

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Tlemcen**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English
Section of English**

**An Exploration of Master One EFL Students' Anxiety in
Post COVID-19 Period at the University of Tlemcen**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages.

Presented by

Malak BERRABAH

Supervised by

Prof. Hafida HAMZAoui

Board of Examiners

Prof. Radia BENYELLES

Professor

President

Prof. Hafida HAMZAoui

Professor

Supervisor

Dr. Hidayat HEMCHE

MCA

Examiner

2022 - 2023

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation "An Exploration of Master One EFL Students' Anxiety in the post-COVID -19 Period at the University of Tlemcen" is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material that has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Miss BERRABAH Malak Nesrine

Date : 11/06/2023

Dedication

- *To my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up.*
- *To the love of my life “Abdelmounaim” and my best friends.*

Malak BERRABAH

- ***Acknowledgments***

My deepest respect to my kind supervisor Prof. HAMZAOUI Hafida for her guidance and precious advice.

Very special gratitude to the board of examiners Prof. Radia BENYELLES and Dr. Hidayat HEMCHE who agreed to spend time and effort evaluating this work.

I owe my deepest gratefulness to my TPR teacher Dr. Zekri Wafaa who inspired me and enlighten my way.

I would also thank all the faculty members (teachers and students) who participated in my work. Prof. Ismail BENMOUSSAT, Prof. Amine BELMEKKI, Prof. Ilhem SERIR, Prof. Ilhem Zoubida ELOUCHDI, Prof. Zoubir DENDANE, Prof. Mohammed Nassim NEGADI, Dr. Wassila BOUKLIKHA, and Dr. Youcef MESSAOUDI.

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the world, including the way of learning and communicating. One area that has been particularly affected is language anxiety in education, as students and teachers had to adapt to new modes of instruction and communication. As a result, many learners have experienced heightened levels of anxiety in their target language. This dissertation explores the issue of anxiety among Master One students in the Department of English in the post-COVID-19 period. The study aims to understand the causes, symptoms, effects, and solutions to overcome anxiety in order to provide insights for effective support. For this purpose, an exploratory case study included 27 Master One students of four majors in the English department at the University of Tlemcen (Algeria). Two research instruments were used to cross-check the gathered data (a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers). Qualitative and Quantitative analyses of data revealed that Poor time management is a major cause of students' high anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period. It was also found that personal diligence, improvement of study skills, and support from the social and pedagogical environment are good solutions to overcome anxiety. To conclude, this work brings attention to the notable problem of anxiety among Master One EFL students during the post-COVID-19 period. The research underscores the extensive impacts of the pandemic on students' mental well-being and academic experiences.

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 2.1: Specialty Of Study.....	32
Table 2.2: High Self-Esteem In Studies.....	33
Table 2.3: High Self-Esteem In Studies Detailed.....	33
Table 2.4: Low Self-Esteem In Studies.....	34
Table 2.5: Low Self-Esteem In Studies Detailed	34
Table 2.6: Students' Time Management.....	36
Figure 2.1: Students' Self-Esteem Rate	35

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AE: Anxiety Exploration

CA: Communication Apprehension

COVID 19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

EA: Educational Anxiety

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate

PCA: Post-COVID Anxiety

SA: Student Anxiety

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	Page
Declaration	II
Dedication	III
Acknowledgments	IV
Abstract	V
List of tables and figures	VI
List of abbreviations and acronyms	VII
Table of contents	VIII
General Introduction	1
Chapter One: Literature Review	4
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 Foreign language anxiety.....	6
1.2.1 Foreign language anxiety definition	6
1.2.2 The difference between L1 and FL anxiety.....	7
1.3 Types of anxiety.....	8
1.3.1 Trait anxiety.....	8
1.3.2 State anxiety.....	8
1.3.3 Situation-specific anxiety.....	9
1.3.4 Facilitating VS debilitating anxiety.....	9
1.4 Components of foreign language anxiety	10
1.4.1 Communication apprehension (CA)	10
1.4.2 Performance/test anxiety	10
1.4.3 Negative evaluation anxiety.....	11
1.5 Foreign language anxiety symptoms.....	11
1.5.1 Physical symptoms (body)	12

1.5.2 Cognitive symptoms (mind)	12
1.5.3 Behavioral symptoms	12
1.5.4 Emotional symptoms	13
1.6 Sources of foreign language anxiety	13
1.6.1 The learner's psychological factors	13
1.6.1.1 Fear of failure	13
1.6.1.2 Low self-esteem	14
1.6.1.3 Perfectionism	14
1.6.1.4 Anxiety disorders/personal traits	14
1.6.1.5 Lack of preparation and high expectation	15
1.6.1.6 Language learning history	15
1.6.1.7 Learning styles and strategies	16
1.6.1.8 Gender	16
1.6.1.9 Motivation	16
1.6.1.10 Linguistic proficiency in four skills	17
1.6.2 The teacher's role factor	18
1.6.2.1 Instruction	18
1.6.2.2 Interaction	19
1.6.2.3 Feedback	19
1.6.2.4 Communication	19
1.6.3 The learning environment (classroom dynamics)	20
1.7 Theories that explain foreign language anxiety	20
1.2.7.1 Krashen's affective filter hypothesis.....	20
1.2.7.2 Horwitz & cope's theory	21
1.8 Anxiety effects after the COVID-19 pandemic.....	22
1.8.1 Effect on students	22
1.8.2 Effect on proficiency	22
1.8.3 Effect on exams	23
1.8.4 Effect on the learning environment	24

1.8.5 Effect on economic and social life at university	24
1.8.6 Effect on campus	25
1.9 Conclusion.....	25
Chapter Two: Methodology and Data Analysis	27
2.1 Introduction	28
2.2 Research methodology.....	28
2.2.1 Type of research.....	29
2.2.2 Sample population.....	29
2.2.3 Research instruments.....	30
2.2.3.1 Students' Questionnaire.....	30
2.2.3.2 Teachers' Interview.....	31
2.3 Data analysis	31
2.3.1 Questionnaire analysis.....	32
2.3.2 Teacher's Interview analysis.....	39
2.4 Discussion of results	42
2.5 Suggestions and recommendations.....	44
2.5.1 Strategies to overcome anxiety	44
2.5.1.1 Students' individual level strategies.....	45
2.5.1.2 Social level strategies.....	46
2.6 conclusion	47
General conclusion.....	48
References.....	51
Appendices	57

General Introduction

Language teachers and researchers have repeatedly found that students create a state of mind and body discomfort especially when they are asked to sit for tests and exams or present workshops where they have to speak in public. This state is language anxiety, it is considered to be a problematic psychological impairment that causes negative impacts on students' academic achievement. Anxiety in a foreign language classroom is a phenomenon that has been increasingly attracting the attention of researchers widely for its important impact on learners. Language anxiety is considered a part of the affective factors which play a major role in student learning. As Arnold and Brown 1999 claim abroad understanding of effective factors leads to more effective language learning because attention will be drawn to how learners can overcome problems created by negative emotions and how teachers can transform those negative emotions into more positive feelings and, then facilitate the improvement of both language learning and teaching. It is essential for teachers and educators to be attentive to the feelings and emotional responses of their students so that they adjust their methods flexibly based on their students' needs. In addition, learners should be aware of this phenomenon (language anxiety) to perfectly deal with it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world, including the way of learning and communicating. One area that has been particularly affected is education among which foreign language education. Students and teachers alike have had to adapt to new modes of instruction and communication. As a result, many learners are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety when it comes to speaking and practicing their target language. This area has not been fully examined in previous research namely at the university level. This study aims to explore the causes of Algerian EFL students' language anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period, it proposes some strategies that can be employed by both students and teachers to overcome language anxiety in this situation. This work focuses on this period and will tackle different aspects of language anxiety as a psychological state considering solid research about its roots, causes, and effects on learning performance and achievements in order to suggest some solutions to overcome it.

To achieve the aims, the researcher strives to answer the following questions:

Q1-What are the causes of EFL students' anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period?

Q2 How to overcome EFL students' anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period?

The hypotheses that will be tested in this research are :

H1- Students' anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period is due to low self-esteem, poor time management, and difficulty to make social interactions again.

H2- Three aspects help to overcome students' anxiety: personal diligence, improvement of study skills, and social and pedagogical support.

In fact, the eagerness to reach the previously set objectives drives the researcher to design an exploratory case study dealing with first-year master's students, all majors in the English department of the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid (Tlemcen). This case study will collect qualitative and quantitative data from different sources relying on two research instruments: a questionnaire for learners, and an interview for teachers for teachers. The results will be analyzed on the basis of a mixed approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods (triangulation). This work consists of two chapters. The first chapter provides an in-depth exploration of language anxiety, covering its definition, causes, types, components, symptoms, and effects on students. This chapter aims to establish the theoretical foundation for the study and to help readers understand the significance of language anxiety in the context of language learning. The second chapter is devoted to data collection and analysis, and it will be conducted using a questionnaire for learners and an interview for teachers. This chapter aims to test the hypotheses formulated by gathering empirical data on the causes and solutions of language anxiety. The questionnaire will be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from learners, while the interview will be used to gather only qualitative data from teachers. The data collected from both sources will be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to obtain reliable results. Accordingly, some practical recommendations and suggestions for language teachers and learners will be presented at the end of the second chapter.

Chapter One: Foreign Language Anxiety

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Foreign Language Anxiety

1.2.1 Foreign language anxiety definition

1.2.2 The difference between L1 and FL anxiety

1.3 Types of Anxiety

1.3.1 trait anxiety

1.3.2 state anxiety

1.3.3 situation-specific anxiety

1.3.4 facilitating VS debilitating anxiety

1.4 Components of foreign language anxiety

1.4.1 communication apprehension (CA)

1.4.2 performance/test anxiety

1.4.3 negative evaluation anxiety

1.5 Foreign language anxiety symptoms

1.5.1 physical symptoms (body)

1.5.2 cognitive symptoms (mind)

1.5.3 behavioral symptoms

1.5.4 emotional symptoms

1.6 Sources of foreign language anxiety

1.6.1 the learner's psychological factor

1.6.1.1 Fear of Failure

1.6.1.2 Low self-esteem

1.6.1.3 Perfectionism

1.6.1.4 anxiety disorders/personal traits

1.6.1.5 Lack of Preparation and High expectation

1.6.1.6 Language learning history

1.6.1.7 Learning Styles and Strategies

1.6.1.8 Gender

1.6.1.9 Motivation

1.6.1.10 Linguistic Proficiency on four skills

1.6.2 the teacher's role factor

1.6.2.1 Instruction

1.6.2.2 Interaction

1.6.2.3 Feedback

1.6.2.4 Communication

1.6.3 the learning environment (classroom dynamics)

1.7 theories that explain foreign language anxiety

1.2.7.1 Krashen's affective filter hypothesis

1.2.7.2 Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope's theory

1.8 Anxiety effects after the COVID-19 pandemic

1.8.1 Effect on Students

1.8.2 Effect on Proficiency/performance/achievements

1.8.3 Effect on Exams

1.8.4 Effect on the learning environment

1.8.5 Effect on Economic and social life at University

1.8.6 Effect on Campus

1.9 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is a feeling of unease, nervousness, and self-doubt when speaking or learning a foreign language. It is a common phenomenon experienced by many language learners, and it can have a significant impact on their ability to learn and communicate effectively in a foreign language. Most language learners undergo the feeling of anxiety during the language learning process, and the degree and severity of this feeling may vary from one individual to another (Riasati, 2011; Alrabai, 2014).

this chapter represents a literature review of previous studies on language anxiety. it is primarily focusing on giving the reader an overview of the topic with definitions, its types, and possible factors or variables that lead to anxiety in learning. In addition, it sheds light on the difference between first and second languages anxiety by mentioning the research tools that help in measuring the anxiety level of EFL students.

1.2 Foreign language anxiety

In this section, we delve into the concept of foreign language anxiety, a topic that has garnered considerable interest in the field of language learning and education. We examine the significance of foreign language anxiety and its influence on language learners. This complex and multifaceted experience can hinder progress and negatively impact overall language learning outcomes.

1.2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety Definition

Various definitions of foreign language anxiety have been stated by researchers. Horwitz et al. (1986, as cited in Oteir & AL-Otaibi, 2012, p.312) define language anxiety to be “ a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”..anxiety, when associated with learning a foreign language, is termed “second/foreign language anxiety” related to the negative emotional reactions of the learners towards foreign language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). According to Doubek and Anders (2013), Anxiety can be defined as A

mental and physical state characterized by specific emotional, physical, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms. It is an adaptive reaction that mobilizes the organism and helps it defend, attack, and avoid an anxiety stimulus. The stimulus can be a previous external or internal antecedent trigger” (cited in Zdena, 2016, p. 3) . Similarly, Maclyntyre(1999) describes language anxiety as a feeling of stress, nervousness, emotional reaction, and worry that is linked to second/foreign language learning. According to MacIntyre and Gardner(1994,p.284), it is the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically and second-language contexts including speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a foreign language classroom. Spielberger (1972, p. 482) defines anxiety as “an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system that accompanies these feelings”.

1.2.2 The difference between L1 and FL anxiety

Speaking in the first language or a foreign language can bring about anxiety, especially when it comes to public speaking. Anxiety levels are typically higher when speaking in a non-native language, which can be more daunting than speaking in one’s first language. L2 anxiety can compound the challenges of learning and expressing oneself in a foreign language. Speakers must select appropriate vocabulary, construct complex syntactic structures, and use accents that are understandable while simultaneously figuring out how to reason and create. In 1991, Daly explored how individuals react to learning a second language in relation to their apprehension toward communicating in their first language. The author noted that the anxiety commonly experienced during first-language communication appears to have logical ties and is somehow closely linked to second-language anxiety

1.3 Types of anxiety

When people feel anxious or uncomfortable while they learn or use a foreign language, it's called foreign language anxiety. There are various types of this condition.

1.3.1 Trait anxiety

Trait anxiety refers to a person's general tendency to experience anxiety across different situations. Individuals with high trait anxiety tend to perceive many situations as threatening, and they may feel anxious even when there is no clear reason for it. Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality characteristic, "It is a more permanent predisposition to be anxious" (Scovel, 1978, p. 129) which means that the trait perspective occurs when a person has a permanent intent to be anxious. (Spielberger 1983) further defined trait anxiety as a stable predisposition to become nervous in a wide range of situations, it is a personality feature that remains stable over time and it is caused by fear and worry about many situations, The level of this fear depends on the situation people with high levels of trait anxiety are generally nervous people, they lack emotional stability. (Goldberg 1993) Studies have shown that trait anxiety can be associated with a variety of negative outcomes, including an increased risk of developing anxiety disorders such as depression. People with high trait anxiety have been shown to be more creative and problem-solving. Moreover, according to Eysenck (1979), Trait anxiety can impair cognitive function and disrupt memory.

1.3.2 State anxiety

State anxiety refers to a temporary emotional state characterized by feelings of apprehension, tension, and nervousness. It is often triggered by specific situations, such as public speaking or taking an exam. (moment-to-moment). Spielberger (1972) explains state anxiety as "the emotional reaction or pattern of response that occurs in an individual who perceives a particular situation as personally dangerous or threatening, irrespective of the presence or absence of objective danger" (p.489). State anxiety is "the apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time

as a response to a definite situation” (Ellis, 1994, cited in Alshahrani, 2016, p.67). For example, some students are afraid to speak up in front of teachers or classmates, even if they have background knowledge on the topic.

1.3.3 Situation-specific anxiety

Situation-specific anxiety refers to anxiety that is triggered by specific situations or stimuli. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that situation-specific anxiety is a unique anxiety form that happens invariably over time within a given situation. Furthermore, (Spielberger, 1983), pointed out that this type occurs at a particular point of time as a result of a specific situation. "This kind of fear is fostered by certain conditions such as public speaking and participation in classes” (Ellis, 2008, n.p.). People with this type of anxiety get nervous in some situations, but not in others.

1.3.4 Facilitating Vs debilitating Anxiety

Anxiety is a natural response to stress, and it can be experienced by anyone. Sometimes it can be helpful, However, when it becomes too intense or lasts for too long, it can be debilitating and interfere with one's daily life. In such cases, it is important to find ways to manage and reduce anxiety. Facilitating anxiety refers to anxiety that enhances performance on tasks that require attention and concentration, such as taking an exam or giving a speech. This type of anxiety is often referred to as good stress. "Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to fight the new learning task” (Scovel, 1978, p.139), in other words, this type of anxiety positively affects student learning, it stimulates and activates the brain to work hard to achieve the desired goals and complete tasks not avoid them, besides it pushes the student to be always alert and focused. According to Young (1990) facilitating anxiety refers to the increase in drive level which results in improved performance. However, debilitating anxiety refers to anxiety that can be overwhelming it significantly impairs a person's ability to function effectively in everyday life. It is a type of anxiety that motivates the learner to flee the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior” (Scovel, 1978, p.139). This means that it can lead to physical symptoms such as panic attacks, avoidance

behavior, social withdrawal, sleeping difficulty, and loss of appetite, it can impact our mental health and overall well-being.

1.4 Components of foreign language anxiety

Horwitz and Cope (1986) argue that foreign language anxiety may be related to three distinct components that are linked to academic and social situations: Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These components lead to the concept of L2 or foreign language anxiety.

1.4.1 Communication apprehension

It is a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people. Horwitz et al.(1986); Communication apprehension has been described as the fear or anxiety related to either actual or expected communication with another person or persons(McCroskey 1977).It is simply, the fear or anxiety associated with communicating in any form, whether it is speaking in public, participating in group discussions, or even making phone calls. Communication apprehension has a huge impact on second foreign language anxiety. People who are apprehensive about speaking in groups are likely to be more uncomfortable when doing so in a second foreign language class in addition to feeling Less in control of the communication situation or their work is being monitored (Horwitz, et at., 1986,P .27).

1.4.2 Performance / Test anxiety

According to Brown 1994, test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure in a test. It is a type of language anxiety that is characterized by a fear of not being able to perform well in a specific language-related task such as writing an essay, taking a test or an exam, participating in a debate, speaking in public, doing a job interview or presenting an academic work. This type of anxiety can be caused by a fear of failure or a lack of preparation for the task. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, performance or test anxiety is the feeling of apprehension and fear of the consequences of being unable to perform a task or of performing it at a level that will raise expectations of even better task achievement.

Young 1991, claims that anxiety would affect foreign language learners with low levels of oral proficiency.

1.4.3 Negative evaluation anxiety

The fear of negative evaluation is a core feature of social anxiety as a dimensional personality trait. When compared to other forms of anxiety, social anxiety as a phenomenon is related to the individual's belief that one is being assessed by others in a social context (Schlenker&Leary, 1982). According to some authors, social anxiety can also be called evaluation anxiety or "fear of judgment", because it implies interpersonal evaluation in a real or imaginary social setting(Watson & Friend, 1969). I.e. This is the anxiety that arises from the fear of being judged or evaluated by others. It can manifest in social situations where language use is required, such as in conversations or social gatherings. Fear of negative evaluation is the feeling of " apprehension about others' evaluation, avoidance of evaluative situations, and expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Horwitz et al. 1986,p.127). Negative evaluation anxiety can be caused by a lack of confidence in one's language abilities or a fear of not meeting social expectations, therefore the student develops the fear of making mistakes while speaking or writing in a language. Individuals with a fear of negative evaluation may experience symptoms such as avoiding social situations, feeling self-conscious, and having negative thoughts about themselves. They may also have difficulty expressing themselves and may avoid situations where they have to use their second language, which can limit their opportunities for communication and personal growth. So in the foreign language context, fear of negative evaluation comes mainly from both teachers and students' peers because foreign language necessitates continuous evaluation from both of them(Von Worde, 2003).

1.5 Foreign language anxiety symptoms

foreign language anxiety may impact students both positively and negatively. When anxiety is at a moderate level and accompanied by motivation it leads to positive performance and outcomes, therefore success. However, if the level of anxiety is high it affects the student's memory and concentration, so it will lead to

failure and may harm his well-being, social life as well as his development of social skills. Anxiety symptoms may be shown at the level of the body, the mind, behaviors, and emotions.

1.5.1 Physical symptoms (Body)

Body symptoms can include increased heart rate, sweating, shaking, muscle tension, shortness of breath, Nausea or insomnia, rapid heartbeat, and gastrointestinal distress. These symptoms can be quite distressing and can interfere with the ability to communicate effectively in the target language. It's important to be aware of these symptoms and to develop strategies to manage them to improve one's language proficiency and overall language learning experience.

1.5.2 Cognitive symptoms (Mind)

In addition to physical symptoms, language anxiety can also manifest in cognitive symptoms. These symptoms are related to how an individual thinks and perceives their ability to communicate in a foreign language. Cognitive symptoms of language anxiety can include negative self-talk, self-doubt about language skills, difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, mental blocks, and a tendency to avoid situations that involve speaking the target language. These symptoms can be particularly debilitating as they can lead to a decrease in confidence and motivation, making it more difficult to learn and improve in the target language.

1.5.3 Behavioral symptoms

Language anxiety can also manifest in a number of behavioral symptoms that can impact an individual's ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language. These symptoms may include avoiding situations where they are required to speak the target language, staying quiet in group conversations, and using nonverbal cues to avoid speaking. In addition, hyperactiveness is when the student keeps moving or talking a lot. Also, when the person avoids completing or preparing homework at home and is unable to even participate in class activities or discussions. Another behavior is indicated by a smile and nod, Focus on frequent, rarely intrusive, and frequent communication feedback. In more severe cases, individuals may

experience a complete avoidance of the target language, which can have significant consequences for language learning and personal and professional relationships.

1.5.4 Emotional symptoms

Language anxiety can also cause a range of emotional symptoms, which can be just as challenging to deal with as physical, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms. Emotional symptoms may include feelings of fear or panic, a sense of embarrassment, shame, low self-esteem, frustration, social isolation, and self-doubt. These emotions can be triggered by a variety of situations, such as speaking in public, making mistakes, or feeling judged by others. These emotional symptoms can have a profound impact on an individual's language learning experience, affecting their confidence, motivation, and overall enjoyment of the process.

1.6 Sources of foreign language anxiety

Studies have shown that there are numerous causes of foreign language anxiety. They can be split into three main variables: The learner's psychological factor, The teacher's role factor, and The learning environment.

1.6.1 The learner's psychological factors

Foreign language anxiety is a common phenomenon experienced by individuals when learning or using a second language. It is caused by the learner's personal and psychological issues, which means that most of the causes are generated by the learner himself.

1.6.1.1 Fear of failure

"Anxiety arises from the fear of failing, looking stupid, or making errors." (Horwitz et al., 1986). Learners may feel anxious about speaking in a foreign language due to the fear of making grammatical errors, mispronouncing words, or using inappropriate vocabulary. Also known as a perceived threat. Language learners may feel threatened by a variety of factors, including fear of making mistakes, fear of being judged by others, fear of getting bad scores, or fear of not being able to communicate effectively. These feelings of threat can be exacerbated

by various situational factors, such as high-stakes language tests, competitive classroom environments, or cultural differences that create communication barriers.

1.6.1.2 Low self-esteem

"Low self-esteem and negative attitudes toward oneself are linked to foreign language anxiety." (Teimouri&Plonsky, 2013). Another factor that contributes to foreign language anxiety is self-esteem. Language learners who have low self-esteem may doubt their ability to learn a new language, leading to feelings of frustration and anxiety. Additionally, negative feedback from teachers or peers can further damage a learner's self-esteem, creating a vicious cycle of anxiety and self-doubt. According to Bailey et al. (1999), Yamini and Tahriri (2006), and Young (1992), research indicates that individuals with lower levels of self-esteem tend to experience higher levels of foreign language anxiety. These individuals may worry excessively about others' opinions, leading to increased anxiety levels.

1.6.1.3 Perfectionism

"Students who have a higher drive for perfectionism also report higher rates of language anxiety" (MacIntyre& Gardner, 1991). Learners who have a tendency towards perfectionism may be more prone to experiencing anxiety when learning a foreign language, as they may put pressure on themselves to achieve a high level of proficiency.

1.6.1.4 Anxiety disorders / Personal traits

"Anxiety disorders are frequently comorbid with foreign language anxiety, causing language learners to avoid communication in the target language." (Price, 1991). Anxiety disorders can be a cause of foreign language anxiety because they can make it more difficult for individuals to cope with the challenges and uncertainties of learning and using a new language. For example, individuals with social anxiety disorder may feel excessively self-conscious and worried about making mistakes or being judged negatively by others while attempting to communicate in a foreign language. This fear of negative evaluation can cause them to avoid or withdraw from language learning situations, which can further increase

their anxiety and make it even harder to develop proficiency in the language. Similarly, individuals with generalized anxiety disorder may experience excessive worry and apprehension about their ability to learn a new language, which can interfere with their ability to concentrate and retain new information. This can cause them to become overwhelmed and discouraged, leading to a cycle of avoidance and increased anxiety. Anxiety disorders can make it more difficult for individuals to manage the stress and uncertainty of learning a new language, leading to foreign language anxiety. As for personality traits, "Introverted and neurotic individuals are more prone to experiencing anxiety in the language classroom." (Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

1.6.1.5 Lack of preparation and high expectation

Lack of preparation and high expectations can be a cause of foreign language anxiety because they can create a sense of pressure and uncertainty that can be difficult to manage when learning or using a new language. For example, if an individual has high expectations for his ability to speak a foreign language fluently and without errors, but has not adequately prepared or practised, they may feel anxious and self-conscious when attempting to communicate in the language. This anxiety can make it harder for them to think clearly and express themselves effectively, leading to frustration and further exacerbating their anxiety. Also, if an individual has a high-stakes event coming up, such as a language exam or an important conversation in a foreign language, and they feel unprepared, this can also lead to foreign language anxiety. The pressure of the situation combined with the sense of being unprepared can create a sense of panic, making it harder for the individual to perform to the best of their ability.

1.6.1.6 Language learning history

A learner's past experiences with language learning can also contribute to foreign language anxiety. Negative experiences, such as being embarrassed or humiliated when attempting to communicate in a foreign language or being forced to learn a language, or struggling to keep up with classmates, can create lasting feelings of anxiety and frustration. Furthermore, positive experiences, such as successful

language exchanges or immersion experiences, can help build confidence and reduce anxiety in future language-learning endeavors.

1.6.1.7 Learning styles and strategies

If one's preferred learning style is not considered, it may cause distress. For instance, providing auditory language learning materials to visual learners may lead to anxiety. Also, students who prefer to learn in a group might feel anxiety when asked to give a solo presentation in a foreign language classroom. For example, individuals who value their personal space may experience anxiety when participating in role-play exercises in a language class.

1.6.1.8 Gender

Studies have shown that women tend to experience higher levels of anxiety when learning a foreign language compared to men. This could be attributed to various factors, such as socialization and cultural expectations surrounding women's communication and gender roles. Women may feel pressured to exhibit politeness, cooperation, and expressiveness while using a foreign language, which can create performance anxiety. Additionally, gender can influence the type of language learning experiences, with women being more likely to enroll in classes that emphasize communicative competence and group interactions, which can be challenging for some. Meanwhile, men tend to engage in self-directed language learning activities, which provide a sense of autonomy and control and may help alleviate anxiety. (Yih, Chin & Ling, 2017) showed that female students showed higher levels of anxiety when learning a second language, while others (Kitano, 2001 et al.) reported that male students were more anxious throughout. There are also studies showing that there is no significant difference in the level of language anxiety between male and female students (Yiang & Dewaele, 2019)

1.6.1.9 Motivation

Motivation can have a major impact on foreign language anxiety. People who are highly motivated to learn a foreign language may experience less anxiety because they are more engaged in the language-learning process. On the other hand, less

motivated people may experience higher levels of anxiety because they may lack confidence in learning and using the language. Motivation can affect foreign language anxiety in several ways. First, people who are motivated to learn a foreign language are more likely to seek opportunities for practice and immersion, which can help build self-confidence and reduce anxiety. For example, someone who wants to learn Spanish may be looking for opportunities to study abroad in a Spanish-speaking country, which can provide valuable insight into the language and culture. In addition, individuals who are motivated to learn a foreign language may be more likely to set realistic goals and expectations for language learning, which can help reduce achievement and achievement anxiety. By focusing on the process of learning and improving rather than the ultimate goal of language proficiency, individuals can approach language learning with a growth mindset that helps reduce anxiety and boost confidence. Previous research in the field of SLA also supports the predictive role of autonomic motivation for boredom in EFL learning. For example, the study by (Noels et al.,1999; Khodadady,2013;Alamer, and Almulhim,2021) agrees with the fact that higher self-motivation is associated with lower learning anxiety among high school and college English learners. In turn, lower levels of anxiety in EFL learning predict more active student engagement such as deep processing and active participation in classroom activities.

1.6.1.10 Linguistic proficiency in four skills

Research has shown a strong link between language proficiency and language anxiety. As proficiency increases, anxiety decreases. (Aida,1994; Gardner,1985; Trembley, and Masgoret,1997) have all reported significant variations in language anxiety between high and low-proficiency students. Individuals with lower proficiency levels may experience higher levels of anxiety compared to those with higher proficiency levels. (Young,1991). (Philips,1992) found a negative correlation between anxiety and performance in oral tests. (Saito, Horwitz and Garza,1999) also discovered similar results about reading comprehension. Additionally, (Gardner, Moorcroft, and MacIntyre,1987) found that vocabulary production was affected by anxiety, while (MacIntyre and Garden,1991a) observed a similar trend in listening

comprehension and short-term memory. Finally, (Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert, 1999) found that writing proficiency was also negatively impacted by anxiety. This could be explained by the fact that as learners become more proficient in a language, they feel more confident in their abilities and experience less anxiety in using the language. "The relationship between language anxiety and proficiency is particularly pronounced in language classrooms". MacIntyre et al. (1998). Individuals who lack confidence in their language skills and proficiency may worry about making mistakes in writing or speaking. This unease can lead to anxiety and reluctance to use the language in a social context such as work or academic setting, they may feel pressure to perform well. Furthermore, the social pressure from peers or community members who are fluent in the language can affect the student negatively. Such individuals may feel inadequate or self-conscious when speaking with native speakers. Also, people with restricted language exposure and few opportunities to practice their language skills may experience apprehension regarding their ability to communicate proficiently. A lack of proficiency in listening and speaking skills can lead to communication breakdowns. Struggling with reading can lead to difficulty understanding texts and increase anxiety when faced with new material. Not being able to effectively communicate in writing can lead to anxiety when writing assignments or communicating in written form. "Receiving positive feedback on language abilities can help reduce anxiety, particularly for those with lower proficiency". Horwitz (2001).

1.6.2 The Teacher's role factor

Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002) reveal that the attitudes and personalities of teachers may cause language anxiety. There are several ways in which a teacher can inadvertently contribute to language anxiety in their students: through instruction, interaction, feedback, and communication.

1.6.2.1 Instruction

Teachers can cause language anxiety by using a high-pressure, error-focused approach in their teaching, which can undermine students' confidence and motivation. For example, pointing at students to answer may provoke the feeling of

stress. If teachers give insufficient, inadequate guidelines or unclear instructions, it can create ambiguity and uncertainty among students. Also, If a teacher uses a rigid teaching approach that doesn't take into account individual learning styles and needs, this can make some students feel left behind and discouraged. Aydin (2008) claimed that the way of correcting the students' mistakes by teachers is a source of anxiety. While it's important to teach grammar and accuracy in language learning, if a teacher is constantly correcting students' mistakes or focusing solely on grammar rules, this can create a sense of pressure and anxiety in students.

1.6.2.2 Interaction

Teachers can contribute to anxiety by fostering a classroom climate where students feel judged, embarrassed, or excluded, leading to feelings of self-consciousness and isolation. A teacher's demeanor, attitude, and behavior can set the tone for the classroom. If the teacher appears stressed or intimidating, this can make students feel nervous and self-conscious when speaking in class. "Teachers who foster interaction, provide scaffolding, and give constructive feedback may help counteract anxiety and enhance students' language proficiency". (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994)

1.6.2.3 Feedback

Teachers' feedback can be too critical, too infrequent, or too inconsequential, leaving students unsure of their progress and feeling a lack of support. If a teacher doesn't provide enough support or feedback to students, this can make them feel left behind and lost in a dilemma about their performance.

1.6.2.4 Communication

Teachers can cause anxiety by not creating opportunities for authentic communication in the target language, thereby limiting students' exposure to real-life language use and interaction, or by expecting too much too soon. If a teacher sets unrealistic expectations or demands too much too soon from their students, this can lead to feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. "Teachers' high expectations and

criticism may contribute to language anxiety and hinder the development of communicative competence". (Horwitz et al., 1986).

1.6.3 The learning environment (classroom dynamics)

Luo (2012) claims that The primary causes of experiencing foreign language anxiety are the classroom atmosphere, learner characteristics, target language, and the foreign language learning process itself. When the learning environment comfort is absent Students would feel anxious in a non-welcoming classroom, with no proper ventilation, bad lighting, inadequate seating arrangement, and noise. Furthermore, An overcrowded classroom and boring lectures can make it difficult for students to concentrate and feel comfortable participating in activities. Students may feel anxious if they don't have access to the resources and support they need to succeed in language learning. This could include materials like textbooks, language apps, or language tutors. Learners who come from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds may feel anxious if they are not able to connect with their classmates or feel like they don't fit in and face cultural shock, social pressure, and judgment.

1.7 Theories that explain foreign language anxiety

Language anxiety, a psychological phenomenon that affects language learners, has been a topic of interest for researchers in the field of second language acquisition. Two prominent scholars who have extensively explored this area are Stephen Krashen and Elaine Horwitz. Krashen's theory of language acquisition and Horwitz's theory of foreign language classroom anxiety offer valuable insights into understanding the complexities and implications of language anxiety.

1.7.1 Krashen's affective filter hypothesis

In second language acquisition, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) is a fundamental theory. It highlights the impact of affective factors on the process of acquiring a second language. According to Krashen (1982), these factors can be classified into three categories: 1) motivation, 2) self-confidence, and 3) anxiety. The theory posits that these emotional variables can hinder the flow of input to the language acquisition device in the brain, thus indirectly influencing the learning

process. In essence, the Affective Filter Hypothesis explains how emotional states can impact the success of language acquisition. When learners experience anxiety, tension, and lack of self-confidence due to an increase in the affective filter, it can impede their success. Conversely, a low affective filter can alleviate anxiety and facilitate learners' understanding of language input. This hypothesis is significant in pedagogy because it redefines the role of language instructors, who are tasked with creating a low-anxiety classroom environment that promotes comprehensible input. Language teachers can reduce students' anxiety by adopting specific strategies, such as emphasizing the message over the form, and delaying production until students are prepared. By employing this theory, English language proficiency is expected to improve, as learners gain input and feel more comfortable participating in class activities with a lower affective filter.

1.7..2 Horwitz, and Cope's theory

In their research, Horwitz and Cope (1986) define foreign language anxiety as a complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that arise from the unique nature of the language-learning process in the classroom (p. 128). They argue that anxiety related to foreign language learning is specific to the situation and differs from general anxiety associated with learning in other academic fields. Their theory is supported by observations of language learners in language classes and feedback from thirty language learners attending a language course. This research suggests that foreign language learning involves more self-concepts and self-expression than other academic fields, which contributes to the distinct nature of anxiety associated with learning a foreign language. Even learners who excel in other subjects may experience anxiety when learning a foreign language. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) utilized nine anxiety scales to examine anxiety dimensions and their correlation with different learning measures. Their research reveals that foreign language anxiety is significantly linked to foreign language proficiency, whereas general anxiety is not related to foreign language proficiency. This implies that foreign language anxiety is a unique form of anxiety.

1.8 Anxiety effect in post-COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a great deal of change in our lives. One of the most significant changes is the level of anxiety. It impacted the students' physical and mental health, proficiency, performance, and achievements in their academic careers and the examination process. In addition to, the learning environment, and social and economic life at the university and campus.

1.8.1 Effect on students

The pandemic has made that anxiety even more pronounced. Students have been identified to experience stress and anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This anxiety not only affects their physical and mental health but also their academic performance and families. The pandemic-induced anxiety persists even after the lockdown period, affecting students during on-campus classes. Researchers, including Haucke et al., have studied the effects of COVID-19-related anxiety on students. They found that while information about COVID-19 did not significantly affect participants' moods, anxiety and stress increased due to concerns about contracting the virus and uncertainty about social interactions post-lockdown. Their study showed that COVID-19 continues to impact people's mental health even after the lockdown. Zhuo et al. examined the impact of returning to university after lockdown on students' mental health and discovered that those who feared the return of the virus experienced more anxiety than those who did not. Similarly, Tadese et al. found comparable results in their study of students' perceptions of post-lockdown classes. Additionally, Kharma et al. conducted research in Saudi Arabia and found that 85% of respondents suffered from stress and anxiety upon returning to college due to concerns about COVID-19 protocols and exposure to people outside after the lockdown. These studies demonstrate that the uncertainty of students' health when returning to college contributes to their anxiety and stress levels.

1.8.2 Effect on proficiency

the pandemic has presented challenges for language learners, it has also highlighted the importance of language proficiency in a globalized world. COVID-

19 increased the level of language anxiety, therefore it impacted the level of proficiency, performance, and achievements. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' language proficiency levels are complex and may vary depending on factors such as learning environments, resource accessibility, and individual circumstances, certain studies indicate that the pandemic has negatively affected language proficiency. The shift to online learning during the pandemic has presented difficulties for language learners, including reduced opportunities for in-person interactions with instructors and peers, limited access to language immersion environments, and increased distractions and difficulty with staying motivated. These difficulties can impede language proficiency levels, contribute to language anxiety, and lead to low achievement. Additionally, the pandemic has disrupted traditional study abroad programs and international travel, which can restrict opportunities for language learners to practice their language skills in real-world settings. This may particularly impact students who rely on language proficiency for their career or academic goals. Generally speaking, some students may have experienced learning setbacks or gaps in their education due to the pandemic's disruptions. These students may need additional support or resources to catch up and succeed academically. On the other hand, some students may have excelled in the online learning environment and continue to perform well in person. Moreover, it is worth noting that returning to in-person learning does not necessarily imply a return to pre-pandemic conditions. Some schools and institutions may have introduced new measures or technologies to support learning and ensure safety, which may affect students' performance in different ways. Ultimately, assessing the pandemic's impact on student's performance in class and adjusting accordingly may take time.

1.8.3 Effect on exams

Anxiety can significantly impact students' exam performance, especially in the post-COVID period. The disruptions caused by the pandemic, such as changes in learning environments, limited access to resources, and health and safety concerns, may have increased anxiety levels among students. Anxiety can result in various

negative effects on exam performance, such as difficulties with concentration, memory, and motivation or confidence. Physical symptoms, such as sweating, trembling, and a racing heartbeat, may also hinder focus during exams. To assist students in managing their anxiety and achieving success in exams, universities may need to provide more resources and support, such as counseling services, workshops on study skills, and accommodations for mental health conditions or disabilities. Additionally, universities should communicate any changes to exam formats or procedures to students and guide effective exam preparation in the post-COVID period.

1.8.4 Effect on the learning environment

At the peak of the pandemic, universities had to shut down, and lectures were forced to move to virtual platforms, with videos and materials shared online. Subsequently, many changes have taken place, and universities have been able to reopen, with indoor group meetings allowed once again. However, despite the risk of Covid-19 still prevailing, many universities are opting to continue conducting a larger portion of their lessons online, blending it with occasional in-person meetings, potentially with smaller groups. Although we have learned to adapt to living with Covid-19, there are still numerous measures in place to prevent its spread. As a result, many universities have implemented additional health and safety protocols. Such as the installation of hand sanitizing stations throughout the campus, including at the entrance of lecture halls. The social distancing of seating arrangements, the frequent cleaning of shared spaces like libraries, and potentially even requesting that students continue wearing masks if possible.

1.8.5 Effect on economic and social life at university

The pandemic generated financial difficulties. Regrettably, this has resulted in a rise in depression and anxiety among younger people, particularly university students. Since many jobs were shut down, the business domain has declined, and no money was available to fulfill all their needs, such as transportation, food, learning materials ... etc. The positive news is that this has prompted universities to implement additional support systems to aid those who may be struggling, whether

it be physically, mentally, or financially. As a result, students who find themselves feeling anxious or concerned about various aspects of their studies, such as online learning, face-to-face interactions, or having to isolate due to illness, can receive help and support until they overcome these challenges. The socializing landscape in universities has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with anxiety playing a key role in the post-COVID period. Many students may still feel uneasy about socializing, particularly in large groups or in proximity to others. Consequently, universities may need to continue implementing measures that promote social distancing and limit the spread of COVID-19, such as limiting gathering sizes or requiring mask-wearing in specific situations. Moreover, the pandemic has led to an increased focus on virtual socializing, such as virtual events or meetings. Although it provides a way for students to stay connected, it may not be a replacement for in-person socializing and may contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation, and anxiety.

1.8.6 Effect on campus

a study revealed that a significant proportion of university students experienced anxiety related to COVID-19 while on campus. Many students expressed concerns about potentially transmitting the virus to their families after being at college (57%). A majority of students (55%) reported being unable to relax while at college, and 35% agreed that their anxiety about coming to campus caused trouble sleeping. In addition, 35% of students reported feeling nervous and anxious while on campus, and the same percentage felt that their anxiety persisted even after returning home. Furthermore, one-third of the sample reported feeling unable to control their worry about contracting COVID-19 while on campus, and 39% reported feeling more irritable since the resumption of on-campus classes.

1.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, language anxiety is a common phenomenon that can have a significant impact on language learners. In this chapter, we have provided a detailed exploration of language anxiety, including its definition, types, symptoms, components, and effects on students. The era after the pandemic was also

demonstrated and many of its aspects that affected language anxiety and students were discovered. Language anxiety is a complex construct that can manifest in different ways depending on the individual learner and their language learning context. It implemented how language anxiety can have a range of negative effects on language learners, including reduced motivation, impaired performance, and lower levels of proficiency. These effects can be particularly pronounced for students who are already struggling with language learning, such as those who are learning a second or foreign language. Overall, this chapter has provided a solid foundation for understanding the significance of language anxiety in language learning, and it highlights the need for further research and intervention to help language learners overcome this debilitating condition, especially in the post-COVID-19 period.

Chapter two:

Research Design, Data Analysis and Recommendations

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Research methodology

2.2.1 Type of research

2.2.2 Sample population

2.2.3 Research instruments

2.2.3.1 Students' Questionnaire

2.2.3.2 Teachers' interview

2.3 data analysis

2.3.1 questionnaire analysis

2.3.2 interview analysis

2.4 discussion of results

2.5 suggestions and recommendations

2.5.1 Strategies to overcome anxiety

2.5.1.1 Students' individual level strategies

a. Self-care

b. Studies organization

2.5.1.2 Social level strategies

c. Institutional level

d. Peer support

2.6 conclusion

2.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant disruptions in various areas of our lives, including language learning and teaching. With the transition towards online and blended learning, both students and teachers have had to adapt to new methods of instruction and learning, which can lead to anxiety and stress. Therefore, this chapter aims to present the methodology and data analysis techniques used to investigate the impact of anxiety on master one EFL students in the post-COVID period. As a common and often crippling condition, anxiety can greatly affect language learners, particularly in the context of foreign language learning. In the preceding chapter, we delved into the definition, types, symptoms, components, and consequences of language anxiety on students. This chapter will build on this foundation by outlining the research methodology applied to gather and analyze data on anxiety levels among master one EFL students in the post-COVID era. This chapter focuses on the practical aspects of the dissertation at hand, which comprises two sections. The first one emphasizes on the methodology used and its components, the second section focuses on the analysis of the instruments and their discussions. In addition to some suggestions stated.

2.2 Research methodology

The first section provides a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology employed to undertake this study, including the techniques and tools employed. It also offers a description of the target population, the research instruments, and the reliability and validity of the research.

2.2.1 Type of research

The objective of this research is to investigate the causes and impact of anxiety on students in the post-COVID period and explore appropriate solutions to overcome it. The research methodology adopted is an exploratory case study which is a research method that aims to investigate a phenomenon or a particular case in-depth, it involves exploring a real-life situation or context to gain a deeper understanding of the subject of study, which will allow us to gather new insights about the topic. According to Dornyei (2007), mixed methods research involves utilizing various combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or analysis levels. By incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, the aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of anxiety on master one EFL students in the post-COVID period. Triangulating will enable us to identify common themes and patterns, as well as individual differences and unique experiences relating to anxiety in the context of EFL learning in the post-COVID period.

2.2.2 Sample population

The focus of this research was on master one EFL students from all majors in the English Department of the University of Tlemcen. The sampling approach for this population was non-random, purposive sampling was used also known as selective sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific criteria or characteristics that are relevant to the research objectives. The researcher deliberately chooses individuals who possess the desired qualities or knowledge related to the research topic. This means all Master One students from 4 specialties, Didactics, Language studies, Literature and Civilisation, and translation. Their age range is from 20 to 42 with a higher frequency of 85.2% in the age group from 21 to 23, with the dominance of the female gender at 81.5% over males. the study aimed to include students who have studied during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, eight English teachers at the master One level who had from 15 to over 40 years of teaching experience were also included in the research and selected randomly.

2.2.3 Research instruments

Research instruments are tools used by researchers to collect accurate and reliable data in a study. They can include surveys, interviews, observation checklists, and tests, and may be quantitative or qualitative. Choosing the appropriate research instruments is important for the success of the study, as they can impact the quality and validity of the data collected. Researchers should choose and develop instruments that fit their research question, design, and participants. In this thesis, a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers were used.

2.2.3.1 Students' questionnaire

A Questionnaire was sent online to Master One English language students of all majors, the objective was to gather 40 questionnaire answers from 4 specialties of the English department, but only 27 students answered. The questionnaire comprises 15 questions that are put into five sections. The initial section, titled "Students' Profile," includes three closed questions to gather demographic information such as age, gender, and field of study (specialty). In the second section, "Self-esteem," students are required to rate their self-esteem level by choosing from options such as strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, to determine whether it affects their anxiety level. The third section is about "Time Management," where students are asked to respond with options such as never, sometimes, often, and always, to assess the frequency of their time organization and how it impacts their stress level. The fourth section, titled "Social Interactions," contains a combination of close-ended and open-ended questions to investigate whether social interaction after the pandemic was a cause of increased anxiety. The last section, "Solutions," is a set of open-ended questions to let students express their thoughts freely and share the solutions they propose to overcome anxiety in the post-pandemic period.

2.2.3.2 Teachers' interview

To obtain sufficient data through conversation, conducting interviews is an essential method. The structured interview for teachers consists of 10 predetermined questions that are organized into three sections. The first section, "Teachers' self-identification," inquires about their teaching experience or the number of years they have been teaching. The second section, "Teachers' opinions on the learners' causes and effects of anxiety in the post-COVID period," aims to gauge the prevalence of anxiety among students after the pandemic and how it is manifested. Furthermore, it examines whether the given variables can be attributed to their increased anxiety, as well as whether there are additional factors to consider, with a focus on the relationship between students' anxiety and their academic achievements. Additionally, it explores the different aspects of students' lives that are impacted by anxiety. The third section, entitled "Solutions," includes a series of questions intended to elicit information on the strategies teachers employ to assist their students in overcoming anxiety and progressing in their academic careers.

2.3 Data analysis

In this section, an overview of the data analysis process utilized in this study is provided to extract valuable information from the collected data through a systematic approach, ensuring the reliability, validity, and credibility of the findings. Data analysis involves essential steps such as data cleaning, coding, categorization, and interpretation. It encompasses both quantitative and qualitative analysis, employing statistical methods to derive numerical data and exploring textual or narrative data for a comprehensive understanding. This mixed methods approach, also known as triangulation, allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the research data.

2.3.1 Questionnaire analysis

Questionnaire analysis is an essential process that helps researchers obtain valuable insights from the data collected. This process involves techniques such as data cleaning, coding, and statistical analysis, enabling researchers to identify trends and patterns in participants' responses. By analyzing questionnaires, researchers can gain an understanding of their study population's attitudes, opinions, and behaviors, which can guide their research conclusions and recommendations. To perform an effective questionnaire analysis, researchers must carefully organize and understand their data and research question and design.

Section One: Students' profile

This section demonstrates the field of study of the participants.

Q3: Specialty of study

Table 2.1: Specialty of study

Specialty	AF	RF
Language studies	10	37%
Didactics	6	22.2%
Literature & Civilisation	6	22.2%
Translation	5	18.5%

AF: absolute frequency

RF: relative frequency

The table shows that the majority of the participants are from the specialty of LS (37%). The remaining students are more or less equally divided among the other specialties.

Section Two: Self-esteem

This section measures the level of student's self-esteem.

Q4: Self-esteem level

Table 2.2: high self-esteem in studies

Sentences	Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself in my studies.	4	15	6	2
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities to study.	11	14	2	0
6. I feel that I'm a person of worth in the classroom	4	15	5	2
8. I take a positive attitude toward myself when studying.	8	16	2	1

This table shows the level of self-esteem, of items (1.3.6.8) These items express a high level of self-esteem. These results can be simplified by fusing the responses into two categories as presented in the following table.

Table 2.3: high self-esteem detailed in studies

Sentences	Strongly agree/ agree (AF)	RF	Strongly disagree/ disagree (AF)	RF
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself in my studies.	19	70%	8	30%
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities to study.	25	93%	2	7%
6. I feel that I'm a person of worth in the classroom	19	70%	8	30%
8. I take a positive attitude toward myself when studying.	24	89%	3	11%

Items 1,3, and 6,8 reveal that the majority of the sample students show a high level of self-esteem, through their answers, they seem to be proud of themselves and have high self-confidence. They do not care when people criticize them but rather take a positive attitude toward themselves and have a strong will to succeed.

Table 2.4: low self-esteem in studies

Sentences	Strongly agree	Agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
2. At times I think I'm not good at all in my studies	4	17	3	3
4. I feel I do not have much to be proud of in my studies	2	9	11	5
5. I certainly feel useless at times in the classroom	6	8	8	5
7. When it concerns my studies, I think I'm a failure	1	5	11	10
9. I feel anxious when people criticize me in the classroom	7	6	11	3

This table represents items (2.4.5.7.9) that express low self-esteem. Here again, responses are grouped into “agree” or “disagree” to have a clearer picture (see Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: low self-esteem in studies detailed

Sentences	Strongly agree/ Agree (AF)	RF	Disagree/ Strongly disagree (AF)	RF
2. At times I think I'm not good at all in my studies	21	78%	6	22%
4. I feel I do not have much to be proud of in my studies	11	41%	16	59%
5. I certainly feel useless at times in the classroom	14	52%	13	48%
7. When it concerns my studies, I think I'm a failure	6	22%	21	78%
9. I feel anxious when people criticize me in the classroom	13	48%	14	52%

Except for two items (2 and 5) which show a higher rate of students who express low self-esteem, the other items (items 4,7, and 9) reveal a higher rate of students with high self-esteem. Then the results of this table seem to confirm the previous results, i.e. most respondents show a high level of self-esteem, and only a few participants do not value themselves, and do not feel good about their studies.

Q5: Students' self-esteem rate

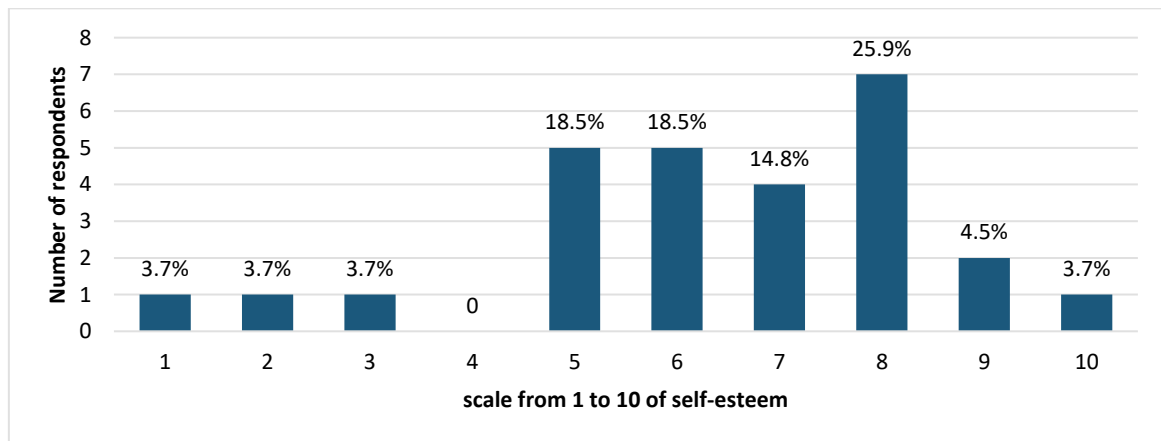


Figure 2.1: Students' self-esteem rate

The figure shows that the majority of participants believe that they have high self-esteem, i.e. above the average (between 5 and 10 on the scale, especially 8 with a rate of 25.9% of the sample). Only few students (11.1%) do not value themselves, and rank their self-esteem below the average (between 1 and 3 on the scale).

Section three: Students' Time Management

This section presents the student's proficiency level in time organization.

Q6: Students' time management proficiency

Table 2.6: Students' Time management

Sentences	never	Some- times	Often	always	
1. I make a list of what to do every day.	11	11	5	0	
2. I prioritize my assignments according to their importance and the time needed.	2	7	9	9	
3. I set deadlines for my goals that are to be achieved.	6	15	3	3	
4. I review my calendar and planner weekly	15	8	3	1	
5. I avoid time wasters.	5	10	8	4	
6. I know how to organize my time and give myself breaks while studying.	1	11	9	6	
Total	AF	40	62	37	23
	RF	25%	38%	23%	14%

The table shows 6 items that express good time management. However, the majority of students appear to be bad time managers since they do not organize their assignments and work and fall in the trap of being always late and anxious about the consequences. Making their to-do lists and planning are not techniques used by those respondents; everything seems to be random and messy.

Q7: students' state in a time-pressure situation

92.6% of the sample students are indeed stressed when they work and run out of time. They feel frustrated, pressured, and out of order, they are afraid to be late, and won't submit their work on time. Some said that stress prevents them from giving all their capacities. Students also complained that they are given so much work to do with less time to be done, Therefore they panic thinking about their teachers' reaction which pushes them sometimes to skip the class. A minority suffers from overthinking which makes them anxious all the time thinking about deadlines, work quality, exams, marks, failure, and unforeseen events. Whereas, the rest said that

they do not feel stressed since is it something normal and can be controlled, they claim that it helps them to work harder and generate new ideas.

Section Four: Social interactions

This section investigates the students' social interactions after the pandemic.

Q8: friendship re-establishment after the pandemic

81.5% of the sample participants did not encounter difficulty making friends after the pandemic. They think that people socialize naturally, and the majority stated that their friends remained the same. Some said that they lost all of them but made new ones easily since they were extroverts and getting out of their comfort zone is not a big deal for them. This new generation is very easy to blend with they are open-minded. However, 18.5% of students claimed that they faced difficulty interacting again since COVID-19 made socializing worse, especially for introverts and shy learners it was an uncomfortable situation for them.

Q9: Participation in clubs or engagement in social activities after the pandemic

A minority of participants 33.3%, joined clubs after the pandemic to interact with people such as Stoflish and AIESEC, others attended conferences, signed up to learn new languages (Turkish, Spanish ...) and some started to teach English courses.

Q10: Students' feelings in the classroom

44.4% of informants feel frustrated, upset, and lonely when they don't interact with their classmates. They doubt their potential and feel demotivated, some said that they need to be surrounded by their mates to feel good and involved to seek guidelines via communication. Whereas, the majority of students 55.6% don't feel anxious since they don't mind spending time alone and can handle the situation by themselves perfectly.

Q11: Students' social life in university after the COVID-19 period.

Social life in the university after the Pandemic was active for some participants, they described it as a good era where the situation slowly began to return to normal,

where they made new friends, reunited with old ones, and had healthy relationships to enjoy the opportunities to study and chill with mates. For them life is racing, there is no time to waste but to create good memories at the university and leave their fingerprint in the department. Few participants had difficulty opening discussions, they described their social life as non-existent, no interaction was done, and they attended courses and went back home.

Section Five: solutions

This section provides solutions to overcome anxiety.

Q12: Tips to overcome anxiety

Increasing the level of self-esteem was one of the major tips given by the participants .by being confident, grateful for their marks, and motivated. They believe in themselves, face their fear, and take action to work harder. In addition, they interact with people to fill their time and get closer to God to avoid feeding their anxiety since it will consume them. Some students said that they prepare their lectures beforehand, avoid overthinking about little things, practice sports, or even seek help from a therapist or friends. And always remind themselves that they are human and that making mistakes is part of the learning process.

Q13: Exercises helping to improve students' study skills?

The exercises stated by the participants involved social media, which has a great impact on the students, they mentioned watching videos, movies, and talk shows such as TED, playing video games, and following grammar and vocabulary channels, for example, American English, chatting via apps (Facebook, Instagram...) and expanding their knowledge by searching about new topics on the net. Furthermore, some students are using the Pomodoro technique which is a time management method where you work on a task for 25 minutes, called a Pomodoro, and then take a short 5-minute break. After four Pomodoros, you take a longer break of 15-30 minutes. This technique helps improve focus and productivity and prevents burnout. Also the use of flashcards and spaced repetition, reading books,

writing short stories, debating different subjects with mates, group works, and practicing speaking in front of the public.

Q14: Family and friends support

the participants receive support from their family, they said that they admire that they are English students, and they provide them with emotional support in hard times especially their mothers who cheers them up when they feel down. besides, friends push them forward and believe in their success, their help is shown in sending lectures, doing recordings, and even explaining the lesson when it is not clear enough. Whereas few students don't get support from anyone, they get motivated on their own and support themselves.

Q15: Teachers' support

Students explained that teachers create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom allowing them to feel at ease and participate freely and get rid of anxiety. Sometimes, they make jokes and tell us about their experiences at our age giving pieces of advice. They try to decrease the amount of anxiety by making us feel comfortable while speaking publicly, they assert that everyone makes mistakes which is totally fine, and they plan extra hours for revisions to help us understand more. Most of the teachers are aware of mental health issues which are amazing, they are more understanding and cooperative, and they cherish the idea of every single student is valuable and wanted. However, A minority of participants didn't receive support from their teachers, for them some teachers are a nightmare, they are severe and make harsh comments that increase the level of anxiety even more.

1.3.2 Teacher interview analysis

Interview analysis is an essential step in qualitative research, allowing researchers to gain insights into participants' attitudes and experiences. The process involves transcribing audio recordings and analyzing the data for themes and patterns. Eight Master One teachers have been interviewed and asked several questions to gain feedback to test the hypotheses.

Section Two: On the causes of the learners' anxiety in post COVID-19 period

This section provides causes mentioned by teachers that increase the level of anxiety of their learners.

Q2& Q3: The number of students being anxious and the appearing symptoms

The majority of teachers answered that only a few students were anxious after the pandemic, while some teachers asserted that many or more than half of students suffered from anxiety after the pandemic.

According to the respondents (teachers), they notice anxious students when they became reddish, they shiver and have a mental block which means an absence of words or hesitation to give an answer. Then they became very active, speed breathing, low voice tone, and avoidance of eye contact with their teacher. In addition to, their behavior with their mates, they don't seem comfortable but rather lost, therefore they do not involve in the discussions, they do not participate or interact, and simply lost focus.

Q4& Q5: Causes of students' anxiety after the COVID-19 period

All the respondents believe that the three variables (low self-esteem, poor time management, and difficulty making social interaction again are causes of students' anxiety during post covid period. They also mentioned other causes that increase anxiety such as loneliness, conviviality, state of the country, health situation, social media addiction or gaming, family factors, exams and fear of evaluation, weak personality, and low self-confidence. mental disorder, and the work/studies combination.

Q6: Correlation between a student's anxiety and his academic achievements

All the teachers agreed on the nature of the negative correlation between the student's anxiety and his academic achievements which is a cause/effect relationship. This means that it depends on the level of anxiety if it is high the achievements will be low. Therefore anxiety is considered an impediment to

educational advance and also professional promotion. However, if the level of anxiety is low the better are the achievements and success.

Q7: the effects that anxiety causes on students

The effects stated by the respondents are isolation, fear, the complication of behaviors, passiveness, oblivion, memory loss, and laziness. In addition, they become very narrow-minded and introverted, they lose interest and lack communication.

Section Three: solutions

This section presents strategies and techniques used by teachers to help their students overcome anxiety.

Q8: strategies to facilitate the learning process for anxious students

The strategies used by teachers involved pushing the learners to participate and interact by making them comfortable. In other words, making them feel at ease, present interesting topics and comprehensible lectures to avoid boredom. they believe that teachers should be democratic, patient, and friendly to cool the atmosphere and be ready to listen to their learners' needs, and be open to free talks.

Q9: Teachers' tips to increase students interaction

Teachers usually use jokes, anecdotes, or storytelling to make them feel free to express themselves. they settle an inter-relationship between themselves and their learners, by providing a calm climate and supportive environment to get them involved and push them to discuss with no fear and feel one family in the classroom.

Q10: study skills to help students overcome anxiety

The respondents implement different study skills, for example, the 5 techniques, the 1-minute talk, ted talks videos, imply hidden messages, extra online sessions, debate on different topics, peer evaluation or group work, and language skills. In addition, teaching educational psychology, giving them pieces of advice or moral speeches, sometimes they switch to a funny mood. Furthermore, reading aloud,

borrowing examples from real-life experiences, and opening the discussion to let them speak about their problems are effective ways to teach and gain satisfaction.

2.4 Discussion of the results

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors contributing to anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period and identify effective solutions to mitigate it. The researcher employed a combination of student questionnaire and teacher interview, yielding a diverse range of results. These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation, enabling the researcher to address the initial research questions and evaluate the validity of the hypotheses by confirming or rejecting them. The following section presents the key conclusions derived from the study about the research questions.

The first hypothesis posited that low self-esteem, poor time management, and difficulty to make social interactions again would be significant causes of anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period. The results obtained from the student questionnaire revealed a contrasting perspective. The majority of students did not perceive low self-esteem or difficulty in making social interactions as major causes of their anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period, they always had high self-confidence and socialize easily. In contrast, it was found that poor time management emerged as a significant cause of language anxiety among the participants, the results show the crucial role of effective time management strategies in alleviating language anxiety in the post-pandemic context. Poor time management was indeed confirmed by the students that it was a variable that affected their anxiety and therefore their achievements. The transition from online learning to on-site necessitated students to independently manage their study schedules since they did not organize their studies and keep procrastinate their assignments, leading to increased stress and anxiety. In addition, the findings of the teachers' interview provided support for this hypothesis, as teachers identified all three factors as contributing to their students' anxiety levels. This discrepancy highlights the importance of considering different perspectives and subjective experiences in understanding the complex nature of anxiety. While the teachers' insights provide valuable professional observations, it is

essential to acknowledge and respect the students' self-reported experiences. Thus, the results of this study indicate that the first hypothesis is confirmed by the teachers but partially by the students, suggesting that the impact of these factors on anxiety levels may vary among individuals in the post-COVID-19 period.

The second hypothesis proposed that personal diligence, improvement of study skills, and social and pedagogical support would serve as effective solutions to overcome anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period. The findings obtained from both the student questionnaire and teacher interview confirm the validity of this hypothesis. The data revealed that students who demonstrated personal diligence in their language learning activities reported lower levels of anxiety. These individuals actively engaged in self-directed practice sought additional resources, and maintained consistent study routines. Moreover, the participants who made efforts to improve their study skills, such as time management and organization, experienced a notable decrease in anxiety. The results also indicated that social and pedagogical support played an important role in decreasing anxiety among students. Students who had access to supportive peer networks, encouraging family environments, and teachers who offered regular feedback and encouragement reported a higher level of confidence and reduced anxiety in their language learning endeavors. These findings underscore the significance of personal diligence, study skill enhancement, and social and pedagogical support as effective solutions to overcome anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period. They emphasize the importance of creating a conducive learning environment that fosters self-directed learning, provides resources for skill development, and promotes supportive interactions among students and teachers. which means that the second hypothesis is fully confirmed.

To summarize, this study provides valuable insights into anxiety causes during the post-COVID-19 period and effective strategies to address it. The results indicate that the impact of low self-esteem and social interaction difficulties may vary among individuals in terms of causing anxiety. Poor time management is for sure one of the factors that increased students' anxiety. Furthermore, personal diligence,

improves study skills, and support universally contributes to reducing anxiety levels. These findings underscore the significance of creating a supportive learning environment that promotes self-directed learning, skill development, and positive interactions. By understanding the underlying causes of anxiety and implementing targeted interventions, educators and policymakers can develop strategies to support students' mental well-being and optimize language learning outcomes. Additionally, this study highlights the ongoing need for research and collaboration to address the unique challenges posed by the pandemic and refine interventions that effectively reduce language anxiety in the ever-changing educational landscape.

2.5 Suggestions and recommendations

Drawing on the insights gained from the research findings, this section provides crucial suggestions and recommendations to address anxiety in the post-COVID-19 era. By capitalizing on the understanding of the identified causes and effective solutions, the recommendations put forth practical steps for educators and policymakers to take. These steps are designed to prioritize students' mental well-being, enhance language learning outcomes, and cultivate an environment that nurtures resilience, skill development, and positive interactions. Language instructors who exhibit patience and understanding while providing a variety of effective coping strategies play a vital role in significantly reducing language anxiety. Moreover, their supportive approach fosters students' confidence and motivation in language learning. By implementing these measures, educational stakeholders can effectively navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, creating an atmosphere conducive to enhancing students' overall growth and success. As noted by Young (1991), proficient language educators offer tailored assistance through personalized feedback, supplementary practice chances, and the establishment of a secure environment where students can freely express themselves without apprehension of criticism.

2.5.1 Strategies to overcome anxiety

As the post-lockdown period continues, universities may still see many students struggling with heightened levels of anxiety related to the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic. This anxiety can have negative effects on various aspects of student life, including academic performance, socializing, and overall well-being. Nevertheless, there are numerous strategies that university students can implement to manage and overcome their anxiety. Whether by students themselves, receiving help from teachers, university staff, or even peers.

2.5.1.1 Students' individual level strategies

There are several strategies that university students can use to help manage and reduce their anxiety in the post-lockdown period :

a. self-care

Engage in self-care practices such as maintaining a healthy diet, getting sufficient sleep, regular exercise, and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga can also aid in reducing anxiety and promoting overall well-being. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), when students actively participate in relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, and progressive muscle relaxation, it can effectively reduce anxiety and improve their language performance. Physical exercise can reduce cortisol levels, improve cognitive function and generate a sense of pleasure and contentment. To manage anxiety levels and lead a well-rounded life, dedicate time to relaxation, engage in reading, or watch movies.

b. studies organization

students should set up an effective time management program to organize themselves and not be rushed to finish their homework .use appropriate techniques to study that suits their learning styles. maintaining social relationships with classmates may help to stay updated They should also set realistic expectations for their academic work and avoid overloading themselves with coursework or responsibilities that they can't handle. In other words, they should be nice to themselves and avoid anxiety to reach better achievements.

2.5.1.2 Social level strategies

Teachers and peers in education are vital for supporting students with anxiety, recognizing its impact on academic progress and well-being. Through social-level strategies, teachers create supportive classrooms to alleviate anxiety, while peers offer understanding and collaborative support. Together, they empower students to develop resilience, confidence, and overcome anxiety, enabling them to fully engage in their educational journey.

c. Institutional level

As universities continue to adapt to the post-lockdown period, many teachers are facing the challenge of helping their students cope with heightened levels of anxiety related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Anxiety can negatively impact students' academic performance, well-being, and socialization, making it essential for teachers to address these concerns in their classrooms. To support their students, teachers can implement various strategies to help reduce anxiety and promote a positive learning environment. These strategies can include providing clear communication, creating a safe and supportive classroom environment, and offering academic and emotional support. “Creating a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment can reduce anxiety and enhance language learning.” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In addition to, counseling services, workshops, and accommodations for students with disabilities or mental health conditions. Virtual mental health support services can also be a valuable resource for students who may be hesitant to seek in-person support.

d. peer support

Classmates and peers can play a crucial role in reducing each other's anxiety in the post-lockdown period. Social support and connection with others are essential for promoting overall well-being and managing anxiety. Being in a supportive and inclusive learning environment, students would feel comfortable sharing their concerns and receiving feedback and support from their peers. Practicing open communication, active listening, and empathy can help create a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness, besides, Studying in groups helps to

alleviate the feelings of isolation and make students feel more connected and engaged with their studies. Additionally, classmates and peers can help promote healthy behaviors, such as exercising together or sharing healthy meals, which can also contribute to reducing anxiety levels. Students should cultivate positive relationships, have a good time and take a break from the stress of academic life with friends.

2.6 Conclusion

Chapter Two serves as a comprehensive overview of the methodology and data analysis employed in this study. The research design was thoughtfully constructed to address the research questions and objectives, utilizing qualitative and quantitative approaches. By employing data collection methods such as interviews and questionnaires, a thorough exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences regarding foreign language anxiety was achieved. The data analysis process involved, categorization, and interpretation, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. The integration of thematic analysis and statistical techniques facilitated a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. This chapter establishes a solid exploration that contributes to a deeper understanding of foreign language anxiety and will inform the development of effective strategies and interventions to address this issue in language learning contexts.

General Conclusion

This work tried to shed light on the topic of anxiety experienced by EFL students in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. An overview and background scope of language anxiety was established to know more about it and dig into the variables causing the increased level of anxiety, in addition to its impact on students in that specific period, searching for the solutions to solve the issue.

Throughout the two chapters, an in-depth exploration of various factors contributing to anxiety among Master One EFL students was presented. The first chapter examined the theoretical foundations and existing research on language anxiety, its causes, types, components, symptoms, and various effects on students with a focus on the period after the pandemic. Then the second chapter delved into the specific challenges faced by students, the possible causes for anxiety in the post-COVID-19 era, and how they overcame it. By analyzing empirical data and incorporating relevant literature, valuable insights were gained into the students' experiences and the impact of the pandemic on their anxiety levels.

The results of the study revealed that Master One EFL students' anxiety experienced in the post-COVID-19 period, was influenced by factors such as a lack of adequate study skills namely poor time management, the majority were not organized in their studies and always rush themselves to finally obtain negative feedback. Other factors such as low self-esteem and difficulty to make social interactions again do not seem to play a key role in heightening students' anxiety. Most students revealed having high levels of self-esteem, and socializing did not seem to be problematic for them. Therefore, among the various possible solutions that were used by the learners to overcome anxiety were personal diligence, improvement of study skills, and support from the social and pedagogical environment. These findings aligned with the initial hypotheses posited at the beginning of the research, confirming the significant impact of the pandemic on students' anxiety levels.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Due to the focus on a specific group of Master One EFL students at a particular university, generalizability to other contexts may be limited. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data and the absence of long-term follow-up may have introduced certain biases and limitations in capturing the full complexity of students' anxiety experiences. Besides, the first hypothesis is partially confirmed since students did not report low self-esteem and difficulty socializing again as causes of anxiety, due to the time constraints it was not possible to implement another instrument to further test the hypothesis and check the obtained results.

In light of the findings, several key conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the post-COVID-19 period has magnified the anxiety levels of Master One EFL students, necessitating targeted interventions and support. Secondly, it is crucial for educational institutions to adapt and provide adequate resources and strategies to

address students' anxiety in the post-pandemic era. Lastly, future research should explore additional variables and causes of anxiety besides considering longitudinal studies to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of the pandemic on EFL students' anxiety in other educational levels and language learning contexts, including different proficiency levels and diverse cultural backgrounds. For the sake of finding appropriate solutions to help students overcome the issue and achieve better outcomes.

Overall, this dissertation contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the experiences of Master One EFL students' anxiety in the post-COVID-19 period. It underscores the importance of addressing anxiety-related concerns to foster a supportive and conducive learning environment for students during these challenging times.

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Appendices

Appendix A

EFL Student's Questionnaire.

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of the research work which aims at finding the causes of students' anxiety in the post covid 19 period, and its effect on their academic achievements in addition to the appropriate solutions to overcome it. You are kindly requested to answer as objectively as possible. Please, tick the appropriate column or give a full answer where necessary.

Part one: profile

1. Age:

2. Gender: Male ☐

Female ☐

3. Specialty:

Part two: self-esteem

4. Answer the following statements with strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree

1. _____. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself in my studies.

2. _____. At times I think I am no good at all in my studies.

3. _____. I feel that I have a number of good qualities to study.

4. _____. I feel I do not have much to be proud of in my studies.

5. _____. I certainly feel useless at times in the classroom.

6. _____. I feel that I'm a person of worth in the classroom.

7. _____. When it concerns my studies, I think that I am a failure.

8. _____. I take a positive attitude toward myself when studying.

9. _____. I feel anxious when people criticize me in the classroom.

5. On a scale from 1(low) to 10(high) how would you rate your self-esteem?

.....

Part Three: time management

6. Fill in the blanks with: never, sometimes, often, always

1-..... - I make a list of what to do every day.

2-.....-I prioritize my assignments according to their importance and the time needed.

3-.....-I set deadlines for my goals that are to be achieved.

4-.....- I review my calendar and planner weekly.

5-.....- I avoid time wasters.

6-.....- I know how to organize my time and give myself breaks while studying.

7. Do you feel stressed when you ran out of time while doing your work?

Yes ☐

No ☐

- Explain your state?.....

Part four: social interactions

8. Was it difficult to make friends again after the pandemic period?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Why ?

9. Have you joined clubs or done any social activity after the pandemic?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, What was it?

10. Do you get frustrated when you find yourself alone with no interaction with your classmates?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Explain ?.....

11. Describe your social life in university after the COVID-19 period?

.....

Part Five: solutions

12. What are your personal tips to overcome anxiety?

.....

13. What are the exercises that help you improve your study skills?

.....

14. Do you receive support from your family and friends in your studies?

Explain

15. do teachers help you feel calm and get rid of your stress?

How ?.....

Appendix B

Teacher Interview

Dear Teacher,

You are kindly requested to answer these questions in my interview below. Your answers will greatly contribute to my dissertation.

Section One: On Teachers’ Self-identification

1-Teaching Experience:

Section Two: On the teachers’ opinions about the learners’ causes and effects of anxiety post covid 19 period

2. how many of your students seem to be anxious after the pandemic?

.....

3. how do you notice an anxious student? (symptoms)

.....

4. From your experience as a teacher, do you believe that low self-esteem, poor time management and difficulty to make social interaction again are the causes of students’ anxiety after the COVID-19 period?

.....
.....

5. mention other causes of anxiety?

a-.....

b-.....

c-.....

d-.....

6. according to you what is the correlation between a student’s anxiety and his academic achievements?

.....
.....

7. what are the effects that anxiety causes on students on their (behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and physical sides)?

.....
.....

Section three: solutions

8. what are your strategies to facilitate the learning process for anxious students?

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

9. how do you help your students to be more interactive and break the ice to release their anxiety?

.....
.....

10. do you teach any specific study skills to your students to help them overcome anxiety?.....
.....