A Comparison of Distance and Face-to-Face Learning Regarding Anxiety Factors Among 5th Grade EFL Students: A Case Study

Seda GÖKCE[1] & Ayhan KAHRAMAN[2]

[1]Teacher, Vakıfbank Middle School, Kütahya, TURKEY
gokcesedaa@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0177-5329
[2]Prof. Dr., Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Kütahya, TURKEY
ayhan.kahraman@dpu.edu.tr
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3410-6351

Abstract: In the general sense, anxiety is a feeling that causes trouble in the mind. Accordingly, language learning anxiety can be listed as one of the factors affecting learners negatively in and out of the educational settings due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, being aware of students' learning conditions that affect their anxiety level is significant for language teachers to set clear expectations about the learning outcomes of the school subjects. Regarding young learners in Turkey, the distance education context is a highly new way to be pursued in the scope of experience. Considering this information, the current study aims to profile and compare individual language anxiety levels of 5th-grade students in face-to-face learning and distance learning. Research is valuable since distance learning is a new concept for young learners in Turkey, resulting from the pandemic, and very few researchers have focused on young learners in Turkey. The study was conducted in a state school in Kütahya. Participants were 5th-grade students from three different sections of the school. In the study, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and its modified distance learning version were used. The results of the two tests were compared. While some factors do not show a significant difference, some aspects of fear of communication increase in the target foreign language. However, some items related to fear of making mistakes have noticeably reduced in distance learning.

Keywords: Distance learning, face-to-face learning, foreign language anxiety, young learners

5. Sınıfta Okuyan Öğrencilerin İngilizce Dersindeki Kaygı Faktörlerinin Uzaktan ve Yüz Yüze Öğrenmede Karşılaştırılması: Bir Vaka Çalışması

Özet: Genel anlamda kaygı, zihinde sıkıntı yaratan bir duygudur. Buna göre dil öğrenme kaygısı, Covid-19 pandemisi nedeniyle eğitim ortamlarında ve dışında öğrenenleri olumsuz etkileyen faktörlerden biri olarak sıralanabilir. Bu nedenle, öğrencilerin kaygı düzeylerini etkileyen öğrenme koşullarının farkında olmak, dil öğretmenlerinin okul konularının öğrenme çıktıları hakkında net beklentiler belirlemesi açısından önemlidir. Türkiye'deki genç öğrencilerle ilgili olarak, uzaktan eğitim bağlamı, deneyim kapsamında izlenmesi gereken oldukça yeni bir yoldur. Bu bilgiler ışığında, bu çalışma, yüz yüze öğrenme ve uzaktan öğrenmede 5. sınıf öğrencilerinin bireysel dil kaygı düzeylerinin profilini çıkarmayı ve karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Uzaktan eğitim, pandemi nedeniyle Türkiye'deki genç öğrenciler için yeni bir kavram olduğundan ve çok az araştırmacı Türkiye'deki genç öğrencilere odaklandığından araştırma değerlidir. Araştırma Kütahya'da bir devlet okulunda yapılmıştır. Katılımcılar, okulun üç farklı şubesinden 5. sınıf öğrencileriydi. Araştırmada Yabancı Dil Sınıf Kaygı Ölçeği (FLCAS) ve değiştirilmiş uzaktan eğitim versiyonu kullanılmıştır. İki testin sonuçları karşılaştırılmıştır. Bazı faktörler önemli bir farklılık göstermezken, hedef yabancı dilde iletişim korkusunun bazı yönleri artmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, uzaktan eğitimde hata yapma korkusu ile ilgili bazı maddeler gözle görülür şekilde azalmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Uzaktan eğitim, yüz yüze öğrenme, yabancı dil kaygısı, genç öğrenciler

1. Introduction

In learning a second language, various individual factors such as motivation, attitude, aptitude, beliefs and anxiety can be influential. Among them, anxiety is what researchers have been debating for years. Although some studies accept anxiety as a normal feeling, a high degree of this negatively affects students in learning and prevents them from being a part of the learning setting (Yaniafari and Rihardini, 2020). Especially young learners, who are different from adult learners, should feel comfortable in the classroom while learning a new language just as they do when learning their mother tongue. However, foreign language teachers sometimes claim that students prefer remaining silent and avoiding participating in communication activities due to anxiety. Therefore, teachers experience difficulties fulfilling anxious learners' needs who display frustration and are reluctant throughout the lesson while balancing all learners (Nilsson, 2019).

On the other hand, although distance learning is not a new term used for many educational purposes, including language teaching, whether learners' anxiety level in distance learning can be less or more frightening is a matter of discussion (Grant et al., 2014). It would be best to highlight the difference between distance education and forced distance education. To support this, it can be mentioned that distance education is a choice, yet forced distance education provides temporary access to education.

In Turkey, distance education is a well-known concept (Geray, 2007); however, it has just entered the lives of young students with the pandemic process. The 5th-grade students who had just graduated from primary school were excited to start secondary school and meet new friends and teachers. However, they began to get used to new terms with the pandemic outbreak. Online lessons obliged them to remain sitting still for a long time in front of mobile tools, concentrate on the subject, and participate in activities like in the classroom. With these concerns in mind, this current study primarily aims to research and compare individual foreign language anxiety levels of 5th-grade students in face-to-face learning and distance learning.

2. Literature review

2.1. Types of Anxiety

Although the terms anxiety and nervous are generally used interchangeably, feeling nervous and having anxiety are two very different things. Anxiety is defined as a negative feeling of restlessness, like fear or danger, which can be mild or severe in some people and under some circumstances (Blau, 1955). Many can have such a feeling of anxiety in their daily lives. To highlight this, job interviews, exams, and medical treatments can be accepted as tense situations and admittedly, they lead to anxiety. On the other hand, foreign language anxiety is anxiety-related to learning a new language, communicating in the target language, or doing activities in that language (Horwitz et al., 1986). What is more, an emotional change and negative self-related cognition prevent the learner from effective learning and cause anxiety (MacIntyre, 1995).

More generally, foreign language anxiety centres around some other anxieties. For example, test anxiety results from the fear of academic evaluation, failing an important test, and facing unpleasant outcomes of that failure by the learner (Horwitz and Young, 1991). Moreover, since language learning requires some skills to be performed in the class and some quizzes and exams are applied regularly, even the most well-prepared students can make mistakes. So, they feel like they have to perform better than the ideal, which causes test anxiety and real suffering for learners (Gordon and Sarason, 1955). Some symptoms that test anxiety sufferers feel in class are nervousness that causes them to forget the subjects they have learned, fear of failure in the exam and feeling overwhelmed by the number of grammar rules. Many materials they have to cover (Lisnychenko et al., 2020).

Furthermore, fear of negative evaluation is one of the feelings that foreign language learners experience, which is defined as feeling incapable of making a social impression and avoiding using the foreign language due to the negative evaluation fear by others (Aydin, 2008). This sort of anxiety can be caused by other social or academic evaluation circumstances, not just testing situations. For instance, foreign language learners have negative evaluation anxiety, fear of making mistakes in language classes, being corrected and made fun of, being left behind, feeling that their classmates are always better, and feeling embarrassed about engaging in the courses in foreign language settings. They also have some physical symptoms such as sweating palms and shaking hands (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Foreign language learners need to use the target language both in written and spoken form. For this reason, while speaking in the target language, they feel shy and worried if they do not use the appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, which causes fear of communication. In fear of getting the correct meaning, avoidance from peer or group works listening activities are naturally associated with communication fear. What is more, they feel panicked, clenching their hands, walking back and back, and low self-esteem when speaking without preparation results from this kind of fear (Lisnychenko et al., 2020).

Different age groups' anxiety and anxiety levels were also researched through the conducted studies in the related literature regarding the context of Turkey. To highlight this, Er (2015) examined the level of foreign language anxiety between the ages of 10 to 18 in Turkey. In order to carry out the study, he studied with 544 students aged 10 and 18 from different schools in Ankara. The data was gathered through FLCAS with students and a semi-structured interview with two volunteer teachers from each mentioned level. Analysis of results showed that high school students between 15 and 18 were more anxious than secondary and elementary school students regarding foreign language learning. The increased anxiety level was accounted for the critical age period since language learning becomes more challenging when adolescence begins, which causes anxiety among adolescents. On the other hand, anxiety levels of secondary school and elementary school learners were low, which could be accepted as a pleasing result and an advantage for them.

Moreover, Aydın et al. (2018) discussed in their study that in both global and national contexts, foreign language anxiety studies were mainly focused on adults. For this reason, they conducted a study to examine the level of communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety among children in Turkey. Four hundred ninety-four primary and secondary school EFL learners participated in the study and answered an adapted version of FLCAS. When the responses were analysed, children experienced a low, moderate, or high level of anxiety in three categories. They concluded that if learners are well-prepared before speaking, they do not feel anxious; on the contrary, they are relaxed. For the students, the leading cause of moderate anxiety is exams. The most anxious situation for the learners is when they do not understand what teachers say in English.

According to Aydın (2013), various studies examined text anxiety among adult learners. Nevertheless, a few studies focused on specifically young learners in terms of test anxiety. Therefore, Aydın (2013) researched the level of test anxiety among young EFL learners with 477 elementary school students at five different elementary schools in the province of Balıkesir. As a result of the study, it was observed that subjects had a low level of test anxiety in general. Moreover, when they had good scores on a test, it increased their self-esteem. Also, they stated that they felt more confident and less anxious when they were informed about the test beforehand and studied sufficiently for the test.

Moreover, the exams sometimes cause some physical and affective problems such as rapid heartbeat, trembling, panic, worry, and uneasiness before the test. In addition, these cause fear of failure and depression after the test. According to the study, EFL learners at elementary school can control their feelings more easily, rarely get confused when they study hard and are not bothered about taking tests.

2.2. Young Learners and Anxiety

Numerous theories and studies have shown that learning a foreign language at an early age favours the learner. When young learners start to learn a different language other than their family language, they are curious and willing to learn it. Very young learners are not afraid of making mistakes and are eager to use what they have learned in their sentences constantly. Based on this, they are accepted as a homogeneous population as individual differences are less relevant, and their self-perception is very high (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2015). On the other hand, young learners and adolescents experience some fears about making mistakes and negative evaluations in foreign language settings. They cannot cope with the anxiety by skipping classes or changing conditions since the instruction is compulsory. They are in cognitive, emotional, and linguistic development, affecting their attitudes and metacognitive abilities (Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica Krevelj, 2009). If they are exposed to high anxiety at this young age, it may have long-term adverse effects. From this point of view, knowing the causes of young learners' anxiety levels and bases enables language teachers to make arrangements about both materials and classroom settings to eliminate the anxiety problem.

2.3. Distance Learning and Anxiety

In terms of foreign language education, remote teaching in Turkey started in the early 1950s as a public service by a private educational institution (FONO and Limasollu Naci for teaching English). The Ministry of Education established the Center for Educative Films to produce educational films for rural people in villages in 1951. In 1982, the open and distance education program at Anadolu University was established by MEB and supported by TRT. Distance education is mainly aimed at those with no or less opportunity for schooling, and it has been successful. With the advent of new informatics and communication facilities, disadvantaged groups can easily reach various types of distance education programs and materials in different settings (Geray, 2007). It is good to keep in mind that there is a difference between remote teaching and emergency remote teaching. While remote education is an option, emergency remote education has a unique format showing that face-to-face education services are temporarily provided due to crises such as pandemics (Bayındır and Gökce, 2021).

Traditional educational settings were changed entirely for all school levels. However, when the sudden and unexpected Covid-19 pandemic hit the whole world, distance learning, a new concept for primary and secondary school students, took its place in people's lives in early 2020 in Turkey. Distance learning compelled learners to learn new concepts about computers and digital technology and caused ambiguity. Apart from these problems, feeling isolated, fear of the illness itself, decreased physical arousal, being away from school and friends, lack of motivation, inability to follow the flow of online lessons, and not getting instant feedback caused a disadvantage for young learners. All these problems are a potential source of anxiety. According to Pichette (2009), distance language learners have to deal with instructional technologies to communicate and target language to interact with their peers and teachers.

In a study conducted by Alshahrani and Alandal (2015), 260 sixth grade students' anxiety levels in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia were researched through FLCAS and personal interviews with highly anxious participants. As a result of the study, eight items scored above 50 % gathered to summarise the most effective causes of anxiety. Item 17 was responded affirmatively by 69.4 % of students. More than half of the students do not feel comfortable in language classes in a traditional setting. It can be said that they are not well motivated to attend the class since they lack self-confidence, anxiety, and fear of their teachers. More importantly, item 21, about test anxiety, is the second item that scored affirmatively by 58.4 %. This shows that students feel anxious while they sit for a language test.

Pichette (2009) compared the anxiety profiles of 186 students who are undergraduates in face-to-face and online learning at three levels. Participants are French speakers who were learning either English or Spanish through online lessons in Canada. They are regular distance learning students. The FLCAS measures general anxiety and anxiety related to oral communication, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, which assesses learners' reading anxiety, and the Daly–Miller Writing Apprehension Test, which measures writing anxiety, were employed. Therefore, speaking, reading, and writing anxieties were evaluated together. Using independent samples T-tests, no differences in anxiety levels between the two settings were found when all three levels were studied together. However, it was stated that advanced language students in online lessons have less anxiety while intermediate and lower students have high anxiety levels in face-to-face settings. It can be said that students feel more relaxed and less anxious after getting used to distance platforms and instructional technologies than their friends in the traditional classroom. Therefore, online settings are accepted as an advantage in this study.

In a study carried out by Lisnychenko et al. (2020), 38 university students' different anxiety levels in classroom and distance learning settings were investigated. FLCAS were administered under pandemic circumstances in 2020. The same questionnaire was applied to the same group after three months. A tendency of anxiety due to changes in the learning context and the character of distance learning was observed, and in accordance with this, students' communication apprehension increased. In addition, compared with the traditional classroom settings, the significant growth of fear of negative evaluation in

distance learning was outstanding. However, the students' fear of making mistakes in distance learning was noticeably reduced.

Rahmati and Ajeng (2021) tried to examine the foreign language anxiety in speaking classes of 120 university students, both online and face-to-face, under Covid-19 pandemic circumstances in Indonesia. Data was collected in the 2019-2020 academic year. Two questionnaire sets were administered via Google forms to compare foreign language anxiety levels during face-to-face speaking class and online speaking class by adding an additional open question asking the reason why they feel more comfortable in two learning settings. According to the responses of the students to the open-ended question, students feel more comfortable while speaking in distance learning with being away from the center. At the end of the study, they concluded that online speaking classes are less threatening for the students since they do not directly face the teacher and their mates.

In their study, Kaisar and Chowdhury (2020) researched virtual classroom situations and the anxiety of language learners. 104 university students from different universities in Bangladesh answered a self-made Foreign Language Virtual Classroom Anxiety Scale and in-depth questions. Results of the study show that students generally feel more comfortable and relaxed in real classrooms. In virtual classes, on the other hand, they feel isolated in front of computers and feel the absence of their classmates and teachers. Moreover, they do not feel a part of a classroom or group work in virtual classes unless it is arranged with more interaction. The fear of disconnection also causes anxiety among students. Sitting in front of a screen for a long time and being away from any physical activity also makes students more nervous.

Finally, Aydın (2018), in his research synthesis on the issue, searched FLA on distance learning and found that the results of distance language learning and language learners' anxiety levels were confusing. To illustrate this, Rahimi and Soleymani (2015) investigated mobile learning and its effects on listening anxiety among 50 Iranian EFL learners. Mobile devices for listening activities reduce listening anxiety among students. However, in general, Aydın (2018) reviewed several studies and concluded that distance learning does not affect the anxiety levels of foreign language learners.

Considering these studies, the current study aims to determine foreign language anxiety levels of young learners in the context of both face-to-face and distance learning. Also, by comparing these two anxiety levels of students, it is aimed to make inferences about the communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluations.

2.4. Aim of the Study

Foreign language anxiety has been a phenomenon that has been researched for over 30 years. However, few studies have examined foreign language anxiety in the context of both online and face-to-face learning environments. In line with the following guiding questions, this study aims explicitly to find an answer to the following research questions:

1. What is the anxiety level of 5th-grade students in face-to-face learning?
2. What is the anxiety level of 5th-grade students in distance learning?
3. Are there any significant similarities and/or differences between face to face and distance learning regarding the anxiety factors?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The given investigation was conducted on 5th-grade students of Akşemseddin Secondary School in Kütahya, in the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Sixty-nine students from three different school sections (5A, 5B, 5C) participated in the first survey, and 61 students participated in the second

survey. All the study participants are female because of the type of school. All the participants have graduated from different primary schools and have just enrolled in secondary school. Moreover, they had face-to-face and distance teaching last year at primary school due to the coronavirus threat. Therefore, participants had a two-week face to face education for the first semester. Except that all the lessons were conducted via online tools such as Zoom or EBA. The second term of the school began in February since students were exposed to three regular hours of English in a week through Zoom.

3.2. Data Collection

To explore the guiding questions mentioned above, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), is described and how foreign language educators can reap the benefit of this as a tool in their online and face-to-face classrooms to measure their students' perceived foreign language anxiety levels. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) with a 5-point-items Likert scale was administered to the participants. This scale has 32 items measuring communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). Items 14 and 31 were excluded from this scale due to being about speaking with a native speaker. If each item is examined, it can be seen that items 1-4-9-14-17-23-26-28-29-31 are related to communication apprehension, and items 3-5-6-8-10-11-12-15-16-19-20-21-24 are related to test anxiety. The ones 2-7-13-18-22-30-32 are related to fear of negative evaluation. The main reason for using this scale for the research is its validity and reliability for both classroom and online settings. In the 5-point-items Likert scale, point 1 is "Strongly Agree", point 2 is "Agree", point 3 is "Neither Agree nor Disagree", point 4 is "Disagree", and point five is "Strongly Disagree" in the statements. On the scale, some items reflect anxiety, and some reflect non-anxiety. Items 2, 5, 8, 11, 17, 21, 27 and 31 reflect a lack of anxiety, and others reflect anxiety factors.

The existing anxiety scale of Horwitz was adapted by using some distance learning items for this current study. So, two surveys were applied, one is about traditional classroom teaching, and the other is about online education. For this reason, in the scoring process, these items were reversed. For example, the first item of the first scale was 'I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English in the classroom' while the first item of the second scale was 'I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English in online lessons.' The other 32 things followed that rule and continued. The researchers translated the surveys into Turkish and checked by the experts in the same field to test whether participants would understand the same meaning. Also, a Turkish version of the scale (Aydın et al., 2016) was referred.

Required data was collected via Google forms. At the beginning of the process, they were informed that answering these questions was up to their willingness, and all the obtained data would be used just for this research. Accordingly, participants answered the face-to-face classroom anxiety scale questions in March. Participants were reminded that they would think about traditional face-to-face learning while answering all the questions on the first scale. Sixty-nine students answered the first scale. After a month, they answered the second scale about distance learning. They were again reminded that they would just consider the distance learning conditions while answering these questions. For the second scale, 61 students answered the questions.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

After applying the same surveys to the same group of students for a month, students' anxiety levels in distance learning and face-to-face learning were calculated under quarantine regulations. The results of both surveys were compared by using a T-test. The results of the study are shown in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1.

Overview of Participants' Profile

	Face-to-Face Anxiety Scale	Distance Learning Anxiety Scale
Age 10	23	17
Age 11	45	43
Age 12	1	1
Total Number	69	61

It should be recalled that this study is a within-subjects design in which the scores obtained from the same group of participants at different times, and Table 1 shows an overview of the participants. Additionally, since the survey is applied to the same group twice, using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability coefficient of both data was computed. The alpha scores seem to be highly reliable for both data ($\alpha = .944$ and $\alpha = .939$, respectively).

Research Question 1: What is the anxiety level of 5th-grade students in face-to-face learning?

One-sample statistics were applied to answer the first research question. Descriptive statistics results show that the population mean score is 32x3=96 points, whereas the sample means the score is 78.74. So, it can be said that students did not have too much anxiety in face-to-face learning. (78.73<96).

Research Question 2: What is the anxiety level of 5th-grade students in distance learning?

For the second research question, the same steps were followed as in the first question to evaluate students' anxiety levels in distance learning. One-sample statistics and descriptive statistics results display the population mean 32x3=96 points, whereas the sample mean is 83.71. It can be said that the expected anxiety level of students is less than the population mean score (83.71< 96). Students did not have too much anxiety in distance learning.

Research Question 3: Are there any significant similarities and/or differences between face to face and distance learning regarding the anxiety factors?

Although the anxiety levels of the students were found to be low when they were evaluated separately in both forms of education, it was observed that the anxiety levels of the students in distance education were higher than the anxiety levels in traditional education when compared with each other as the paired samples statistics of face-to-face and distance learning shows (83.70> 80.59).

The paired samples test shows no significant difference between face-to-face and distance learning regarding their anxiety factors (t= -.619; p< .538).

When the comparative analysis of the mean scores of both surveys is observed, while the mean scores of some items do not change much, the scores of some items change a little.

Suppose the percentages of participants' responses to each item in both scales are analysed and compared in detail. In that case, the three components (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation) can be explained explicatively. For this reason, percentages were calculated using the number of students who responded to the questionnaire items (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). Disagree and strongly disagree percentages were summed as negative responses, and consent and strongly agree rates were calculated as positive responses. Table 2 shows the ten items that vary most according to the answers given by the students in the two learning environments.

Table 2.

Comparison of Most Varying Items in Two Learning Environments

	Face-to-face learning		Distance learning		Difference
	Agree (A)	Disagree (DA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (DA)	
Item 8	72.5%	10.1%	53.2%	21%	19.3%
Item 4	17.4%	63.8%	32.3%	43.5%	14.9%
Item 3	18.8%	65.2%	30.6%	50%	11.8%
Item 19	53.6%	36.2%	42%	46.8%	11.6%
Item 32	43.5%	33.3%	54.8%	27.4%	11.3%
Item 11	55%	23.2%	45.1%	30.6%	10%
Item 6	7.3%	75.3%	16.2%	67.7%	8.9%
Item 14	34.8%	37.6%	43.6%	41.9%	8.8%
Item 13	23.1%	75.3%	14.5%	71%	8.6%
Item 16	1.5%	86.9%	9.7%	69.4%	8.2%

4.1. Test Anxiety

Items 3, 6, 8, 11, 16 and 19 show test anxiety on the scale. As shown in the table above, item 8, "I am usually at ease during tests in my English classes", has a 72.5% agreement in face-to-face settings; on the contrary, it has 53.2 % agreement in distance learning. It shows that while students feel more relaxed about tests in English in classroom settings, they feel more stressed in distance learning. So, it can be said that learners may have test anxiety in distance learning. That may be because of students' easily asking questions about clarifications and misunderstandings about the test in the face-to-face classes. They may not feel at ease during the test in distance education because when they unmute themselves simultaneously and ask questions one by one in the online connection, they both reduce their test time and cause voice confusion. For this reason, they can avoid asking questions at the time of the test and feel anxious.

Item 3, which shows test anxiety again, "I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English class," has more affirmative responses in distance education (30.6%) than face-to-face learning (18.8%). It indicates that they can answer questions that the teacher directs to them more easily in class; however, they cannot participate in distance learning.

While almost two-thirds of the students (75.3%) gave negative answers about classroom settings to item 6, "During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course," this rate decreased slightly for distance learning (67.7%). According to the descriptive statistics frequency of distribution of the data, the findings might show us that the students in distance learning seem to be more distracted during the pandemic.

Item 16, "I often feel like not going to my English class." has the fewest affirmative response on the scale in terms of both classroom and distance learning settings, although there is a slight increase in distance learning among both. It shows that majority of the students like language classrooms in traditional settings more than distance learning. It may be because face-to-face interaction in activities and games is high in class. However, there is little interaction between students while doing an activity or playing a game, especially if their cameras are off. They cannot feel that energy or enjoyment in online lessons.

Item 19, which shows test anxiety again, "I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English class," has more affirmative responses in face-to-face learning this time (53.6%) when compared with distance learning (42%).

Item 11, "I do not understand why some people get so upset over English classes", has 55% affirmative responses in-class teaching while it has 45.1% affirmative responses in the distance learning setting. Thus, there is a decrease in affirmative answers on the second scale. All the relevant items are shown in the Table 3 as follows.

Table 3.

Comparison of the Foreign Language Text Anxiety Scores

No	ITEM	CL-M	DL-M
3.	I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English class.	2.13	2.58
6.	During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	1.86	2.58
8.	I am usually at ease during tests in my English classes.	4.0	2.37
11.	I do not understand why some people get so upset over English classes.	2.46	2.70
16.	I often feel like not going to my English class.	1.50	1.80
19.	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English class.	3.20	2.90

CL-M: Classroom Learning Scale Mean, DL-M: Distance Learning Scale Mean

4.2. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Item 13 and 32 shows fear of negative evaluation on the scale. Item 13 on the scale "It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class." has more positive responses about classroom learning (23.1%) when compared with positive reactions of distance learning (14.5%). This shows that they feel more relaxed about being volunteers to answer the question in the online setting.

Again, concerning the fear of negative evaluation, more than half of the students (54.8%) in distance learning feel anxious when they ask questions they have not prepared in advance, as Item 32 indicates. However, in-class settings have fewer affirmative responses (43.5%), which show they feel less anxious. All the relevant items are shown in the Table 4 as follows.

Table 4.

Comparison of the Foreign Language Fear of Negative Evaluation Anxiety Scores

No	ITEM	CL-M	DL-M
13.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	1.88	2.01
32.	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions that I have not prepared in advance in class.	3.13	2.11

CL-M: Classroom Learning Scale Mean, DL-M: Distance Learning Scale Mean

4.3. Communication Apprehension

Two of the items on the scale that show communication apprehension, item 14, "I get upset when I do not understand what the English teacher is correcting in English in class." has fewer affirmative responses about class learning (34.8%), more affirmative responses about distance learning (43.6%).

Another item, Item 4, "It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English in class", has the second-highest difference between the two learning settings (14.9%). It shows a communication apprehension in distance education. When they do not understand what the teacher is saying in English in the classroom, they feel less anxious. However, in distance learning, they get more confused and feel anxious when they do not understand what is going on in English. They may avoid communication online due to the same reason as item 8. All the relevant items are shown in the Table 5 as follows:

Table 5.

Comparison of the Foreign Language Communication Apprehension Anxiety Scores

No	ITEM	CL-M	DL-M
4.	It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English in class.	2.24	2.82
14.	I get upset when I do not understand what the English teacher is correcting in English in class.	2.95	2.98

CL-M: Classroom Learning Scale Mean, DL-M: Distance Learning Scale Mean

As a result, after analyzing the ten items that vary most according to the answers given by students, the most varying type of anxiety is test anxiety, with six things out of ten.

5. Discussion, Conclusions and Suggestions

The unique aspect of this study and its contribution to the literature on foreign language anxiety is that it compared young learners' anxiety levels in two different learning settings. Students' anxiety profiles needed to be researched and compared because distance learning resulting from the pandemic is a new concept regarding foreign language learners. 5th graders, who graduated from primary school and enrolled in a new school, were subjected to distance education before they had a chance to meet their classmates.

This revealed two situations for them to get used to a new classroom and a new education model. For this reason, the study was conducted with 5th-grade students. First of all, like the previous studies in the field, this study tried to evaluate the anxiety level of students in the traditional setting, whether they have a high or low anxiety level regarding test anxiety, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation since they are foreign language learners (Horwitz, 1986). It is worth noting that both surveys were administered during distance education under pandemic conditions, and the students were reminded that when answering the survey about face-to-face education, it should be answered by considering face-to-face education circumstances in previous years.

When relating the findings of this study to the conducted studies mentioned before, it has similar findings to Er (2015) about primary and secondary school learners' low level of foreign language anxiety in the classroom settings. Although the subjects in this study do not have statistically significant anxiety levels in the two learning settings, there is an increase in distance learning regarding test anxiety compared to each other. Moreover, it was stated in the study carried out by Aydın (2013) that elementary school students have low test anxiety. Aydın et al. (2018) found in their study that when students are well-prepared for an exam or an assignment, they feel relaxed and eager to communicate in the target language. The moderate and high anxiety levels are due to the exams and students' inability to understand what the teacher is saying in the target language. The study has similar findings to our study in terms of these factors, especially in face-to-face learning. Kaisar and Chowdhury's study (2020) suggests that students in virtual classes do not feel like a part of an on-site class. So they prefer traditional classrooms instead of virtual ones, which is similar to our study. Pichette (2009) tried to find students' anxiety levels in two learning settings similar to this recent study. However, participants of the study were regular distance learning students, not forced distance learning students. So, for that study, distance learning settings were accepted as an advantage for students' low anxiety levels, which is different from our study.

Also, Rahmati and Ajeng (2021) found that distance education has a relaxing effect on students' speaking performance, which is inconsistent with our study. Contrary to Alshahrani and Alandal's study (2015), students have a tendency to like language classrooms and feel more motivated to participate in classroom learning and lessons in distance learning. They do not bother to have more English lessons. Lisnychenko et al. (2020) argued the decrease in fear of making mistakes in the distance learning setting in their study. Similarly, subjects of this study are also less fearful about making mistakes in distance learning. All in all, in line with Aydın's findings (2018), distance education does not have an effect on the anxiety levels of foreign language learners in general, even when slight differences were observed.

In terms of the research questions, it was concluded that there were some positive and negative effects of the transition to an online distance mode of learning, and this could be observed. Although the statistical results of the two scales do not indicate anxiety in both face-to-face and distance learning, it is clear that there is an increase in the level of anxiety in the second form.

Regarding communication apprehension, the percentage of total agreement of responses decreases in four items (items 17, 26, 28, 31) in distance teaching. On the other hand, the percentages of the rest of the things increase in distance teaching. Thus, they feel less anxious about communicating in the foreign target language in the classroom. Also, they experience nervousness when they are expected to speak spontaneously without preparation in distance learning.

Students' affirmative responses to the items related to the fear of negative evaluation on the scale tend to increase in distance education form. Most students know that other students are better than themselves and worry about making mistakes in distance education. On the contrary, they feel less anxious to volunteer answers in English in online lessons.

There have also been both increases and decreases in text anxiety items in distance education form. Students feel more nervous when they have a problem remembering the words or correcting them in online lessons. However, they prefer to attend face-to-face classes more rather than online classes. Compared with other online lessons in the curriculum, students feel more relaxed in language classes than others in line with their reactions to online lessons in the listed items. Lisnychenko et al. (2020) promote positive changes in the level of foreign language anxiety to the program's flexibility, more student autonomy, weakening of teachers' classroom control, lack of evaluation, and isolation from the classroom environment. Based on our knowledge and experience, it can be inferred that some students feel more relaxed when they connect the online lessons with their cameras off and voices muted. They do not feel obliged to actively participate

in the lesson by answering the teacher's questions or communicating with friends. As for the negative bearing reasons, Lisnychenko et al. (2020) emphasise the effects of the character of distance learning itself, changes in the learning context and form, online connection and communication problems, lack of social interaction, zoom fatigue, being unable to show understanding instantly, lack of verbal or emotional sharing with peers and teacher, poor feedback. Presumably, internet connection problems and technical deficiencies are among the issues of the nature of distance learning itself.

Students can be well aware of its symptoms and reasons, their own emotions and reactions, and strategies to deal with problems to reduce or prevent foreign language anxiety. Students can become more qualified in distance education by looking for ways to be more attentive while listening, asking for clarification or repetition when something is missing, and coping with technological deficiencies.

Pedagogical outcomes include suggested techniques and interventions to help online foreign language learners feel less isolated, less anxious, and more connected to their teachers and peers. Considering the large number of students currently participating in online foreign language learning due to COVID-19, it is significant to consider how influential factors such as anxiety can hinder learning outcomes. In addition, foreign language teachers and students have had to make a rapid transition to the online environment without adequate time and preparation, which is an additional source of anxiety and other concerns for students and teachers alike.

6. Limitations of the Study

As with most studies, this study may have several limitations regarding the participants' profile, number, age, background, or data collection tool. In the broadest sense, findings and results are based on this specific group of students' perceptions and beliefs about two forms of education. The participants are called young learners whose age range is between 10 and 12. They belong to just a state secondary school in Kütahya, which means they may not represent the samples of actual classroom interactions in the whole universe. Most young learners enjoy learning a foreign language, participating in all learning settings voluntarily, and using the language outside the class as much as possible. In particular, participants of this study are successful students who have done prosperous studies in primary school and entered this project school with an exam. When their opinions about language class are received, most students express that they all love the lesson very much, even as their favourite subject. For this reason, their answers may contain a positive bias.

Since this research was more concerned with general anxiety levels among learners in class and distance learning, further research might investigate the individual anxiety levels of students and the reasons for it by adding more tools like personal interviews. Also, research about the sources and causes of anxiety for specific language skills can shed light on educational issues.

7. Ethics Statement

In the present study, participation was voluntary for students. The students who participated had consent for the involvement in the research. The data collection and handling were declared to correspond strictly with the usual norms of research ethics accepted by Kütahya Dumlupınar University, and written permission from the Ministry of Education authorities was taken.

Disclosure

No authors have any conflict-of-interest report.

References

Ajmal, M., & Ahmad, S. (2019). Exploration of Anxiety Factors among Students of Distance Learning: A Case Study of Allama Iqbal Open University. *Bulletin of Education and Research, 41*(2), 67-78.

Alshahrani, M., & Alandal, A. (2015). An investigation of anxiety among elementary school students towards foreign language learning. *Studies in Literature and Language, 11*(1), 29-40.

Ay, S. (2010). Young Adolescent Students' Foreign Language Anxiety in Relation to Language Skills at Different Levels. *Journal of International Social Research, 3*(11).

Aydin, S. (2008). An Investigation on the Language Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Turkish EFL Learners. *Online Submission.*

Aydin, S. (2013). Factors Affecting the Level of Test Anxiety among EFL Learners at Elementary Schools. *Online Submission, 4*(1), 63-81.

Aydin, S. (2018). Technology and foreign language anxiety: Implications for practice and future research. *Dil ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi, 14*(2), 193-211.

Aydın, S., Harputlu, L., Çelik, Ş. S., Uştuk, Ö., & Güzel, S. (2018). A descriptive study on foreign language anxiety among children. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (H. U. Journal of Education) 33*(1), 229-241 doi: 10.16986/HUJE.2017028070

Aydın, S., Harputlu, L., Güzel, S., & Genç, D. (2016). A Turkish version of foreign language anxiety scale: Reliability and validity. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 232*, 250-256.

Bayındır. N., & Gökce, M., (2021). *The Levels of Coping with Online Course (Zoom) Fatigue of Preservice Teachers in the Emergency Remote Teaching Process*. ITTES 2021 Proceeding Book, *1*(1), 378-386.

Blau, A. (1955). A unitary hypothesis of emotion: Anxiety, Emotions of Displeasure, and Affective Disorders, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 24*, 75-103.

Çağatay, S. (2015). Examining EFL students' foreign language speaking anxiety: The case at a Turkish state university. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *199*, 648-656.

Chan, D. Y. C., & Wu, G. C. (2004). A study of foreign language anxiety of EFL elementary school students in Taipei County. *Journal of National Taipei Teachers College, 17*(2), 287-320.

Djigunović, J. M. (2015). Individual differences among young EFL learners: Age-or proficiency-related? A look from the affective learner factors perspective. *Early learning and teaching of English: New dynamics of primary English*, 10-36.

Djigunović, J. M., & Krevelj, S. L. (2009). Instructed early SLA-Development of attitudes. *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia: Revue publiée par les Sections romane, italienne et anglaise de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Zagreb*, *54*, 137-156.

Er, S. (2015). Foreign language learning anxiety of Turkish children at different ages. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, *2*(2). 68-78. http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/81/106

Geray, C. (2007). *Distance education in Turkey. International Journal of Educational Policies, 1*(1), 33-62.

Gordon, E. M., & Sarason, S. B. (1955). The relationship between" text anxiety" and" other anxieties". *Journal of personality*.

Grant, S., Huang, H., & Pasfield-Neofitou, S. (2014). The authenticity-anxiety paradox: The quest for authentic second language communication and reduced foreign language anxiety in virtual environments. *Procedia Technology*, *13*, 23-32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.protcy.2014.02.005

Hilliard, J., Kear, K., Donelan, H., & Heaney, C. (2020). Students' experiences of anxiety in an assessed, online, collaborative project. *Computers & Education*, *143*, 103675.

Horwitz, E. K., & Young, D. J. (1991). *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications*. Prentice-Hall.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. The Modern language journal, *70*(2), 125-132.

Hurd, S. (2007). Anxiety and non-anxiety in a distance language learning environment: The distance factor as a modifying influence. *System*, *35*(4), 487-508.

Jegede, O. J., & Kirkwood, J. (1994). Students' anxiety in learning through distance education. *Distance education, 15*(2), 279-290.

Kaisar, M. T., & Chowdhury, S. Y. (2020). Foreign Language Virtual Class Room: Anxiety Creator or Healer?. *English Language Teaching*, *13*(11), 130-139. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n11p130

Lisnychenko, A., Dovhaliuk, T., Khamska, N., & Glazunova, T. (2020). Foreign language anxiety: Classroom vs distance learning. *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 8(*12), 6684-6691.

Liu, M., & Huang, W. (2011). An exploration of foreign language anxiety and English learning motivation. *Education Research International*, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/493167

MacIntyre, P. D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The modern language journal, 79*(1), 90-99.

Nilsson, M. (2019). Foreign language anxiety: The case of young learners of English in Swedish primary classrooms. Apples: *Journal of Applied Language Studies, 13*(2).

Park, G. P., & French, B. F. (2013). Gender differences in the foreign language classroom anxiety scale. *System*, *41*(2), 462-471.

Pichette, F. (2009). Second language anxiety and distance language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, *42*(1), 77-93.

Rahimi, M., & Soleymani, E. (2015). The impact of mobile learning on listening anxiety and listening comprehension. *English Language Teaching*, *8*(10), 152-161.

Rahmati, P. Y., & Ajeng A. R. (2021). Face-to-face or online speaking practice: A comparison of students' foreign language classroom anxiety level. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies 1*(8). https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v8i1.3058

Russell, V. (2020). Language anxiety and the online learner. *Foreign Language Annals*, *53*(2), 338-352.

Sertçetin, A. (2006). Classroom foreign language anxiety among Turkish primary school students (Master's thesis, Uludağ Üniversitesi).

Yaniafari, R. P., & Rihardini, A. A. (2021). Face-to-Face or Online Learning? A Comparison of Students' Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Level. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)*, *8*(1), 49-67.

Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The modern language journal*, *75*(4), 426-439.

Note on Ethical Issues

The authors confirm that ethical approval was obtained from Dumlupınar University (Approval Date: 22/03/2021).