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Uncovering Procrastination in Language Teaching: Self-Efficacy, Anxiety, and Situational Influences

Abstract

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the relationship between English language teachers' teaching efficacy, emotional experiences, and situation and task-related procrastination. It aimed to explore both self-reported teaching self-efficacy beliefs and the factors influencing language teachers' procrastination behaviors and emotions during task delay. A total of 305 Croatian EFL teachers participated in this study. Descriptive, correlation, and directed content analyses were carried out. According to the findings, the Croatian language teachers viewed themselves as highly effective in the classroom and they also reported engaging in procrastination infrequently. When inquired about language proficiency-related anxiety, they admitted having experienced it sporadically. Those confident in utilizing instructional strategies and implementing classroom management strategies procrastinated less and reported lower anxiety levels. Qualitative analysis revealed that demotivating or fatiguing tasks, especially administrative and testing-related ones, instigated procrastination, among others. When procrastinating, the teachers reported primarily unpleasant emotions, such as anxiety, nervousness, frustration, and guilt.

Keywords: self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety, procrastination, EFL teachers, tasks, emotions

Let us set the scene—we have a language teacher and a class full of language learners. The teacher, armed with experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm for their work, is in full teacher mode, engaging the class with questions, thought-provoking prompts, and tasks that are meant to enrich the language learning process. We might even say that there is potential for inspiring the learners to become not only proficient but independent and curious language users. Interestingly, further examination may reveal that this seemingly

effective teacher also happens to grapple with insecurity, low self-confidence, and emotions that lead them to delay their work till the very last minute. Procrastination entails deliberately postponing a planned activity, even when one is aware of the potential negative consequences. It is associated with lower well-being, and higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, among others (Stead et al., 2010). Steel (2007) lists several other correlating factors, such as low self-efficacy, perfectionism, neuroticism, and task aversion. Yet, procrastination is not merely a behavioral issue; it often stems from deeper psychological factors that warrant examination. One such factor is self-efficacy, a construct that represents our beliefs in what we think we can do, not what we can do (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Every teacher goes through what Bandura (1997) calls information processing which entails analyzing the task in front of them with respect to their teaching abilities. Research has shown that self-efficacy beliefs determine the choices teachers make, the tasks they engage in, their behavior, and how long they persist in the face of obstacles. Teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy expect to fail, expend less effort and time, and may choose to retreat despite being aware of a solution that may aid them in attaining their goals (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Teaching is a multi-role job filled with human interaction, one that requires a high degree of autonomy, self-regulation, and the ability to cope with unforeseen social and emotional events. Language teachers, unlike their colleagues who teach other subjects, are unique in that they engage in emotional labor pertaining to managing the dynamic interplay between identity, language, and social reputation (Gkonou & Miller, 2019). These teachers report lower levels of self-efficacy and language anxiety because they use a language that is not their L1 to instruct their learners (Horwitz, 1996). Like language learners, some teachers who are foreign language users suffer from anxiety tied to the use of the target language and their proficiency levels (Dewaele, 2018). However, language teachers have the propensity to entertain irrational beliefs about the standards they are to attain, and they tend to enlarge the smallest of imperfections in their speech production. A study carried out by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) listed different sources of foreign language anxiety, among which were perfectionist tendencies (e.g., unrealistic language learning goals) and exaggerated responses to errors. All the above-listed variables can lead to lower levels of confidence in a teacher's ability to instruct learners, use the target language appropriately, and regulate their actions. Should they find themselves under emotional duress, teachers may succumb to dilatory behavior as a way of coping.

While academic procrastination has been extensively studied in various contexts, including second language research (e.g., Asmah & Sayin, 2022; Bobe et al., 2024; Khooei-Oskooei et al., 2021), less is known about its impact on language teachers' instruction quality and well-being. The study of language

teacher procrastination represents an underexplored area within the broader field of academic procrastination research. Given the unique challenges faced by language educators, such as managing emotional labor and navigating language anxiety, understanding the causes and implications of procrastination among language teachers is crucial for ensuring their well-being and instructional quality. Thus, this study aims to explore the relationship between Croatian EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety, and procrastination. It also seeks to investigate the causes of procrastination, activities/tasks promoting dilatory behavior, and the emotional experiences involved. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study aims to offer a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation. By utilizing multiple research methods, including qualitative inquiry, the study enhances the validity of the data by capturing the teachers' experiences from diverse perspectives and angles.

Theoretical Overview

Language Teacher Self-Efficacy (LTSE) Beliefs

Bandura (1997) defines perceived self-efficacy as the ability to organize and execute actions needed to achieve specific goals, influencing motivation, well-being, and a sense of accomplishment (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007). Four sources of efficacy expectations are presented: mastery experiences, physiological and emotional states, vicarious experiences, and social persuasion. Mastery experiences, based on past successes or failures, strongly shape self-efficacy beliefs. Physiological and emotional states also play a role; higher enthusiasm enhances feelings of mastery, while increased anxiety undermines them. Vicarious experiences involve modeling, where observing others' successes or failures influences one's beliefs accordingly. Social persuasion, such as feedback from superiors or colleagues, can motivate or demotivate, depending on the credibility and expertise of the source. Teachers evaluate both the demands of the teaching task and their competence in meeting those demands. This includes considering factors like available resources, student characteristics, and contextual elements. This dual assessment involves reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Teachers may perceive their teaching self-efficacy differently from external assessments impacting their instructional approaches (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Overestimating their abilities and investing extra effort can help them overcome challenges. Additionally, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs influence their instructional actions and outcome expectations. Dörnyei and Ushioda

(2011) distinguish between teaching efficacy, which reflects teachers' beliefs in facilitating student learning, and personal efficacy, which illustrates how teachers evaluate their effectiveness as educators. This division highlights the multifaceted nature of teacher self-efficacy, informed by Bandura's (1997) four sources, and described as cyclical.

LTSE beliefs in the L2 domain have been investigated with respect to different domains, predominantly language proficiency (Chacón, 2005; Faez, Karas, & Uchihara, 2019; Ghasemboland & Hashim, 2013; Lee, 2009), then grammar instruction (Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2019); motivation and burnout (Song, 2022), live stream teaching (Liu et al., 2021), emotions and emotional labor strategies (Dumančić, 2021), discourses on effective teaching practices (Phan, 2015), and teaching enjoyment, grit, and work engagement (Zhang et al., 2023), to name a few. To briefly illustrate some of the studies, Chacón (2005) explored the self-efficacy beliefs of Venezuelan English language teachers. Her research revealed a direct association between teachers' self-efficacy and their perceived language proficiency. This suggests that teachers who viewed themselves as more proficient in English also demonstrated greater confidence in their teaching capabilities. Ghasemboland and Hashim (2013) explored the link between non-native English as an LTSE belief and their English proficiency. Like Chacón (2005), they found a positive correlation between teachers' perceived language proficiency and their self-efficacy in teaching. In their investigation of factors influencing self-efficacy in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Phan and Locke (2015) reported that social persuasion emerged as a primary influence on LTSE beliefs among university teachers in Vietnam. The authors found that various sources interacted to shape self-efficacy dimensions and highlighted the impact of cultural aspects and contextual changes on teacher self-efficacy. Additionally, Phan and Locke (2015) emphasized the importance of improving leadership, teaching conditions, and professional development programs to enhance teacher self-efficacy.

Foreign Language Teacher Anxiety (FLTA)

The early era of teacher emotion research was marked by the interest in teacher anxiety. Horwitz's (1996) study highlighted the adverse impact anxiety had on foreign language teaching, particularly for non-native language instructors whose confidence in their target language proficiency was compromised. Non-native foreign language teachers may experience anxiety due to the unpredictable nature of contemporary language classrooms (El Ouastani, 2020). This unpredictability can coincide with other sources of FLTA, such as perception of one's competence and cultural and linguistic background; moreover, it can be particularly challenging for teachers who have invested significant

time and effort in mastering the target language. Language instructors, who are also language learners, have likely faced various anxiety-provoking situations during their language acquisition journeys. Horwitz's (1996) seminal work served as a springboard for all subsequent research on the topic. FLTA has been associated with perfectionist inclinations such as setting unrealistic language learning objectives and reacting excessively to errors (Horwitz & Gregersen, 2002). A recent study carried out among 151 Chinese college English language teachers revealed the primary drivers of foreign language anxiety among the respondents, such as fear of language inadequacy, fear of negative outcomes, and lack of confidence in the teachers' English competence (Liu & Wu, 2021).

Anxiety has also been investigated in relation to emotional experiences in the classroom. The primary cause of teaching anxiety stemmed from insufficient English proficiency, trailed by low confidence levels, limited understanding of linguistics and education, inadequate class preparation, and comparison with native teachers (Kim & Kim, 2004). The anxiety levels among foreign language teachers correlated with their teaching experience in the language. As language teachers accumulated more experience teaching the target language, anxiety diminished (Canessa, 2004). Other classroom-focused research revealed that FLTA was accompanied by other unpleasant emotions (e.g., frustration and irritability) to do with carrying out different classroom activities (e.g., those tied to speaking or content revision) (Dumančić, 2021). FLTA has also been examined with regard to experiences in teaching practicum. During the teaching practicum, 52 pre-service EFL teachers in Korea experienced anxiety primarily due to fear of speaking English in the classroom and lack of confidence in the target language (Yoon, 2012). Another study showed a discernible rise in FLTA among pre-service teachers compared to their non-practicum counterparts. Primary contributors to FLTA encompassed fear of negative evaluation, self-assessment of second language proficiency, and limited teaching experience (El Ouastani, 2021; Li et al., 2023). Current studies on language teacher emotions and work-related experiences often adopt multi-method, holistic approaches to capture the complexities of these phenomena. For instance, Fraschini and Park (2021) employed Q methodology to examine shared anxiety experiences among Korean second language teachers. It underscored their diverse interactions within the profession and explored participant subjectivities comprehensively. Utilizing an appraisal-based emotion theory framework, Goetze's (2023) research examined the intricate emotional dynamics of teachers and the nuances of language teacher emotions during classroom interactions. Anxiety served as the focal point, with vignette methodology employed for emotion elicitation.

Foreign Language Teacher Procrastination

Procrastination involves voluntarily postponing intended actions, influenced by both personal and situational factors, despite awareness of potential negative outcomes (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). It has been extensively theorized, with scholars exploring both its positive and negative aspects (Chu & Choi, 2005; Steel et al., 2001). While some view procrastination as a deliberate delay despite expecting unfavorable outcomes (Steel, 2007), others highlight its undesirable nature (Beswick & Mann, 1994). Internally, emotions like shame and anxiety, low self-efficacy, and task characteristics such as complexity and lack of interest contribute to procrastination (Grunschel et al., 2013; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984; Steel, 2007). Externally, factors like high workload and poor course organization impact procrastination (Grunschel et al., 2013). Additionally, task traits like the timing of rewards and punishments, as well as task aversiveness, play significant roles (Grunschel et al., 2013; Steel, 2007). In addition, scholars have identified three key criteria for procrastination: (1) voluntary delay, (2) a gap between intention and action (Steel, 2007), and (3) expectation of unfavorable outcomes followed by a sense of unease, such as guilt (Ferrari et al., 1998; Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). This consensus underscores the complexity of procrastination and provides clarity on its defining characteristics. Academic procrastination, often termed "student procrastination," involves delaying intended study-related actions despite expecting negative consequences (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016). It has been extensively researched from various perspectives, such as the correlation between language students' procrastination, satisfaction with their major, and motivation (Bekleyen, 2017); the impact of procrastination on achievement in language learning and classroom anxiety (Akpur, 2017); reasons for procrastination and coping strategies (Asmah & Sayin, 2022); the effects of procrastination on language learning and its use as a strategy (Khooei-Oskooei et al., 2021); and the relationship between learner self-efficacy beliefs and procrastination (Özer & Yetkin, 2018).

Research on academic procrastination surpasses that on teachers, especially in the L2 field. Laybourn, Frenzel, and Fenzl (2019) highlighted the limited empirical evidence regarding teachers' procrastination, indicating potential negative effects. Pertinent to the current study is the research conducted by Özer and Yetkin (2018), which aimed to examine the correlation between academic procrastination behaviors and academic self-efficacy beliefs among pre-service English language teachers. While other L2 studies touch on procrastination, they do not directly address language teachers. For instance, Yadafarin and Farjami (2019) explored procrastination from both language teachers' and learners' perspectives, while Khooei-Oskooei, Ahangari, and Seifoori (2022) investigated teachers' perceptions of their learners' procrastination. However,

the scarcity of teacher-focused research suggests a need for further exploration in this area.

The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Anxiety, and Procrastination

Bearing the lack of available studies on teacher procrastination in mind, the coming section will also present the works that have investigated procrastination regarding the variables examined among learners/students. As for the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and procrastination, research has shown that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy reported lower levels of procrastination over time (Hall et al., 2019). The authors conducted a longitudinal study on a large sample of faculty participants (n = 3,071) to investigate the relations between self-efficacy, procrastination, and burnout. Similarly, a negative association was reported between self-efficacy beliefs and academic procrastination among pre-service English language teachers (Özer & Yetkin, 2018). This finding suggests that participants with higher self-efficacy were less likely to postpone their academic obligations.

The importance of self-efficacy beliefs for self-regulation in predicting procrastination was underscored by Klassen et al. (2008) in their study on academic procrastination among 456 undergraduates. The authors hold that negative procrastinators, characterized by higher levels of procrastination, exhibit both immediate and long-term task management errors, emphasizing the need to enhance self-efficacy to mitigate procrastination tendencies and enhance academic success. As for the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety, and procrastination, it has been observed that undergraduate students with higher levels of self-efficacy in using self-regulatory strategies experienced lower levels of anxiety and engaged in procrastination less frequently (Yerdelen et al., 2016). This indicates that higher self-efficacy could protect against procrastination driven by anxiety, as those confident in task management tend to experience less anxiety and, consequently, procrastinate less. Given the apparent research gap on research focusing on procrastination behaviors of foreign language teachers, this study aims to examine how Croatian EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety levels, and procrastination tendencies are interrelated. Additionally, it seeks to uncover the underlying causes of procrastination among these teachers, identify specific tasks or activities that promote procrastination, and explore the emotional experiences associated with procrastinatory behavior.

Aims and Method

Aims

This mixed-methods study aimed to examine the relationship between language teachers' self-reported self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety, and procrastination, as well as to explore which situations and tasks related to language teaching led to procrastination and what emotions surrounded them. The present study follows the explanatory sequential design of mixed-methods research (Creswell & Clark, 2017) because it begins with the quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by the qualitative section. The primary objective of the initial quantitative phase is to identify relationships or patterns, which will subsequently be investigated in more depth during the qualitative phase. The following research questions were postulated for the quantitative portion of the research:

1. What are the levels of self-reported teaching self-efficacy among Croatian EFL teachers?
2. What are the levels of self-reported foreign language anxiety among Croatian EFL teachers?
3. What are the levels of self-reported procrastination among Croatian EFL teachers?
4. What is the relationship between teaching self-efficacy, foreign language anxiety, and procrastination?

Hypothesis related to the fourth research question:
H1: EFL teachers who report higher levels of teaching self-efficacy and lower levels of anxiety will display lower levels of procrastination.

The following research questions were posed for the qualitative segment of the research:

1. Why do Croatian EFL teachers (decide to) procrastinate?
2. Which specific situations and tasks commonly trigger procrastination among Croatian EFL teachers?
3. What emotional experiences do Croatian EFL teachers report when they find themselves procrastinating?

Sample

A total of 305 Croatian EFL teachers participated in the present study, among them 286 (93.8%) females, 18 (5.9%) males, and one (0.3%) gender nonconforming. All the teachers took part in both the quantitative and qualitative

segments of the study. The participants were employed in different institutions, for example, 188 (61.6%) worked in elementary schools, 106 in high schools (34.8%), and six at a university (2%). The average age was 43 (SD = 8.803), while the average working experience was 18 (SD = 8.583). The descriptive data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	5.9%
	Female	286	93.8%
Place of work	Elementary school	188	61.6%
	High school	106	34.8%
	University	6	2%

	Number	Mean	Stand. deviation
Age	305	43.56	8.803
Years of experience	305	18.07	8.583

Instruments

Given the nature of the research, different types of instruments were used in this study. In the quantitative portion, a four-part questionnaire was administered to explore the relationship between the participants' self-efficacy beliefs, procrastination behaviors, and language anxiety. The first section of the survey required the participants to provide information regarding their gender, age, place of employment, as well as years of working experience. In the second section, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) was used to measure the participants' level of confidence across three distinct domains, namely, the efficacy in student engagement (e.g., How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?), use of instructional strategies (e.g., To what extent can you craft good questions

for your students?), and classroom management (e.g., How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?). The instrument consisted of 12 items and teachers used a 9-point Likert scale to indicate the level of their efficacy, ranging from 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal). The third section included Steel's (2010) Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) which aimed to inquire about the frequency of engaging in specific procrastination behaviors. The instrument comprised three subscales with a total of 12 items. The subscales are as follows: namely, decisional delay (e.g., I delay making a decision until it's too late.), implemental delay (e.g., I am continually saying "I'll do it tomorrow."), and delay in meeting deadlines (e.g., I am not very good at meeting deadlines.). The teachers denoted the frequency of engaging in certain behaviors using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very seldom) to 5 (very often). Lastly, Horwitz's (2008) Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale was used in the fourth section; the teachers utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree) to express the extent to which certain situations make them feel apprehensive. The instrument consisted of 18 items (e.g., It frightens me when I don't understand what someone is saying in my foreign language). With respect to the qualitative portion, three open-ended questions were presented to further delve into EFL teachers' procrastination, specifically its causes, related activities, and emotions. The questions are as follows:

Q1) Why do you (decide) to procrastinate?

Q2) What situations and tasks cause you to procrastinate? List examples of both and briefly elaborate on them.

Q3) What emotions do you experience when you engage in procrastination? Feel free to provide different examples and emotions accompanying them (e.g., I feel X when I delay doing Y).

Procedure and Data Analysis

The data were collected through an online questionnaire constructed in the Google Forms workspace. The link to the survey was disseminated through various channels, such as representatives of the Education and Teacher Training Agency, the Croatian Association of Teachers of English, and County Professional Councils. The ethical considerations were respected as the participants were informed of the aims of the study, their right to willingly participate and opt out of the research, as well as the fact that their anonymity would be ensured throughout the entire process. Each participant was assigned a unique identifier code, such as T1, T2, T3, etc. This allowed the author to track the responses back to individual participants. Regarding data analysis, quantitative data was subjected to descriptive (frequencies) and Pearson correlation analysis using the SPSS 26 package. The correlation analysis was carried out

to investigate the relationships between the variables tested, namely, teacher sense of efficacy, language teacher anxiety, and procrastination.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for each scale. Qualitative data was subjected to directed content analysis with the help of NVivo 14 software designed to locate patterns and relations in transcripts, among others. The analysis entailed importing the data into the software. The author first conducted a general overview of all the data to gain a better understanding of the data set. Following the deductive coding approach and the research questions, the data was first placed under broader categories. The deductive coding approach involves starting with a predefined set of codes, which are then applied to the data. The initial codes, such as situations and tasks that cause EFL teachers to procrastinate or emotions experienced when procrastinating, were identified based on the research questions and then refined through iterative review. To aid with the data analysis a qualitative codebook was created with the help of the qualitative software used. After coding the responses thematically, the author organized them under the three major categories identified: reasons for procrastination, situations and tasks causing procrastination, and emotions experienced during procrastination. This process allowed for a more systematic analysis of the qualitative data, ensuring that relevant themes were captured and explored in depth. Different codes emerged during data analysis, however, the most frequent ones were highlighted (color-coded in the codebook to help the author separate them from the other) and reported in the paper.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was carried out on three distinct scales, namely, the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES), Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS), and Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS). The results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of the Scales Used in the Research—Means, Number, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients

Scale	Range	Subscale(s)	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's Alpha
Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale	9-point scale (1–Nothing, 9–A great deal)	Efficacy for student engagement	305	6.89	1.09	α = .75
		Efficacy for instructional strategies	305	7.70	.93	α = .82
		Efficacy for classroom management	305	7.32	1.16	α = .90
Pure Procrastination Scale	5-point scale (1 – very seldom or not true of me; 5 – very often or true of me)	Decisional delay	305	2.16	1.01	α = .87
		Implemental delay	305	2.43	1.17	α = .95
		Delay in meeting deadlines	305	2.03	.90	α = .83
Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale	5-point scale (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree)	–	305	2.08	.64	α = .88

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, and it revealed good internal consistency. The findings indicated a moderate to high level of confidence in the participants' ability to teach. Specifically, the Croatian EFL teachers revealed a slightly higher level of efficacy in student engagement (M = 6.89, SD = 1.09). This would imply that they feel quite confident in their capacity to get their learners to do schoolwork and to make them believe they can do well in school. The score related to efficacy in classroom management was higher (M = 7.32, SD = 1.16), indicating that the Croatian EFL teachers felt more confident in their ability to control disruptive learner behavior and get learners to follow the rules. The highest score was observed in relation to efficacy in instructional strategies (M = 7.70, SD = .93). This would imply

that the teachers have more confidence when it comes to crafting appropriate questions for learners and using a variety of assessment strategies.

With respect to the Pure Procrastination Scale, the internal consistency coefficients for this scale were good. The results obtained revealed low scores across all three domains examined in the descriptive analyses. To illustrate, the findings tied to the first one, labeled Decisional delay, were quite low (M = 2.16, SD = 1.01), indicating that the EFL teachers in this study rarely wait till the very last minute to decide or delay acting upon the decision once it has been made. The highest among scores were detected in the second factor, named Implemental delay (M = 2.43, SD = 1.17). This seems to suggest that EFL teachers seldom waste time doing other things or delay before starting on the work they must do. The lowest score was related to the last factor, labeled Delay in meeting deadlines (M = 2.03, SD = .90). It potentially signifies that Croatian EFL teachers rarely find themselves running out of time, or in breach of a deadline. Lastly, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale was good. Apropos language teacher anxiety, the findings revealed a low score among the participants (M = 2.08, SD = .64). It could be argued that Croatian EFL teachers experience low levels of anxiety related to their language proficiency. Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS) predominantly focuses on teachers' ability to speak and comprehend those around them (e.g., native speakers, other language teachers, and students). Bearing this in mind, the participants do not seem to be self-conscious when speaking in front of native speakers, or when they do not understand what they hear.

Relationships Between Variables

When observing the relationship between the self-efficacy and procrastination variables, the findings revealed a predominantly low negative significant relationship. When observing the relationship between the self-efficacy and procrastination variables, the findings revealed a predominantly low negative significant relationship. Specifically, teacher sense of efficacy for student engagement was significantly and negatively correlated with all three factors of teacher procrastination. It can be suggested that the more efficacious the teachers appraise themselves in various domains, the less likely it is that they will engage in different forms of procrastination.

A similar scenario can be noted regarding the relationship between said aspects of teacher self-efficacy and various forms of procrastination. To exemplify, there was a significant negative relationship between the respondents' efficacy in using varied instructional strategies and engaging in decisional delay. This suggests that teachers who display more confidence in their ability

to use adequate instructional strategies might be less likely to delay acting upon making a decision or wait to make one. Similarly, the findings also revealed a significant negative relationship between efficacy for classroom management and both decisional delay and implementation delay. This observation suggests that the teachers who exhibit more confidence in their capacity to manage the classroom might be less likely to procrastinate when having to make a decision or waste their time doing something else.

The relationships between different factors of teacher self-efficacy and language teacher anxiety indicated low to mid-negative significant correlations. Specifically, a weak negative relationship was detected between student engagement, classroom management, and foreign language teacher anxiety. This suggests that the more efficacious teachers feel about engaging students in class and using proper disciplinary procedures, the less probable it is that they will experience language anxiety. The findings also revealed a moderate negative relationship between instructional strategies and foreign language teacher anxiety, implying that teachers who feel more confident in their ability to choose effective instructional and assessment strategies might also experience lower levels of language anxiety. Lastly, when examining the relationships between various forms of procrastination behavior and foreign language teacher anxiety, weak positive correlations were found. To illustrate, there was a weak association between foreign language teacher anxiety and all forms of procrastination, including decisional delay, implementation delay, and delay in meeting deadlines. This would signify that teachers who experience higher levels of anxiety would be more likely to engage in various forms of procrastination. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations Analysis of Different Variables (Teacher Sense of Efficacy – TSES, Pure Procrastination Scale – PPS, and Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale – TFLAS); Pearson Correlation Values (r), Significance (p)

Variables		Significance (*p*)	Pearson correlation (*r*)
Student engagement	Decisional delay	<.0001	–.286
	Implementation delay	<.0001	–.244
	Meeting deadlines	<.0001	–.226
Instructional strategies	Decisional delay	<.0001	–.309
	Implementation delay	<.0001	–.218
	Meeting deadlines	<.0001	–.218

Table 3 continued

Variables		Significance (*p*)	Pearson correlation (*r*)
Classroom management	Decisional delay	<.0001	–.403
	Implementation delay	<.0001	–.309
	Meeting deadlines	<.0001	–.294
Student engagement	TFLAS	<.0001	–.257
Instructional strategies	TFLAS	<.0001	–.353
Classroom management	TFLAS	<.0001	–.267
Decisional delay	TFLAS	<.0001	.232
Implemental delay	TFLAS	.018	.135
Delay in meeting deadlines	TFLAS	.005	.162

Qualitative Analysis

As a natural progression from the quantitative phase, the qualitative segment delves deeper into the nuances of language teachers' procrastination behaviors, targeting the underlying reasons, causes, and emotional experiences associated with procrastination. Building upon the quantitative findings, this qualitative exploration aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between self-efficacy, anxiety, and procrastination among Croatian EFL teachers. The findings in this subsection are presented according to the research questions presented in the Aims and Method Section.

Q1: Why do you (decide to) procrastinate?

The Croatian EFL teachers in this study provided a variety of responses to this question. Starting from most to least frequent, their causes of procrastination are as follows: demotivating/uninteresting tasks or activities (n = 55), numerous obligations (n = 44), feeling fatigued/tired (n = 26), and lack of time (n = 24). As far as the first category is concerned, the majority of the respondents admitted to delaying their course of action when they found the task or activity boring, unworthy of expending effort, unappealing, pointless, or simply not challenging enough. To quote some of them, T7 revealed: "I sometimes procrastinate because I don't see the point of doing the paperwork." T21 explained: "Because I find some things boring and unnecessary, and they still need to be done." A similar point of view was also shared by T2 who explained

their motivational plight when faced with such activities/tasks. This teacher engages in procrastination and explains it as follows: "[…] some things I have to do are pointless and a complete waste of time. So, I have to force myself to invest my time into sth that is useless. E.g. heaps of paperwork." The following example ties in some of the causes listed above, as well as some others mentioned in different categories. T44 claims to procrastinate because they are

> overworked and tired. We are often required to do pointless busywork that takes away our time and energy which we could focus on more productive activities. In short, because I find a significant portion of my daily workload pointless.

The next category, labeled external demands and workload, depicts a range of additional obligations the teachers are faced with in addition to their professional duties. Many of them (n = 44) underscore the challenges of balancing work and personal responsibilities, including household chores, family obligations, administrative tasks, and unexpected obligations that arise outside of teaching duties. For instance, T87 explained: "I am overwhelmed with work, including household chores and errands related to family life. I don't feel I have the skillset required to do a task." Likewise, T223 admitted: "It is not my personal decision, there are obligations that I have to fulfill and that cannot be delayed. Some situations in life (taking care of children and parents) is more important than deadlines." On the other hand, some teachers reflected on their professional domain. T14 said they procrastinated because they "[…] have got too many things to do, especially dealing with school administration, observing, making notes for each student, preparing lessons, etc." The last example envelops both teaching-related and personal issues that cause them to procrastinate. T56 explained that:

> It is most often connected to work, also it is most often stuff I have to do at home due to not having a place at school to prepare for English classes. So, since it's about doing work at home I delay doing it as long as possible.

Fatigue was a prominent cause of procrastination according to many Croatian EFL teachers. It stemmed primarily from their work, and it entailed various emotional states, such as worry and anxiety, as well as a lack of motivation. While many participants provided curt responses (such as "because I'm tired," "I'm overwhelmed and tired," or "I'm too exhausted"), there were those that supplied somewhat more elaborate answers. For instance, when asked what causes them to procrastinate, T191 replied: "Tiredness and lack of motivation or if I don't find the task fulfilling or worth the effort." T8 reflected this state by underscoring it with stress. In their words, procrastination "is primarily caused

by feeling overwhelmed with the number of tasks I need to get done and/or feeling exhausted and anxious." T42 explained that procrastination is not simply a matter of decision but something necessary. They reported:

> I don't decide to do so, but simply delay my obligations. Usually, the reason is that I need rest, want to enjoy some other activity, or most often because it feels overwhelming knowing that I ALWAYS have some school-related work to do well outside my working hours.

Regarding the Lack of time category (n = 24), the Croatian EFL teachers complained of not having enough time to do all that was needed. Akin to the category above, the responses were mainly brief (e.g., "Because I don't have (enough) time," "Lack of time," or "Too little free time"). Some teachers followed up with additional reasons, such as those tied to motivation (e.g., "Lack of time, not feeling like doing certain things"), alternative options (e.g., "Lack of time, various interests in my free time..."), or psychological states (e.g., "Lack of time and a lot of self-doubt. I don't think I am good enough to do this job due to lack of experience").

Supplementary Insights

This heading is designated for additional findings that do not directly correspond to the research question posed in this section but are still pertinent to the discussion at hand. Two categories emerged in this segment, namely, the "I do not procrastinate" (n = 54) and "I rarely procrastinate" (n = 24). To illustrate the first category, many teachers (n = 54) attested to not engaging in procrastination. While this category cannot explicitly be classified under the confines of the first research question, it still gives insight into the current situation among Croatian teachers. Their answers were predominantly brief and to the point, with a few exceptions that will be presented below. When inquired why they choose to procrastinate, the majority replied: "I don't," "I never do it," or "I don't procrastinate." Those that opted to provide some feedback alluded to their emotional states (e.g., "I don't procrastinate as it makes me feel nervous"), preferences (e.g., "I am not fond of delays"), or professional training (e.g., "I don't because I'm trained and experienced enough to not do so"). T180 gave a detailed description of their remedy for procrastination.

> I always try to do everything I have to do. I even like doing things in advance because I know that there always can be some unexpected stuff to do, so I like to be prepared. I don't like leaving things for the last minute. I feel more relaxed when I do things on time.

In terms of infrequent procrastination, 24 teachers reported to delay their obligations only in special circumstances, or those that they deem emergent and unexpected. Upon closer inspection, the reasons behind their still infrequent procrastination stem from their personal lives. To illustrate, several teachers mentioned their families and stated that they delay things ("Mostly due to family or personal reasons" or "See no point in putting things off unless I'm facing unexpected family obligations"). T85 implied personal reasons without referring to their family ("I never procrastinate with work, but I sometimes or often do procrastinate with tasks concerning my personal life"). Interestingly, only one teacher admitted to procrastinating because of their learners. According to T211, "I usually procrastinate when my students are not ready for examination, so I decide to review rather than obtain unsufficient marks [sic]."

Table 4

Reasons for Procrastination

Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Demotivating/uninteresting tasks or activities	55	18%
External demands and workload	44	14%
Feeling fatigued/tired	26	8,5%
Lack of time	24	6.8%

Q2: What situations and tasks cause EFL teachers to procrastinate?

Qualitative analysis revealed several categories related to this research question. In order of frequency, Croatian EFL teachers' responses can be subsumed under the following categories: administrative and bureaucratic tasks (n = 96); tasks related to testing and assessment (n = 50); tasks teachers feel ill-equipped to handle (n = 28); and non-teaching related situations/tasks (n = 27). The data is presented in Table 5. The majority of the participants (n = 96) admitted to procrastinating when having to deal with administrative and bureaucratic duties. The first and most prominent category encapsulated personal reports of procrastinating when being required to fill out reports, tables, and paperwork, input personal observations and comments regarding learner progress, plans for SEN learners, and work on the curriculum, among others. The teachers' responses uncovered varied experiences, ranging from those where teachers feel like administrators, not teachers (e.g., "Let's not forget administration—I often feel like I am some office clerk and not a teacher"), doubt their competence (e.g., "Writing plans for the School year, writing plans for students that have special needs (I don't feel competent enough")), or experience unpleasant

emotions (e.g., "Writing reports, because they consume too much time and are boring"). T19 provided more information regarding the type of paperwork that is required of them. They provided an example of some tasks, meanwhile using Croatian terminology in the process, such as "GIK" (annual curriculum), "pp" (programs for SEN learners), "tematsko planiranje" (thematic planning/instruction). According to them:

> I don't enjoy sitting for long periods of time in front of the computer writing documents (GIK, tematsko planiranje, pp programi) because I always do a detailed and thorough job, which takes a lot of time, especially if it has to be in Croatian.

T146 provided a detailed account of why they procrastinate when faced with "red tape" procedures in their school. They explained as follows:

> I usually procrastinate on the so-called red tape, e.g. different tables with data that my school requires us to hand in, paperwork regarding SEN students, written records of teacher meetings or PTA meetings, etc. I feel that a lot of that work is unnecessary so that's why I tend to procrastinate.

The second most frequent category, labeled Tasks related to testing and assessment, mainly points to activities such as grading essays, exams, learner assignments, making tests, and being involved in formative assessment. When inquired about their procrastination behaviors, 50 teachers elaborated that they are strongly (and mostly negatively) affected by the repetitiveness of such work (e.g., "Usually it's something repetitive like entering formative assessment results for each student and trying to make it clear, affirmative, precise… I give up after an hour when I realize there are 50 more to go"), the emotional and physical toll on the teacher (e.g., "Also, grading papers, especially students' texts about certain topics, I hate doing it. It takes too much time and energy to read something that is most of the time written poorly"), or a circumstance that requires them to decide between different options (e.g., "If I have to choose between correcting students' tests and seeing a doctor/helping my parents/cooking dinner for my boyfriend/taking care of my physical and mental health, I will choose the latter"). T59 underscored the strenuous nature of being a language teacher. They admitted to procrastinating: "I teach two foreign languages, so I do have lots of things to do, very often I'm under pressure especially when I have to read and correct essays."

The following category, named Tasks teachers feel ill-equipped to handle, is informative in that it gives insight into the teachers' self-appraisal, that is, self-efficacy beliefs related to their teaching and personal competencies. When language teachers feel ambivalent, insecure, or are unable to proceed with their

obligations, they tend to delay them. The responses obtained pointed to specific sources of procrastination, such as lack of language proficiency (e.g., "When I am not confident enough or if there are knowledge gaps. Situations like public speaking"), low self-appraisal of personal skills (e.g., "Something I am not good at, creative tasks, being inventive, responding to emails I'm not sure what to say), or situations causing teachers discomfort, such as interacting with parents (e.g., "Sometimes I'm nervous about certain situations that are unknown to me (dealing with some parents, e.g.) and I delay that out of nervousness"). A major factor behind many teachers' desire to procrastinate was dealing with SEN learners. They experienced feelings of inadequacy, lack of preparedness, and worry when approaching that subject. These examples point to the interrelatedness between language teacher self-efficacy beliefs, emotions, and dilatory behavior. To illustrate, T138 said that:

> The only thing I tend to procrastinate is writing the curriculum for SEN students. It's because I think we should do it together with the social educator and I don't feel competent enough to estimate the type/depth of the educational support the student is going to need during the entire year.

T17 attested to this by reiterating how much paperwork teaching SEN learners requires. They primarily procrastinated because: "All the consent forms for my lessons I need to get from parents, lesson plans for students with special needs who I do not know how to fill in because I am not prepared for teaching them."

Non-teaching related situations and tasks were also one of the causes of language teacher procrastination. The teachers in this study (n = 27) delayed carrying out those duties that were outside the scope of their regular, teaching duties (e.g., filling out research questionnaires or organizing field trips), or they postponed their teaching obligations due to personal affairs (such as housework or child-rearing). To exemplify, T91 stated that they procrastinate when being required to do "obligatory tasks not directly involving my classes but other school things." T249 showcased how their work life is impacted by their personal life: "My school work suffers because of my family obligations. I've been under a lot of strain." This was echoed by T35 who said: "If I do postpone some tasks it is because of family obligations (I am a mother of 2—one of them is autistic and needs more time and effort than a neurotypical child)." Alongside numerous family-related responses, T180 expressed their preference for non-teaching activities over those tied to their profession; in their words: "Laundry, gym, cooking, dog walking: which all seem more interesting than GIK and other ŠzŽ things." To illustrate, "ŠzŽ" in this context pertains to the curricular reform experimental program entitled 'Škola za život' (Engl., School for life).

Table 5

Situations/Tasks That Cause Language Teachers to Procrastinate

Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Administrative or bureaucratic tasks	96	31.4%
Tasks related to testing and assessment	50	16.3%
Tasks teachers feel ill-equipped to handle	28	9.1%
Non-teaching related situations/tasks	27	8.8%

Q3: What emotions do you experience when you procrastinate?

The last question in the qualitative portion of this research probed into the emotions Croatian EFL teachers experience when they engage in procrastination behavior. The findings are clustered around the following categories (emotions): anxiety (n = 67), nervousness (n = 46), guilt (n = 38), frustration (n = 28), and stress (n = 26). While acknowledging that stress is a state, not an emotion, the author opted to keep it here as it is closely related to the teachers' affective state. The least frequent emotions, anger (n = 22) and worry (n = 10) will not be discussed, only mentioned. The data is presented in Table 6.

According to the findings, the majority of Croatian EFL teachers feel anxious when they delay certain obligations. Most teachers appeared laconic when responding to this research question, providing answers such as "anxiety," "anxious," or "I feel anxious"; these emotional states were accompanied by different bodily experiences, such as tension, headaches, or the feeling of being overwhelmed. The respondents' anxiety was frequently reported alongside other previously mentioned emotions, such as guilt. According to T74, they felt "[m]ostly anxious and guilty for not getting things done." Some teachers experienced anxiety when they were about to perform an activity for the first time. This was corroborated by T129 who reported: "I always feel anxious because I do know I have to do something but I haven't done it yet." Anxiety was also mentioned in cases when a teacher failed to organize their time properly. T46 recalled experiencing several emotions because of their poor timing. In their words: "It is a mixture of getting anxious, nervous, and disappointed because I couldn't find the time to do it all." Approaching due dates, as well as having unfinished business, caused Croatian teachers to feel anxious. T215 said, "I feel anxious and often think about what needs to be done, even in my free time." An interesting view of procrastination was shared by T82 who distinguished voluntary from unexpected procrastination. According to them, "Well, if it is my choice to procrastinate because I value my well-being, then I feel fine. If it is an unexpected situation, then I might feel nervous or even

anxious." These responses yet again reflect the relationship between unpleasant emotions, in this case, anxiety, and procrastination behavior.

Nervousness was the second most frequently reported emotion regarding procrastination. The emotion appeared to permeate various domains of teachers' lives as it manifested itself regardless of their current whereabouts (i.e., whether they were at work or at home). The teachers felt nervous owing to a pending deadline or one that was about to expire. Hoping to describe nervousness stemming from a task yet to be completed, T155 said, "I feel nervous when I delay doing whatever needs to be done because no one is going to do it instead and it just keeps hanging over my head." T27 depicted how it feels for them to be close to a due date:

> I feel very nervous when I am running out of time to finish certain activities. In the end, I managed to finish all activities on time. I am aware of the fact it would be much better to plan things well in advance but it takes a lot of time and patience.

There is an intriguing example in which T196 initially experiences a pleasant emotion when procrastinating, only to have it replaced by an unpleasant one along the way. They explained, "It starts with pleasant emotions, but eventually it may turn to nervousness and even anxiety when I realize that I have procrastinated too much." Nervousness was also rooted in expectations teachers had of themselves, as well as not attaining previously set goals. In the words of T51:

> I feel nervous and a bit anxious when I don't do things/tasks on time (on time in my mind). I am usually very punctual and respect the deadlines and when I don't sort all the things out, I feel as if I failed and am not able to organize my time properly.

When it comes to guilt, several teachers reported experiencing this unpleasant emotion because of delaying their obligations. As in the categories above, guilt was frequently accompanied by other unpleasant emotions, such as nervousness, anxiety, and feeling self-conscious. Before elucidating reasons for feeling guilty, T13's vivid and personal recollection best describes experiencing a multitude of emotions alongside guilt:

> When I procrastinate in the examples I've described previously, I usually feel guilt, anger, and desperation. I feel like I'm not a good fit for this profession. I see many of my coworkers neglecting their health and families to do tons of work, engage with students via WhatsApp, Yammer, etc., while I don't want to have anything to do with anyone once I'm off the clock.

As stated before, one of the major sources of guilt when procrastinating is postponing work that needs to be done. T68 used a metaphor to describe how they "always feel very guilty, uncomfortable and restless because the task at hand is looming over my head like Damocles' sword." T104 had similar thoughts when it came to delaying working on learners' assignments. They explained: "[I] feel guilty when I delay doing things that I know my students expect me to do—actually I feel the highest level of responsibility towards my students because I am deeply aware I should be a role model."

Some teachers admitted to experiencing guilt when delaying their administrative duties. To clarify, T83 revealed: "When delaying with plan making I feel a bit guilty because I am scared that I might be the last person to hand them in." This was attested to by T20 whose example involves putting in grades. They also: "feel guilty when I don't write notes and grades immediately after a lesson in e-dnevnik. I feel guilty and like I'm not a good enough teacher when I don't bring graded papers a week or two weeks after the exam (which often happens)."

Unlike the rest of their colleagues, T242 recognized their guilt and accepted procrastination as a necessary and welcome solution. They stated: "I sometimes feel guilty, but then I tell myself I deserve some rest and the world will not cease to exist if I don't do whatever it is I need to do."

Frustration was reported by a smaller number of EFL teachers, and their responses mainly revolved around experiencing the emotion owing to a job still pending or the fact that delaying work might cause further complications. This was reflected in the recollection of T39 who said: "I feel frustrated when I delay making a timetable of tests because I can't choose the dates I need anymore and have to change my plans." T167 expressed a similar sentiment when they responded: "I feel frustrated when I delay doing the above-mentioned plans and reports because I know I will have to do them in the end." Some teachers experienced frustration regarding their learners. T95 mentioned frustration alongside low self-confidence; in their words, "When making plans for special needs students I sometimes get frustrated because I don't feel confident enough even to decide how to do the task that is ahead of me." T116 recalled feeling frustrated due to their learners' disposition toward school obligations. They disclosed that: "I feel frustrated when I delay exams because my pupils are still not ready after many classes, exercises, examples simply because they aren't interested or eager to learn." Akin to the section above, T53 expressed mixed feelings towards procrastinating; according to them, "I feel human when I delay doing the paperwork. Frustrated as well. But adrenaline driven when I am about to finish something challenging in the last minute."

The final category pertains to the state of stress that some Croatian EFL teachers experienced when deciding to procrastinate. While most teachers provided a brief response, such as "stress," "stressed," or "I feel stressed," some

proceeded to clarify their experiences. The findings indicated that stress was mostly associated with delaying doing the administrative work or responding to the parents. Regarding the administrative domain, T219 recalled feeling under duress when they failed to enter the proper date in the class book. They felt: "Stressed and angry, sometimes I felt I had some major failure when I saw a remark that I hadn't written a date of my control work in the register, the control work that I had done and announced by the rules just missed to write that it was done." T71's stress was related to them not providing corrective feedback on time, "I feel stressed when I don't give feedback the next day after a test." As for postponing parent-related obligations, T143 confessed: "I feel stressed, and I experience a bit of anxiety when I delay conversations with parents whom I have to tell about their children's misbehavior at school." T29 experienced stress tied to delaying correspondence with their learners' parents; in their words, they are under "[s]tress when [they] delay responding to parents' emails."

Table 6

Emotions EFL Teachers Experienced When Procrastinating

Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Anxiety	67	22%
Nervousness	46	15%
Guilt	38	12.4%
Frustration	28	9.1%
Stress	26	8.5%

Discussion

Given the scarcity of available research on foreign language teacher procrastination, the author will discuss the findings with respect to general or second language research conducted among other teachers, and/or language learners/students. The goal of this study was to investigate the relationship between Croatian EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, procrastination, and anxiety. Additionally, the aim was to examine the situations and tasks that caused the teachers to procrastinate, as well as the emotions they reported when they delayed their obligations.

The findings unveiled a relatively high level of confidence in the language teachers' ability to engage students, instruct them, and ensure proper classroom

behavior. Using the hierarchy of dimensions outlined in Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) these findings hint at a notably high sense of teaching efficacy which represents teachers' overall beliefs regarding their capacity to facilitate student learning despite facing numerous challenges. When inspected individually, it can be observed that the teachers in this study felt most confident in their capacity to utilize various instructional strategies and manage the classroom but less so when raising learner motivation and promoting their learning process. These findings appear to be consistent with the findings of other researchers in the L2 domain (e.g., Chacón, 2005; Kostić-Bobanović & Grgić, 2016). To briefly demonstrate, Venezuelan teachers in Chacón's study also felt confident when having to devise and use new instructional strategies but not as much when it came to managing the classroom and promoting language learning. Certain discrepancies have been observed in relation to different facets of teacher efficacy when comparing Croatian teachers and their Asian counterparts. For instance, the Asian EFL teachers in Ghasemboland's (2014) study reported higher levels of efficacy related to learner engagement whereas their Croatian colleagues felt more efficacious in their ability to employ different instructional strategies. Similarly, Iranian EFL teachers shared their level of appraisal of efficacy in learner engagement with the Croatian teachers; however, they diverged in their appraisal of classroom management efficacy (which was higher among Iranian colleagues) (Zakeri & Alavi, 2011).

The phenomenon of FLTA represented another point of inquiry in this study. The findings indicated a low level of anxiety among the Croatian language teachers. This would imply that the teachers appear to be quite confident in their language proficiency when conversing with other speakers (native and non-native alike) and are unperturbed by the fact that they might not understand everything. Their anxiety can be observed through the dynamic perspective, meaning that it is viewed as the teachers' response to continuing events (Gregersen et al., 2014). This finding highlights the connectedness between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their emotional experiences, that is, the relationship between competence and anxiety. Deci and Ryan (1985) identified competence, encompassing feelings of efficacy and a sense of achievement, as a fundamental prerequisite for intrinsic motivation, whereas Bandura (1997) discussed emotional states as one of the sources that shape one's sense of efficacy. In this case, Croatian teachers' confidence in their language prowess helped dissipate their feelings of anxiety. The present findings were also echoed by Liu and Wu (2021); according to their study, Chinese college English teachers also expressed confidence in their teaching abilities, as well as their language competence. They were not concerned with failure nor were they apprehensive when speaking English in front of others. Similarly, a group of EFL teachers who came from and worked in various countries reflected on their experiences with language teaching anxiety. According to the results, they also

reported low levels of anxiety. Their self-appraisals were not the cause of the emotion, but their learners' lack of interest and negative evaluation were (Aydın & Uştuk, 2020). Both studies seem to align with the findings reported in this article. Conversely, Chinese EFL pre-service teachers appeared to differ from our participants in their levels of anxiety and self-appraisal. In addition to the low appraisal of their competence, they were also worried about negative evaluation and lack of experience (Li et al., 2023). This finding should be viewed through the prism of their current career phase. Pre-service language teachers often find coordinating university and initial teaching experiences daunting, and their lack of experience makes them feel unprepared for what awaits them in the real classroom (Sulis et al., 2023).

Broadening the scope of investigation, the study turned toward procrastination behavior among the Croatian language teachers. As it stands, the teachers in this study appear to engage in dilatory behavior infrequently. This seemed to be the case across all three domains tested, namely, the delay in meeting deadlines, the decision delay, and the implemental delay. It can be surmised that Croatian teachers rarely wait till the very last minute to do something, to decide, and they seldom do other things instead of what they ought to be doing. Furthermore, the present findings, given the teachers' higher levels of efficacy and lower levels of anxiety, are unsurprising, as internal factors such as low self-efficacy, anxiety, and shame, known to exacerbate procrastination, are not evident here (Grunschel et al., 2013). However, there appears to be a contrast in findings with some studies available. Specifically, Laybourn and colleagues (2019) reported that 16 out of 27 teachers in their study engage in procrastination frequently, whereas Balkis and Duru (2009) revealed that nearly half of the pre-service teachers in their study had either a moderate or high level of dilatory behavior. It can be speculated that there may be some cultural and educational factors at work that might help explain the discrepancy in these findings, or perhaps the respondents in this study provided socially desirable responses, thus precluding us from gaining insight into the true state of the matter.

When considering the relationship between the variables, namely, LTSE beliefs, FLTA, and procrastination, the findings presented would seem to correspond to the previously set hypothesis that states that teachers who feel more efficacious in the classroom will exhibit fewer dilatory behaviors and experience lower levels of anxiety. In this case, Croatian teachers' strong beliefs in their teaching abilities boosted their achievement behavior, as stated by Bandura (1997), and it enabled them to confront daunting situations confidently. Their lower levels of language anxiety implied that they prioritized task-oriented focus over self-doubt during task engagement. It can be predicted that they will be capable of persistently exerting effort even in the aftermath of setbacks. Kim and Kim (2004) reported several causes of anxiety, among

which were insufficient English proficiency low confidence levels, and limited understanding of linguistics and education. Judging by the present findings, Croatian teachers' strong language proficiency and teaching experience are what allow them to maintain higher levels of confidence in the classroom and offset both language anxiety and procrastination.

In line with the present findings, a negative association between self-efficacy and procrastination was also underscored by Steel (2007) in his meta-analysis. It can be gathered that individuals with higher levels of efficacy report lower levels of dilatory behavior.

Other studies among teachers and students outlined similar findings. To exemplify, a longitudinal study among post-secondary faculty carried out by Hall et al. (2019) attested to the fact there is a decrease in procrastination behavior among teachers who exhibit a higher level of efficacy. The authors noted that lower dilatory behavior was not solely observed at the baseline but also over a longer period. Similarly, Turkish pre-service teachers who displayed a higher level of confidence in their abilities avoided delaying their academic tasks. This study also confirmed the negative relationship between the students' academic self-efficacy beliefs and procrastination (Özer & Yetkin, 2018). The inverse relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination has been documented in academic settings by other scholars as well (Ferrari et al., 1992; Klassen et al., 2008; Yerdelen et al., 2016). Yerdelen and colleagues (2016), for instance, conducted a longitudinal study targeting procrastination, anxiety, and self-efficacy for regulated learning among undergraduate students. Their initial testing revealed that students who procrastinated were the ones who had low levels of self-regulation efficacy and high levels of anxiety. This only proves that self-efficacy beliefs are an important predictor of procrastination behavior.

After reviewing the quantitative data on language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety levels, and procrastination tendencies, it is necessary to get a better understanding of procrastination behavior by turning attention to the qualitative findings that are based on the real-life experiences of Croatian language teachers. The data obtained uncovered various antecedents of language teacher procrastination, ranging from uninteresting tasks/activities and external demands and workload to feeling fatigued. Uninteresting tasks/activities, including filling out reports, making tables, and working on syllabuses, plans, and notes related to learner progress, emerged as the most prominent antecedent of procrastination. It was found that the teachers mainly procrastinated when having to deal with tasks associated with testing and assessment, tasks that made them feel less efficacious, such as working on plans and materials for SEN learners. This link between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and dilatory behavior is evident in this case as Croatian teachers do not feel well-equipped to contend with the demands of teaching SEN learners. The respondents also admitted to having too many obligations, both professional and personal. When

discussing various sources of procrastination, Laybourn et al. (2019) mentioned extrinsic motivation, which involved, among other things, imposed duties, such as those mandated by the Ministry or the existing curriculum. Feeling fatigued was another prominent cause of language teacher procrastination. This finding can be categorized under internal reasons, according to Grunschel and colleagues (2013). More the point, the authors listed exhaustion and illness under mental and physical states, which would seem to encompass the weary state observed among the Croatian teachers.

The second research question explored the situations and tasks that instigate procrastination among Croatian EFL teachers. The findings revealed that they were primarily driven to procrastinate by what they considered uninteresting and demotivating tasks. This underscores the importance of considering various facets of procrastination, such as task characteristics, individual differences, outcomes, and demographics (Steel, 2007). Additionally, their appraisal of said tasks falls under the category of task aversiveness (Grunschel et al., 2013; Steel, 2007). Given the affective appraisal of a task, we can also discriminate between a dysphoric affect (Milgram et al., 1988) and task appeal (Harris & Sutton, 1983). Filing reports or doing any type of paperwork would certainly qualify as dysphoric for Croatian teachers.

Unappealing tasks and administrative duties were also reported by Laybourn and colleagues (2019). Respondents in their study procrastinated when they found the task aversive, complex, or evoking too much stress. Delving into data further, the participants reported tasks involving assessment as one of the main driving forces behind their dilatory behavior. These involved grading essays, and exams, correcting homework assignments, and being involved in formative assessment. This finding aligns with the experiences reported by German teachers, who also identified tasks such as correcting exams and evaluating learner performance as common triggers for procrastination. Similarly, like their Croatian counterparts, some German teachers postponed grading tests or evaluating homework assignments (Laybourn et al., 2019). In their assessment of teaching capability, teachers evaluate the demands of anticipated tasks and their personal competence (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). This evaluation considers factors like available resources, student attributes, and contextual elements. When confronted with tasks they feel ill-prepared for, such as preparing materials for SEN learners, teachers may perceive a gap between task requirements and their skills, leading to procrastination. This observation corresponds to the competencies category identified by Grunschel et al. (2013), who highlight instances where teachers lack the necessary knowledge and organizational abilities to effectively manage certain teaching responsibilities.

Regarding the emotional experiences and outcomes following procrastination, the respondents reported various unpleasant emotions, such as anxiety, nervousness, guilt, frustration, and a state of stress. Only one teacher recalled

having an occurrence of mixed feelings, indicating that they first felt good procrastinating (which might be attributed to what Laybourn and colleagues label as hedonistic reasons), and then they started experiencing unpleasant emotions. Some of the emotions mentioned were also reported by Laybourn et al. (2019) and Grunschel et al. (2013). For instance, German university students in the latter study felt both anxious and frustrated. Their anxiety stemmed from their fear of the future, as well as fear of failure. On the other hand, teachers in Laybourn and colleagues' study reported experiencing guilt, anger, and stress, much like their Croatian peers. An interesting contrast between these studies can be discerned about feeling anger. While it was the most frequently reported emotion among the German teachers (who turned the emotion toward themselves), only a small portion of Croatian teachers encountered it while procrastinating.

Certain common themes have been identified across both quantitative and qualitative portions of the research. Both segments discussed teacher self-efficacy beliefs; namely, the quantitative data hinted at high levels of teaching efficacy in instructional strategies and classroom management but lower in learner engagement. This was bolstered by the qualitative findings which also showed that Croatian teachers feel more confident in certain areas but less so in others, such as tasks related to special needs education. The quantitative findings indicate that the respondents exhibit a low level of language anxiety, whereas qualitative insights suggest that their confidence in language proficiency serves to mitigate this anxiety. This observation underscores the intrinsic link between self-efficacy beliefs and emotional states, emphasizing their intertwined nature. The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and procrastination has been reflected in both portions of the study. The quantitative section showed that higher levels of teaching efficacy are tied to lower levels of procrastination. Qualitative, on the other hand, suggests that Croatian teachers procrastinate primarily due to feeling ill-equipped to handle certain tasks.

Conclusion

The objective of this mixed-methods study was to bridge the research gap that exists in the domain of language teaching by exploring the relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, language teaching anxiety, and procrastination. The present findings offer valuable insights that carry both research and practical implications. The study reveals that teachers face the challenge of procrastination, which can contribute to heightened stress levels (Verešová, 2013). The findings of the present study highlight the importance

of exploring the interplay between teacher self-efficacy, anxiety, and procrastination, and underpin the need for further research and practical applications in the field of foreign language teaching. While the mixed-methods approach allowed the author to delve into essential aspects of procrastination, there are notable limitations to acknowledge. The sample, while suitable for research of this scope, would benefit from greater diversity, encompassing teachers from different countries, communities, cultures, and education systems. For instance, the results from this study highlight differences in teachers' self-efficacy in the Croatian context compared to their counterparts in Asian countries (Ghasemboland, 2014), suggesting a need to examine what elements might be lacking in our local teacher education system. However, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this behavior, a longitudinal study could unveil the underlying factors and variables related to procrastination, potentially elucidating how these behaviors change over time (Gregersen et al., 2014). It is also incumbent that we acknowledge the potential for socially desirable responses among the Croatian participants, given that many language teachers claimed not to engage in procrastination. Qualitative research methods, such as focus group studies, journals, and interviews, could complement the quantitative findings, enabling a deeper exploration of the societal, cultural, and personal factors that influence procrastination.

In terms of practical uses, the present results have significant implications for language teachers and their work conditions. The findings obtained indicate that teachers are more prone to procrastinate when faced with repetitive administrative tasks, further straining a profession already known for its stress levels (McIntyre et al., 2017). The prevalence of unpleasant emotions, combined with high workloads and a lack of support or training in specific domains, reveals a necessity for an improved work environment and better support systems for teachers. A staggering 40% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Borman & Dowling, 2008), emphasizing the urgency for a more supportive and growth-oriented work environment. This includes implementing initiatives such as mentorship programs, professional development opportunities tailored to teachers' needs, and regular assessments of workload distribution to prevent burnout. While the teachers in this study exhibited low levels of anxiety linked to their language proficiency, it is important to recognize that they undoubtedly experience it in other domains of their professional lives. To ensure that teachers maintain their level of productivity and satisfaction, all stakeholders must take steps to alleviate bureaucratic burdens, implement appropriate reward systems, create a nurturing atmosphere conducive to growth and personal development, and provide services that safeguard their psychological well-being.

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