer the close-ended part to investigate their perceptions about foreign language anxiety in teaching EFL. The question consisted of 10 statements on a Likert scale with the following responses SA- strongly agree, A- agree, N- neutral, D-disagree, and SD- strongly disagree. The following table (Table 1) demonstrates the perceptions of the participants.

Table 1

Response frequencies for questionnaire items.

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean Response
1. I feel nervous when I speak English in front of students.	8	4	4	7	0	2.4
2. I feel worried that I might make mistakes while speaking English.	3	8	2	8	2	2.9
3. I sometimes forget what I prepared for the lesson when I start speaking English.	6	11	1	5	0	2.2
4. I feel afraid that my students and mentor may judge me based on my English language.	6	3	5	9	0	2.7
5. I use filler words a lot when I speak English (such as Umm, so, like).	0	5	1	14	3	3.7
6. I would feel confident even if one of my students were a native speaker of English.	2	1	9	10	1	3.3
7. I am connected to my students in a good way.	0	2	4	9	8	4.0
8. I am pretty satisfied of the way I teach students.	0	3	2	10	8	4.0

9. I feel confident even if I make a grammar	0	2	4	10	7	4.0
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mistake in the class.

10. Over all of my practicum teaching experience, I prefer online teaching and learning more than traditional classrooms.	6	3	3	5	6	3.1
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As shown in Table 1, the mean response to statement one (2.4) shows that 31.8% of the participants felt nervous while speaking English in front of the students. Also, the mean response of statement two was (2.9). It shows that 45% of the participants felt worried that they might make mistakes while speaking English. While in the third statement, the mean response (2.2) shows that only 18% of them forget what they prepared for the lesson when they start speaking English. The mean response of statement four (2.7) also shows that 41% of the practicum teachers feel afraid that their students and mentor may judge them based on their English language. Besides, the fifth statement's mean response was (3.7) and it shows that 63% of them use filler words a lot when they speak English (such as Umm, so, like), and the mean response of statement six (3.3) shows that 50% of them feel confident even if one of their students were a native speaker of English. Practicum teachers showed a very positive attitude in teaching online as the mean response of statement seven was (4) and it indicates that 72.7% of them connected to their students in a good way. Likewise, the mean response of statement eight was (4) as well as statement nine's mean response was (4) which suggests that the participants feel pretty satisfied of the way they teach students and they feel confident even if they

made a grammar mistake in the class. Finally, the mean response of statement 10 shows that 50% of them preferred online teaching and learning more than traditional classrooms. While 13% of them were *Neutral*, and 37% of them said that they preferred the traditional class style in teaching English.

According to their responses, practicum teachers seemed to adopt very well with the online teaching and learning. Interestingly, they showed a very positive attitude with the foreign language anxiety even though this was a completely new situation for them. Since half of them said that they enjoyed the experience, it suggests that they found some strategies to cope with the situation. Unlike what was expected, they preferred the online teaching more than the traditional classes setting and only 31.82% of them agreed for being anxious while speaking English in front of their students. Overall, the participants' responses showed that they could manage their fears and control it to make the most use of their experience.

Section three. The participants were asked two open-ended questions to find out the reasons of anxiety that affect their performance in teaching the foreign language online. The first question asked them about the possible reasons that make them feel nervous while speaking English in the classroom. The participants were asked to give at least three reasons. Table 2 provides some of their answers in general.

Table 2

Practicum teachers' responses summary to the open-ended questions (section three).

Q.1 As a practicum teacher, what are the reasons that make you feel nervous while speaking English in the classroom? (Give at least 3 reasons).

Reason 1	The fear of not being understood by the students.
Reason 2	The fear of making grammar or pronunciation mistakes.
Reason 3	The fear of being judged by the mentor, students, or students' parents.
Reason 4	The fear of being unable to handle the technological problems.
Reason 5	The fear of being unable to manage the time of the class.

Students' answers varied depending on their context, and by context I mean their school, students' behavior, language level, and their self-esteem. Some students wrote many reasons with long statements, while some of them wrote only one reason. Since they were teaching for the first time, they faced a little difficulty with the online teaching which leads to the first reason that explains their foreign language anxiety (FLA); being unable to connect to students and feeling afraid that students might not understand their explanation because of the lack of face-to-face communication and body language.

Especially since they were doing it online which might made it twice as hard to connect and deliver the information efficiently. Besides, most of them mentioned that they felt nervous because they constantly kept thinking about their grammar and pronunciation mistakes. Most of them made self-corrections for their own mistakes. The reason to describe their language deficiencies as a mistake and not as an error is because all of these participants are considered high-intermediate. So, they know the grammar rules but they are making mistakes because of the foreign language anxiety (FLA). The pie chart below demonstrates the percentage of students who stated their reason behind their anxiety.

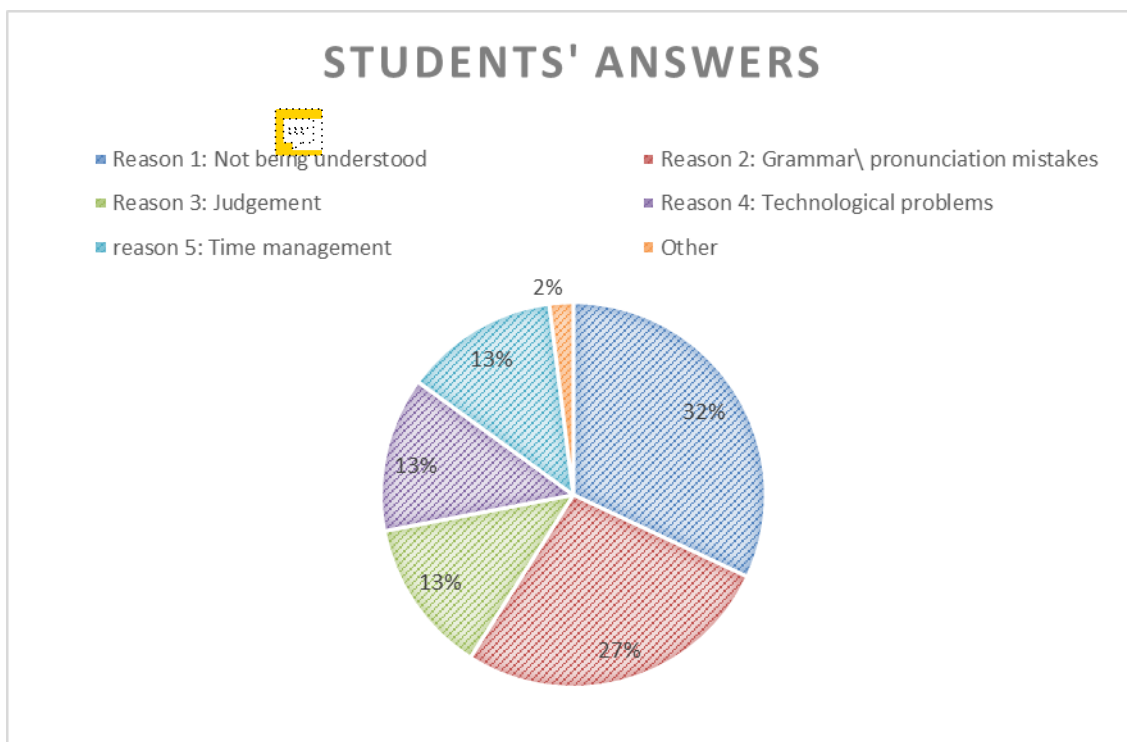


Figure 1. Demonstration of percentages of students' answers of the first open-ended questions.

In Figure 1 above, each number refers to a reason in Table 2. Clearly, there are very common reasons behind the anxiety that most students shared despite their variation in context. The fear of not being understood by the students (32%) and the fear of making grammar or pronunciation mistakes (27%) are the most dominant reasons behind the teachers' anxiety. While reasons 3, 4, and 5 share the same percentage of 13% of the participants. Finally, 2% indicates other reasons behind their FLA such as the lack of discipline of students, constant speech interruption, and having difficulty explaining the lessons in a simple language that suits the young learners.

The second question asked the participants about the strategies they used to overcome their FLA. The answers varied depending on each practicum teacher's needs.

Some of them mentioned that they tried to sit in a quiet place with a cup of coffee, and

some of them mentioned that they had to prepare very well for the lesson in order to overcome the obstacle of being anxious while speaking English. Others mentioned that

they imagined that they were talking to themselves and some of them even made a mock class or a demo class before the actual lesson. Also, some practicum teachers mentioned that they translated all the difficult words and tried to pronounce it correctly. Some said that they prepared the ideas they want to discuss in the lesson ahead of time and presented the lesson before the class to check their voice and the flow of their ideas.

Some of them also mentioned that they predicted some possible obstacles and tried to make some side plans to prevent them in case they occur. Finally, they mentioned that they watched other teachers on other platforms who have taught the same lesson and learned from them or even imitated their teaching style.

So, according to the data above, this research supports the previous studies since it shows that most of the participants experienced the foreign language anxiety (FLA) in their teaching. Furthermore, the reasons mentioned by the participants are similar to the reasons of the previous studies such as the studies done by Yoon (2019). Also, this study results are inline with Talidong & Toquero (2020) who suggested that teachers found purposeful and effective ways to deal with the anxiety in online teaching. Thus, this study suggests that most EFL teachers share not only common fears, but also common ways and strategies to deal with these fears.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Saudi practicum teachers about online foreign language teaching anxiety and the reasons that affect the level of anxiety in their experience. Also, this study asked for the strategies and techniques used by the practicum teachers to overcome the obstacles they faced in teaching EFL. The results showed that more than half of the experience practicum teachers enjoyed and preferred the online teaching and learning. Many of them faced problems in teaching EFL for the first time but they could control their anxiety and enjoy the experience. This study focused only on Saudi female EFL practicum teachers who are doing their practicum online. So, in future research perhaps it would be interesting to include male practicum teachers or other nationalities. Also, further studies could be done in the future with more focus on the reasons and strategies to help future EFL practicum teachers face their FLA.

Limitations of the Study

There are few reasons why results cannot be generalized to all other situations. For instance, the sample of this study was very small since the practicum teachers who could participate this semester were only 22. Besides, all participants were female. So, this study cannot be generalized on male practicum teachers.

Recommendations

Many recommendations can be suggested based on the results of this research. Firstly, I would recommend to explore more in the frame of EFL online teaching and foreign language anxiety (FLA). The practicum teachers are not used to or they do not

have enough knowledge about FLA which made them feel like they were not normal or like there was something wrong with them. So, I suggest that mentors and practicum teachers' advisors shall give them a brief idea about their situation and how to deal with it. They could perhaps suggest some techniques to the practicum teachers and tell them that it is just normal to feel anxious since English is not their first language. This way, the practicum teachers may feel more relaxed and comfortable with asking for help from their mentors and advisors. Finally, researchers are recommended to perform such a study in a broader context. So, in future research perhaps it would be interesting to include male practicum teachers or other nationalities. Also, further studies could be done in the future with more focus on the reasons and strategies to help future EFL practicum teachers face their FLA.

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Appendix – Questionnaire

Dear practicum teachers,

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of Saudi practicum teachers about online foreign language teaching anxiety and the reasons that affect the level of anxiety in their experience.

Thank you so much. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Section (A): Please choose the option that suits you the best according to the following scale: (SD- strongly disagree, D- disagree, N- neutral, A- agree, SA- strongly agree).

	statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel nervous when I speak English in front of students.					
2	I feel worried that I might make mistakes while speaking English.					

3	I sometimes forget what I prepared for the lesson when I start speaking English.					
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4	I feel afraid that my students and mentor may judge me based on my English language.					
5	I use filler words a lot when I speak English (such as Umm, so, like).					
6	I would feel confident even if one of my students were a native speaker of English.					
7	I am connected to my students in a good way.					
8	I am pretty satisfied of the way I teach students.					

9	I feel confident even if I made a grammar mistake in the class.					
10	Over all of my practicum teaching experience, I prefer online teaching and learning more than traditional classrooms.					

Section (B): Please answer the following questions.

1. As a practicum teacher, what are the reasons that make you feel nervous while speaking English in the classroom? (Give at least 3 reasons). *

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2. How do you overcome the fear of speaking English in front of your students? (Give at least 3 solutions). *

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