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Investigating Language Learning Strategies and Language Learning Anxiety of Preparatory School Students

Ulviye Keten

Abstract: This study aimed to find a significant correlation between the use of language learning strategies and the language learning anxiety of preparatory school students in Turkey. Besides, Quantitative data from 70 students were collected using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Descriptive statistics showed that students reported using a high level of learning strategies and metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used strategies. On the other hand, they showed a moderate level of anxiety. The correlational data also presented that language learning strategies and language anxiety correlated significantly in a negative way. When students reported using more language learning strategies, their stated level of anxiety might be lower. The results of this study can be helpful to create a more relaxed language learning environment for language learners and suggest explicit strategy training.

Keywords: Foreign language anxiety, language anxiety, language learning strategies

It has been accepted that rather than a sole focus on teaching or teachers, characteristics of learners or variables which affect learning situation are important to acquire a language. This can be observed in studies as in Bailey (1999), which focuses on foreign language anxiety and language learning process and the studies by Habók and Magyar (2018) on the effect of language learning strategies on proficiency, attitudes, and school achievement and Mubarak's (2019) research on flipped classroom model on writing achievement considering cognitive styles among Indonesian students.

Among these variables, the researchers pay attention to affective factors considerably. There has been various research focusing on these affective factors and language learning experience in many ways. One of these variables is the anxiety that students must cope with in the classroom. This feeling of anxiety has been observed by various researchers as Aida (1994) and Ohata's (2005) studies in Japanese classrooms. As it is shown by the study of Aida, students who have a higher level of anxiety show low performance on course grades. It may be concluded that a high level of foreign language learning anxiety may hinder the learning process and cause lower performance (Andrade & Williams, 2009; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Therefore, students can use strategies to lower their anxiety or compensate for it so that the learning can continue. In order to lower their anxiety level down, the learners can use several language learning strategies and these strategies can promote their language learning as well. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between language learning anxiety and language learning strategies. Examining what strategies learners use, finding out who has a lower level of anxiety may help teachers to access their students easily and comfort their students' learning context from the state of anxiety.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are all the actions one can use to overcome difficulties in learning processes. Some of them can be observable whilst the others are mentally active. Oxford defines learning strategies as “behaviours or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable” (Oxford, 1989).

By now, there have been several classifications of learning strategies in the literature (Cohen, 1998; Ellis, 2008; Oxford, 1990; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Stern, 1992). Categories include some names as clarification, verification, analysing, monitoring, memorizing, guessing, deductive versus inductive reasoning, emphasizing one thing over another, and practice and production tricks (Gass, 2008). Since then, there have been more classifications coming out as learning strategies versus use strategies; cognitive versus metacognitive strategies; strategies for reading, writing and speaking (Gass, 2008). These strategies may not directly result in acquisition. However, conscious use of language learning strategies can lead to language achievement and proficiency. It helps learners to overcome the obstacles they face in the learning process. One of the well-known and extensively used classifications was developed by Oxford (1990). She classified language learning strategies into six categories under two main strategies:

The first main category was direct strategies. These were memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies while indirect strategies were subdivided as metacognitive, affective, and social (Oxford, 1990). Memory strategies deal with creating mental images when something new is learned to remember things easily. Cognitive strategies are for the way of practising the language, receiving and sending messages. If someone takes notes, uses highlighters for important points on a text, this may mean that person uses cognitive strategies. When there is a communication breakdown, compensation strategies may help people to overcome it. Guessing, using linguistic clues and coining a word is within the compensation strategies. Metacognitive strategies are active in planning and evaluating one’s language learning adventure. Affective strategies are about how someone handles the emotional states in different language use situations. The final category is social strategies. Asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathising with others are the main components of social strategies. One can benefit from these strategies a lot if they are carefully used.

Thompson and Rubin (1996) displayed it by their research with students who took a listening course. It was shown by this study that learners used compensating and metacognitive strategies to tackle the problems while they performed listening in English. In addition to that, rich use of language learning strategies could be linked to better achievement compared to unsuccessful students who use surface-level cognitive strategies (Gerami & Baighlou, 2011). Ehrman and Oxford (1995) pointed to the positive correlation between individual variables such as learning strategies and language learning in their study with adult learners. It shows that successful students report more frequent use of cognitive strategies. Noormohamadi (2009) tried to compare students who showed a low and high level of anxiety in terms of their use of language learning strategies. He took a negative correlation result between language anxiety and the strategies. Metacognitive and memory strategies were reported by the students as the most used in the high anxiety level group. Metacognitive and social strategies were reported to be used most among students who showed a lower level of anxiety.

Altunay (2014) also investigated the use of language learning strategies among distance learners of English. She used Strategy Inventory for Language Learning and conducted interviews in order to gather data on how they utilized the strategies. This study indicated the low use of affective strategies because of a lack of real language in the classroom. The author stated that according to the interviews with the students, learners were not into learning a foreign language and they were not aware of the existence of physical anxiety. Çubukçu and Aydın (2019) researched with 195 preparatory school students on the relation between motivational orientations and language learning

strategies using Oxford's learning strategies inventory. The results showed that students reported that they used metacognitive strategies more and learning strategies provided a positive and significant correlation between learning strategies and orientations among participants.

1.2 Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

Anxiety is defined in the field of psychology as the feeling of tension or worries happening in the nervous system (Spielberger, 1983). Anxiety can be long term and pervasive in one's life. On the other hand, it can be situation-specific anxiety (Scovel, 1978), which means anxiety arises at specific situations and events (Ellis, 2008). Foreign language learning anxiety is also situation-specific, especially depending on classroom language learning. It arises from the combination of various variables such as self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviours of the learners (Horwitz et al. 1986). Young (1991) suggested six possible sources of foreign language learning anxiety: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, 2) learner beliefs about language learning, 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching, 4) instructor-learner interactions, 5) classroom procedures, and 6) language testing. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), three main sources contribute to language anxiety. Communication apprehension stems from a lack of communication skills (Aydın, 2008), where learners can face communication breakdowns or shyness although they are ready to communicate. Test anxiety stems from the testing and evaluation of learners. Students who show a high level of test anxiety may face psychological and physical reactions towards the tests. This feeling is based on fear of failure (Horwitz & Young, 1991). These students that show negative feelings towards test can transfer these feelings into their current lessons unconsciously (Chan & Wu, 2000). Fear of negative evaluation is the other source of language anxiety. As it can be inferred from its name, it is the fear that one can feel when they do not see themselves as sufficient to be appreciated by others. Students who have this fear can think that they may lose face among others because of their evaluations, resulting in a communication fear (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In the current study, these three main sources were taken into the investigation.

Various studies have been conducted in order to determine the sources of anxiety and the relation between anxiety and achievement and the effects on learning in several different ways. Eysenck (1979) indicated students who had a low level of anxiety did not need to show a low level of language performance when they showed steady effort towards difficulties. Horwitz et al. (1986) demonstrated that all students showed anxiety at various levels and it was common in language learning classes. Gardner et al. (1987) reported a significant relationship between the level of anxiety and the scores on task for word production. Koch and Terrell (1991) looked at the communication issues as the reason for the anxiety. Woodrow (2006) drew out a significant negative correlation between anxiety and speech performance of English learners of Asian students who took EAP courses before they studied in Australian universities. On the other hand, Mohammadi et al. (2013) researched with university students examining the relationship between language learning anxiety and the use of language learning strategies. 85 Iranian students who majored in English were grouped into low language learning strategies (LLS) users and high LLS users. The results indicated a negative correlation between the language learning strategies and the level of language learning anxiety. Students in the high LLS group felt a lower level of anxiety compared to the students who report using fewer learning strategies.

Dalkılıç (2001) studied the relationship between foreign language anxiety and achievement. It was concluded by the researcher that learners' achievement was significantly related to foreign language anxiety. Aydın (2008) also studied the level and source of foreign language learning anxiety and its relationship with fear of evaluation. He pointed at unpreparedness to courses, corrections in the class, negative feelings for classes and testing as some of the main sources of anxiety. Teachers were also stated as a major source of anxiety. Demirdaş and Bozdoğan (2015) aimed to search for the relationship between language anxiety and the performance of the learners. In their study with preparatory school students, low-level language anxiety was observed. There was a negative correlation between the learners' performance and their level of language learning anxiety. Uzun studied with 104 English Language Teaching

(ELT) students to find a correlation between foreign language anxiety and self-directed learning. According to the results, self-directed learning did not have any significant relationship with anxiety. However, students felt mostly anxious about communication apprehension. In the Turkish context, there was a lack of studies that looked into the relationship between language learning strategies and language anxiety. These were generally on specific language skills and components as in studies by Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2016) and Oflaz (2019). Bektaş-Çetinkaya reported that reading anxiety stemmed from unknown words and unfamiliar reading context. Therefore, from the previous studies, it can be concluded that many studies focused on anxiety and language performance or achievement, and language learning strategies with variables other than language learning anxiety, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between language anxiety and language learning strategies use among preparatory school students at a state university in Turkey. By studying this subject, possible reasons for language learning anxiety can be found and by finding relations with strategies, students can be promoted to lower their state of anxiety with the help of various strategies. So, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What language learning strategies are preferred by preparatory school students the most and the least?
2. What levels of anxiety do English language learners report in general and in sources of anxiety?
3. Is there any significant relationship between the level of language learning anxiety and the strategy use of EFL learners?

2. Methodology

2.1 The purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate empirically whether there was a significant correlation between language learning strategy use and the level of foreign language classroom anxiety among English language learners.

2.2 Research Design

The research design of this study was a survey model. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that a survey design could answer several questions such as descriptive and questions about the relationship between variables. Therefore, by using two scales for determining language learning anxiety and language learning strategies, the research tried to explore the relationship between language strategy use and foreign language classroom anxiety.

2.3 Setting and Participants

Data for this study were collected during the winter term in 2018-2019. The sampling design was a single stage. During a single-stage sampling procedure, the researcher can access the names in the population and can sample directly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participants were selected by applying convenience sampling because the researcher had access to these students and it also depended on participant availability. The participants consisted of 29 male (42%) and 41 female (58%) students. These students were taking B1 level English courses in the preparatory school. The reason why B1 students were chosen for this study was that B1 level is the threshold to become an independent user in the target language. So, students become more aware of language and their language learning process (Council of Europe, 2018). The age of students ranged from 18 to 21.

2.4 Instruments

Questionnaires can be useful for researchers in terms of getting a great deal of information in a short time with less effort (Dörnyei, 2009). So, in order to gather data, two instruments were used. The first one was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) that was developed by Oxford (1990). In this study, the Turkish version that was translated into Turkish by Cesur and Fer (2007) was used. It consists of 50 items in a five-point Likert scale which assesses the frequency of a variety of strategies for second or foreign language learning. These strategies are categorized into six: (1) compensation, (2) memory, (3) cognitive, (4) metacognitive, (5) affective, and (6) social

strategies. The reliability of this questionnaire was found to be 0.92. Besides, Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.59 to 0.86 on subscales (Cesur & Fer, 2007). The present study obtained a 0.93 reliability score. The subscales' reliability coefficient scores ranged from 0.60 to 0.89. It was 0.60 for memory strategies, 0.85 for cognitive strategies, 0.72 for compensation strategies, 0.89 for metacognitive strategies, 0.70 for affective strategies, and 0.64 for social strategies. These results corresponded with other research findings (Balci, 2017; Cesur & Fer, 2007; Solak & Cakir, 2015).

To report SILL, mean scores for each subcategory were taken into consideration as in Table 1.

Table 1. Reference for mean scores (Oxford, 1990)

Level	Range of score	Description
High	4.5-5.0	Always or almost always used
	3.5 – 4.4	Usually used
Medium	2.5 – 3.4	Sometimes used
Low	1.5 – 2.4	Generally not used
	1.0 – 1.4	Never or almost never used

The other instrument used in this research was a translated version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz et al. (1986). There are 33 items in this inventory related to situational anxiety and they focus on the context of language learning; namely language classrooms. The original study and the following studies show satisfactory reliability (Aydin et al, 2016; Demirdaş & Bozdoğan, 2013; Horwitz, 1991). The translated version of this inventory in Turkish also supports the reliability. Cronbach's Alpha for the Turkish version was 0.86 (Aydin et al., 2016). This scale also follows the similar features of SILL; a five-point Likert type of scale ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree". There are negatively stated items besides positive items. Therefore, strongly agree does not mean to refer to something positive for every item. 8 items are to determine the communication apprehension (item no: 1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, and 32). 9 items are for finding fear of negative evaluation (item no: 3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, and 33). Test anxiety is also aimed to be reported by students with 5 items (item no: 2, 8, 10, 19, and 21). Finally, the questionnaire consists of 11 items for the English classes (item no: 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 28, and 30). According to Baharuddin (2009, as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2016), students are categorized into 3 levels of anxiety: 1.00-2.33 (low language anxiety LLA), mean 2.34- 3.66 (moderate language anxiety MLA), and mean score of 3.67-5.00 (high anxiety level HLA).

The instrument was validated and found reliable by Horwitz et al. (1986). FLCAS had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .98 and test-retest reliability results indicated that the initial and follow-up test results were highly correlated, $r = .83$, $p < .01$. The data collected for this study also supported the reliability of FLCAS in that the Cronbach's alpha values for the whole scale was .86.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

In order to gather data, students were given the language learning strategies questionnaire as the first step on their weekly writing course. The instructors of the participants were informed before the study and all necessary permissions were granted. In front of the front page of the inventories, under the explanations of the questionnaires, two boxes with the statements for the consent were put. Students could choose to participate in the research by putting a tick in the box or they could also put a tick for not being in the research. Thus, the participants in this context were voluntary to join the research. The language anxiety inventory was also applied on the same day.

After the data were gathered, reliability analyses were run. Then, the questionnaires were analysed for mean scores, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores. Finally, as the data were not normally distributed and homogeneous, Spearman's rho correlation was employed to find whether there was any significant relationship between language learning strategies and language learning anxiety.

3. Findings

3.1 R.Q.1. What language learning strategies are preferred by preparatory school students most and the least?

In order to find out what language learning strategies were preferred the most and the least, descriptive statistics were run. Table 2 displayed the summary of descriptive statistics of the language learning strategies used by the participants. Except for metacognitive strategies, frame by Oxford (1990). As the overall score showed, learners usually used the language learning strategies ($M=3.20$). Students reported using metacognitive strategies most ($M=3.63$, $SD=.82$). The least used strategies were the affective strategies (2.90 , $SD=.78$). These results were similar in terms of frequency of use as in the study of Balcı (2017) who also investigated the use of strategies among preparatory class students at a state university in Turkey.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics Summary of SILL (N=70)

Language Learning Strategies	Mean	SD	Ranking
Memory strategies	3.04	.82	5
Cognitive strategies	3.11	.71	4
Compensation strategies	3.22	.82	3
Metacognitive strategies	3.63	.82	1
Affective strategies	2.90	.78	6
Social strategies	3.30	.74	2
Total	3.20	.62	

3.2 R.Q.3. What levels of anxiety do English language learners report in general and in sources of anxiety?

As it was given in Table 2, the mean score of the level of anxiety was 2.53 ($SD=.35$). This score might be interpreted as the students at the preparatory school showed a moderate level of language learning anxiety.

Table 3. Level of Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Level
Overall	70	2.18	3.79	2.53	.37	Moderate

In terms of sources of language anxiety displayed in Table 3, the lowest score for language anxiety was observed in communication apprehension ($M=2.22$, $SD=.49$). In this research context, learners did not feel anxious because of speaking in front of others or speaking in the target language. The other sources of foreign language anxiety indicated a moderate level all in all. The highest level of source of anxiety was because of anxiety of English classes ($M=2.79$, $SD=.34$). Students reported that when they could not understand what the teacher says in the foreign language, they become nervous ($M=3.67$, $SD=.50$). Students also pointed at the reason for unpreparedness to speech in language classes ($M=2.79$, $SD=.86$). Fear of negative evaluation was also reported as one of the main sources of anxiety. When students felt that they did not understand what was corrected by the teacher, it could also have a negative effect on learners ($M=3.11$, $SD=1.01$). For the test anxiety component, students felt anxious because of the fear of failure in tests ($M=2.63$, $SD=1.06$).

Table 4. Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Level
Communication Apprehension	70	1.63	3.88	2.22	.49	Low
Fear of Negative Evaluation	70	2.11	4.00	2.65	.53	Moderate
Test Anxiety	70	1.80	3.80	2.35	.45	Moderate
Anxiety of English classes	70	2.36	3.73	2.79	.34	Moderate

3.3 R.Q.3. Is there any significant relationship between language learning anxiety and the strategy use of EFL learners?

Table 5 presented the relations between the overall strategy use and the anxiety. In addition to that, sources of anxiety and categories of strategies were shown. As the results indicated, there was a negative correlation between the use of language learning strategies and foreign language learning anxiety but it was not statistically significant ($r = -.09$, $p < .01$). Still, it can be said that when students use strategies more frequently, their anxiety towards learning a language can be lower. Overall anxiety was consistent with its variables. It was also negatively correlated with categories of strategies. However, it was not significant. Communication apprehension was significantly correlated with English classes ($r = .76$, $p < .01$) while test anxiety was significantly related to fear of negative evaluation ($r = .67$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, sources of anxiety showed several significant relations with strategies. For instance, fear of negative correlation was most significantly correlated with overall strategy use ($r = -.60$). Metacognitive strategies ($r = -.56$), cognitive strategies ($r = -.50$), social strategies ($-.49$), affective strategies ($-.43$), memory strategies ($r = -.36$), and compensation strategies ($-.34$) followed it with significant relations respectively. Test anxiety was considerably correlated with overall strategy use ($r = -.58$, $p < .01$) whereas the lowest significant relation was with compensation strategies ($r = -.36$, $p < .01$). English classes as a source of anxiety were also correlating with strategies but not statistically meaningful.

Table 5. Correlations for sources of anxiety and language learning strategies

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Overall anxiety											
2. Communication apprehension	.70**										
3. Fear of negative evaluation	.42**	.02									
4. Test anxiety	.44**	-.11	.67**								
5. English classes	.70**	.76**	.22	.03							
6. Memory strategies	-.00	.17	-.36**	-.41**	-.05						
7. Cognitive strategies	-.08	-.02	-.50**	-.38**	-.23	.55**					
8. Compensation strategies	.03	.10	-.34**	-.36**	.06	.43**	.60**				
9. Metacognitive strategies	-.15	.01	-.56**	-.55**	-.22	.50**	.76**	.48**			
10. Affective strategies	-.14	-.14	-.43**	-.37**	-.20	.12	.50**	.39**	.60**		
11. Social strategies	-.11	-.00	-.49**	-.44**	-.16	.33**	.58**	.49**	.69**	.54**	
12. Overall strategy	-.09	.05	-.60**	-.58**	-.16	.61**	.91**	.73**	.88**	.63**	.75**

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The first question was about the frequency of language learning strategy use by English learners. The results indicated a moderate level use of strategies while the metacognitive strategies were reported to be used at a high frequency. The study demonstrated similar results with the research that was conducted by Hakan et al. (2015). Students showed a high level of strategy use and the underlying components of the strategy use inventory resulted in a high positive correlation. Noormohamadi (2009) pointed at lower scores compared to the current study. The present study's results also supported by Solak and Cakir's (2015) study. In that study, they tried to find out significant relations between language learning strategies and academic achievement of e-learners. Students preferred using metacognitive strategies the most while the affective and cognitive strategies were the least frequently used. This study had the same results in terms of metacognitive strategies. It was also similar to the study conducted by Dreyer and Oxford (1996), who also showed that metacognitive strategies affected language proficiency. Besides, according to Oxford's (1996) suggestions, affective strategies could be helpful for beginners but as the students moved forward in language proficiency, they would depend on these strategies less often. When the students with a B1 level of English in the current study were considered, it was reasonable for them to show less tendency to use affective strategies. In addition to that, a study conducted by Altunay (2014) also showed a low degree of use in affective strategies. Moreover, Korkmaz's (2013) study reported the same results for affective strategies. Therefore, it can be inferred from these results that English language learners incline to use metacognitive strategies more often. So, they have become more aware of their needs in language learning, they can monitor and evaluate their learning process. Therefore, teachers can focus on giving constant feedback on students' learning process. Students can also be advocated for keeping a portfolio of their studies so that they can track their development. The second frequent use of strategies was social strategies.

The second question sought to find the level of anxiety of students at preparatory school students. Overall, students showed a moderate level of anxiety. The main source of anxiety with a high score was related to the anxiety of English classes. These results supported the study of Aydin (2008). These results showed similarities as in a study done by Al-Khasawneh (2016) who also reported that their participants displayed a moderate level of anxiety in language learning. As it was stated by Ellis (2008), showing a low level of anxiety or high level of anxiety may impede language learning. Therefore, a moderate level of anxiety can help learners to be motivated in the learning process and help them go further in acquiring the second language. The results of the study were opposite to Demirdaş and Bozdoğan (2015) because their participants showed a low level of anxiety in general. Furthermore, Uzun's (2016) study with 104 ELT students showed that student-teachers felt mostly anxious because of communication apprehension. However, the present study's participants reported a low mean of communication apprehension ($M=2.22$, $SD=.49$).

The last question was about the relationship between language anxiety and the use of language learning strategies. Language learning strategies scores revealed a positive correlation among each subgroup whereas anxiety and language learning strategies correlated negatively. As the students used more strategies, their level of language learning anxiety could score lower. This result was parallel to Noormohamadi (2009) and Biria et al. (2013). Overall, the anxiety was not significantly related to language learning strategies. However, sources of anxiety and categories of strategies revealed significant correlations. Communication anxiety was considerably associated with English classes. For this reason, it can be inferred from this result that because of anxiety that arises in English classes such as teachers' ideas about the students, learning context in the class, social relations create the feeling of anxiety. Test anxiety was significantly correlated with fear of negative evaluation. Therefore, students might be embarrassed by others' views and evaluations if they obtained low scores in tests. On the other hand, test anxiety was negatively relevant to strategies. The highest relation was with the overall strategy use and metacognitive strategies followed it.

This relation can indicate that frequent use of metacognitive strategies may help learners to keep their anxiety for the tests at a moderate level, which in the end result in changes in fear of negative evaluation as well. Therefore, students should be aware of what learning strategies can be most suitable to their needs and explicit ways of learning and teaching strategies can greatly affect students' language learning process.

Learners suffered from anxiety because of the fear of failure in speaking, testing; fear of losing face in front of others or teachers' appreciation. Koch and Terrell (1991) also point at the anxiety resulting from speaking in front of others. However, the findings of this study reveal an opposite result with the low level of anxiety in terms of communication apprehension. Correlational data show a negative relationship; however, it can be seen from the descriptive statistics that students report the lowest level of strategy use on affective strategies. On the other hand, correlation analysis displays a negative relationship between affective strategies and level of anxiety. It may be inferred from the results that although students report low use of affective strategies, they may still show a low level of language anxiety. In the light of this study, students can be taught how to use strategies deliberately and by looking at the sources of anxiety in detail, classrooms can be shaped into a more relaxed and supportive environment. For further research, longitudinal studies can be done. Students can be trained to use strategies deliberately and observed how they use these strategies in several situations and at a higher language proficiency in time. After strategy training, learners can be examined again to see whether their state of anxiety has diminished.

5. Disclosure of Conflict

The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest.

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