

Perfectionism, Anxiety and Procrastination as Predictors of EFL Academic Achievement: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract: The purpose of the present study is to determine the predictive level of perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination on academic achievement and to describe interrelationships among the variables. A convergent parallel mixed methods research design was applied in the study. The participants included 522 college students. The “Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale,” “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale,” and “Aitken Academic Procrastination Inventory” were used as data collection tools for the quantitative portion of the study, and the quantitative data were analyzed through correlational and multiple linear regression analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis by organizing a focus group interview with seven students. The findings of the regression analysis revealed the three predictors, perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination, explained 54 % of the variance ($R^2 = .54$, $p < 0.01$) and perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination together illustrated a high level and significant relationship with academic achievement ($R^2 = .54$, $p < 0.01$). Correspondingly, the qualitative data also gave parallel results with the quantitative data by indicating that anxiety was the most powerful variable which affects academic achievement.

Anahtar sözcükler

Mükemmeliyetçilik,
kaygı,
erteleme,
akademik başarı.

İngilizce Dersi Akademik Başarısının Yordayıcıları Olarak Mükemmeliyetçilik, Kaygı ve Erteleme: Bir Karma Araştırma

Öz: Bu çalışmanın amacı, mükemmeliyetçilik, kaygı ve erteleme düzeylerinin akademik başarı üzerindeki yordama gücünü ve söz konusu değişkenler arasındaki karşılıklı ilişki örüntüsünü belirlemektir. Çalışma yakınsak paralel karma yöntem araştırma deseni ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu toplam 522 üniversite öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Nicel veriler için veri toplama aracı olarak Çok Boyutlu Mükemmeliyetçilik Ölçeği, Yabancı Dil Sınıf Kaygısı Ölçeği ve Erteleme Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Nicel veriler korelasyon ve çoklu doğrusal regresyon çözümlemesi ile; nitel veriler ise yedi öğrenci ile odak grup görüşmesi düzenlenerek içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Regresyon analizi sonuçları, üç yordayıcı değişken olan, mükemmeliyetçilik, kaygı ve ertelemenin toplam varyansın %54'ünü açıkladığını göstermiştir ($R^2 = .54$, $p < 0.01$). Elde edilen bulgular, mükemmeliyetçilik, kaygı ve ertelemenin, akademik başarı ile yüksek düzeyde ve anlamlı bir ilişkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur ($R^2 = .54$, $p < 0.01$). Gerçekleştirilen nitel analizler de nicel bulgulara benzer sonuçlar ortaya koymuş ve kaygının akademik başarıyı etkileyen en önemli değişken olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır.

1. Introduction

Defined as “the wish for everything to be correct or perfect” (Perfectionism, 2017), the concept of perfectionism has recently been attracting much interest among educators (Chang, 2006; Dunkley, Blankstein, Zuroff, Lecce, & Hui, 2006; Gnilka, Ashby, & Nobel, 2012; Walsh & Ugumba-Agwunobi, 2002; Wang, Yuen, & Slaney, 2009) as well as educational psychologists (Neumeister, Fletcher, & Burney, 2015). Despite its reputation among scholars, defining perfectionism is elusive (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). Frost, Marten, Lahart and Rosenblate (1990) define the term as “setting of excessively high personal standards of performance” (p. 450). Similarly, Flett and Hewitt (2006) argue that perfectionist people adhere closely to their own standards, even when perfectionism is not in question, and they insist on, with an unreasonable desire, obtaining personal standards that are normally high and hard to reach. To Frost et al. (1990), these extreme standards, set by perfectionist individuals, are “accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations of one’s own behavior” (p. 450), which results in extreme concern for or fear of making mistakes, tendency to have suspicions about the value of the performance as well as the feeling of inadequacy to meet others’ expectations. In other words, perfectionists can be described as the ones who set unattainable objectives, strictly abide by them and give meaning to their existence or value with regard to accomplishing the objectives (Shafran & Mansell, 2001).

While initially theorized as a unitary structure (Baran-Lucarz, 2013; Miquelon, Vallerand, Grouzet, & Cardinal, 2005), researchers have treated perfectionism as a multidimensional notion for over the last two decades (Di Schiena, Luminet, Philippot, & Douilliez, 2012; Drolet, Volais, Forget, & Caron, 2014; Flett & Hewitt, 2006; Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Stoeber, Otto, & Dalbert, 2009). Hewitt and Flett (1991) developed a “Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale” (MPS), including three elements of perfectionism: “self-oriented perfectionism,” “socially prescribed perfectionism” and “other-oriented perfectionism.” Establishing improbable objectives or expectations forms the very basis of the “Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale” (Neumeister, Fletcher, & Burney, 2015). However, the “Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale” (MPS), developed by Frost et al. (1990), emphasizes six different aspects of perfectionism, and, among others, they put the dimension “excessive concern for mistakes” (p. 449) in the center of the measure. Apart from “excessive concern for mistakes,” the scale includes “high personal standards, the perception of high parental expectations, the perception of high parental criticism, doubting of the quality of one’s actions, and the preference for order and organization.” Moreover, Slaney et al. (2001), asserting that most scales on perfectionism generally “measure the negative psychological concerns” (p. 131), developed The Almost Perfect Scale - Revised (APS-R). The APS-R highlights two aspects of perfectionism: “adaptive perfectionism” and “maladaptive perfectionism.” “Adaptive perfectionism” focuses on setting and having high objectives and standards to be obtained while “maladaptive perfectionism” focuses on the discrepancy between a person’s actual performance and targeted individual standards or objectives (Comerchero & Fortugno, 2013; Enns, Cox, & Clara, 2002; Slaney et al., 2001; Ulu & Tezer, 2010).

Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) argue that perfectionism, as in the case of anxiety, can be one of the inhibitory factors behind poor school performance. As for foreign language learning, perfectionist individuals are the ones who are not contented with just speaking in a foreign language; on the contrary, they strive for having a native-like speaking performance which is totally free from mistakes, even pauses. Thus, perfectionist learners would prefer not to participate in any kind of activity or speaking task unless they are sure of themselves in expressing their opinions. In the event that they are not confident of expressing their thoughts

perfectly well, they prefer withdrawing themselves or being reluctant to engage in speaking activities. For Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), such demanding standards or objectives make the emergence of language anxiety possible.

Prevalent views in the related literature put forward the idea that perfectionism is mostly thought to have an affiliation with anxiety (Erozkan, 2016; Flett & Hewitt, 2006; Flett, Hewitt, & De Rosa, 1996; Kawamura, Hunt, Frost, & DiBartolo, 2001), and anxiety is an element that hampers foreign language learning (Martin & Alvarez Valdivia, 2017). Dewaele (2013), correlating foreign language anxiety with perfectionism as a personality dimension, asserts that an individual having anxiety with a high level tends to be more of a perfectionist. As Hewitt and Stephenson (2012) argue, studying the concept of anxiety does not only help understand the role and significance of it as an inhibitory determinant in foreign language learning, but it leads to a remedy as well, since the concept itself has a “facilitating” aspect (Scovel, 1978, p. 129).

Focusing particularly on anxiety in foreign language learning and developing the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCAS), Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) regard foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom foreign language learning arising from the uniqueness of the foreign language learning process” (p. 128). According to the theory, foreign language anxiety consists of three constituents: “communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety” (Horwitz et al., 1986). “Communication apprehension is a type of shyness” that appears when interacting with other people (Andrade & Williams, 2009). For Horwitz et al. (1986), people encountering difficulty in speaking in front of people generally experience this kind of anxiety. “Fear of negative evaluation” is to do with the concern about other people’s assessment. The final type, “test anxiety,” which is generally associated with setting idealistic objectives, refers to the typical feeling of failure.

Among the studies that concentrate on the correlation between perfectionism and anxiety in foreign language context, Ghorbandordinejad and Nasab’s (2013) study, the purpose of which is to assess the association between perfectionism and English language achievement among high school students, asserts that a positive and significant relationship exists between perfectionism and anxiety. Pirbaglou et al., (2013), studying the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety and depressive distress, find a statistically significant relationship between anxiety and perfectionism. The findings of Stornelli, Flett and Hewitt’s (2009) study, whose purpose is to inspect the links between perfectionism and academic achievement, suggest that students who are subject to perfectionistic burden have a tendency to develop anxiety and sadness. Similarly, Comerchero and Fortugno’s (2013) study, intending to find whether a correlation exists between statistics anxiety and perfectionism among graduate students, though not in foreign language context, marks the correlation between perfectionism and higher levels of anxiety.

Inasmuch as perfectionism is generally defined as a “multidimensional construct” (Frost et al., 1990, p. 19) or a “multifaceted personality trait” (Burnam, Komarraju, Hamel, & Nadler, 2014, p. 165), another aspect which has been found to be interrelated to it is procrastination (Walsh & Ugumba-Agwunobi, 2002). For Frost et al. (1990), perfectionism is not a unidimensional concept, rather it has separate aspects such as depression and procrastination which are bound up with perfectionism in different forms and are needed to be analyzed to comprehend the concept of perfectionism thoroughly. Shih (2017) argues that anxious individuals may have a tendency to delay or put off given tasks, and since anxiety is related to

perfectionism, “perfectionistic tendencies” (p. 416) could become a significant predictor of procrastination.

The term procrastination is generally described as the act of intentionally postponing given tasks or work which must be done at an assigned time (Ackerman & Gross, 2005; Gustavson & Miyake, 2017; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). It is estimated that procrastination occurs on given academic tasks or preparing for the exams (Klassen & Kuzucu, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2000; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), and there are numerous studies revealing that procrastination has negative effects on academic achievement (Akinsola, Tella, & Tella, 2007; Balkis & Duru, 2017; De Paola & Scoppa, 2015; Kim & Seo, 2015). Linking perfectionism with procrastination on the basis that both concepts share the tendency for “irrational beliefs” (p. 86), Flett, Blankstein, Hewitt, and Koledin (1992) argue that procrastination behaviors root in setting excessively high objectives and standards. Walsh and Ugumba-Agwunobi (2002) make it clear in their study that procrastination potentially correlates with perfectionism since it has a correlation with higher degrees of anxiety as well as over-concern for failure.

As a support to the assumption on the association between perfectionism and procrastination, Smith, Sherry, Saklofske and Mushqaush’s (2017) study, aiming at revealing factors on why perfectionistic concerns result in procrastination, have discovered that there is a positive relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. Focusing on the relationship between self-oriented and socially-prescribed perfectionism with procrastination and aiming at analyzing the link between perfectionistic attempts and perfectionistic concerns, Closson and Boutilier (2017) concluded that a positive relationship between socially-prescribed perfectionism and procrastination existed, while a negative relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and procrastination. Similarly, in Boysan and Kiral’s study (2017), which aimed to perceive the connections between procrastination, perfectionism, locus of control and self-esteem, academic procrastination negatively correlated with perfectionism. Another study conducted by Jadidi, Mohammakhani and Tajrishi (2011) scrutinized the link between perfectionism and academic procrastination, and the study indicated that perfectionism and procrastination positively and significantly correlated with each other.

As mentioned, since perfectionism is a multifaceted concept, that is perfectionism is related to some dimensions such as procrastination, depression, anxiety, it is of vital significance to scrutinize the nature of the concept and the interactions among its dimensions. Thus, this study is significant in a sense that it includes aforementioned dimensions of perfectionism, and it puts forward an alternative standpoint to understand the variables and interrelationships among them in achieving success in the process of foreign language learning. In this vein, the purpose of the study is to investigate the predictive level of perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination on academic achievement and interconnections between the variables. The questions for the research are as follows:

1. What is the predictive level of perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination on academic achievement?
2. When foreign language learning process is taken into consideration, what are the students’ views about;
 - the most predictive variable for academic achievement,
 - factors increasing the level of anxiety,
 - causes for procrastination
 - and the domains of perfectionism?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The study was carried out using convergent parallel mixed methods research design. In this kind of design, both the quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously and merged afterwards, analyzed and used to answer a research question. In convergent parallel design, researchers attach equal importance to both sources of data and compare the results to decide if the two sources reveal similar results (Creswell, 2012; Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). Within this framework, the researchers firstly collected the quantitative data, and then qualitative data in order that the researchers could gain more insights into the variables predicting academic achievement.

2.2. Participants

The participants included 522 college students who attend the preparatory school of foreign languages of a state university in Turkey. The information related to the participants is in Table 1:

Table 1

Participants

Demographic Information		<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Female	214	41
	Male	308	59
Age	17-19	446	85.4
	20-22	64	12.2
	23-25	8	1.5
	25+	4	0.7
Level	A Level	221	42.3
	B Level	182	34.8
	C Level	119	22.7
Department	30 % English	433	83
	100 % English	89	17
The type of graduated high school	Anatolian high school	307	58.8
	Science high school	87	16.6
	Religious high school	10	1.9
	Private high school	24	4.6
	Vocational high school	21	4
	Basic high school	47	9
	Other	26	4.9
Total		522	100

As Table 1 demonstrates, the participants of the study included 214 female and 308 male students. The majority of the students were between the ages of 17-19 ($n=446$). Of the 522 participants, 221 of them attended A level (lower level) classes; 182 of them attended B level (middle level), and 119 of them attended C level (higher level) preparation classes. Moreover, 433 of the participants were from 30% English departments, while 89 of them were enrolled in 100% English departments. Lastly, a large number of the participants completed their high school education in an Anatolian high school ($n=307$), and the remainder of the participants graduated from science high schools ($n=87$), religious high schools ($n=10$), private high schools ($n=24$), vocational high schools ($n=21$), basic high schools ($n=47$), and the other types of high schools ($n=26$).

2.3. Measures and Variables

For the quantitative part of the study, three different measures were used: the “Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale,” “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale,” and “Aitken Academic Procrastination Inventory.”

“Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale”

Developed by Frost et al. (1990), the “Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale” is a well-known instrument to examine perfectionism from various dimensions, and it set up as the basis to examine the perfectionism behavior in the current study. The original scale is a five-point Likert type scale consisting of 36 items under six factors. Higher scores in the scale imply that the individual tends to display higher perfectionist behaviors. Kağan (2011) made the adaptation of the study into Turkish. The analyses demonstrated that the six-factor structure was valid in Turkish. The researcher also found that the inner consistency for overall items was .91 while Cronbach’s alpha for the subscales ranged between .64 and .94.

“Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale”

Developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and adapted to Turkish by Aydın (1999), the “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” is a scale used to identify the anxiety levels of individuals particularly in foreign language classes. Being a five-point Likert scale, the scale is constituted of 33 items. The range of the possible scores from the scale is between 32 and 160 (Aydın, 1999). Factor analysis of the original scale showed that internal consistency was .93 Cronbach Alpha. The test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as .83 ($p=.001$). After adaptation, the internal consistency of the translated version of the scale was .91 (Aydın, 1999).

“Aitken Academic Procrastination Inventory”

“Aitken Academic Procrastination Inventory,” developed by Aitken (1982), set up the foundation to measure academic procrastination in this study. The original scale is a five-point Likert type scale consisting of 19 items under a single factor. Higher scores in the scale imply that the individual tends to procrastinate more. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Balkis (2006). The researcher indicated that there were 16 items in the Turkish version, confirming that the Turkish version also had a single factor. The researcher also reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficient as .87.

A focus group interview was organized with seven volunteer students for the qualitative part of the study. With this type of an interview, the researchers tried to create a non-threatening environment for the students who participated in the quantitative section of the study and get their opinions in a more detailed way to answer our research questions. During the interview, which lasted nearly 45 minutes, they tried to understand the paradigms behind the academic achievement in foreign language learning in a better way, and they tried to clarify the share of perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination in the learning process. To protect the reliability of interview questions, the researchers both took into consideration the literature, and they asked for the opinions of three field experts to find out whether the questions were appropriate.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data gained from the quantitative part were analyzed through SPSS 21.00 software program. To determine the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables, the researchers conducted correlational analysis. Further, multiple linear regression analysis to investigate the predictive degree of independent variables on dependent variable

was applied. This type of analysis is the process of determining the relationships between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables. Multiple linear regression analysis allows interpretation of the total variance explained in the dependent variable by independent variables, statistical significance of the explained variance and interpretation of the direction of the correlation between the dependent variable and independent variables (Büyüköztürk, 2017; Seçer, 2017).

The qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. Contrary to digitizing, the main purpose of qualitative data analysis is to create patterns and themes (Glesne, 2012), and content analysis makes it possible since it can uncover the hidden facts within the data as well as merging it on the basis of similar concepts (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2008; Yin, 2011). The researchers tried to describe and classify the data in such a way that the data could be comprehended and commented by readers. When the focus group interview was over, they began by interpreting the record. Both researchers conducting the study read the transcription meticulously, made the coding, and banded the interrelated codes together to create categories and themes individually. At first, there were some discrepancies between the themes and patterns in the two researchers' analyses. However, they revised, compared the themes, categories, and codes to reach an agreement. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, the findings were calculated using Miles and Huberman's (1994) reliability formula which is shown below:

$$\text{“Reliability} = (\text{Number of Agreement}) / (\text{Total Number of Agreement} + \text{Disagreement})\text{”}$$

In this regard, a percentage of 85 [(76) / (76+13) = .85] was obtained from the reliability computation of the two distinct data analyses. The result indicated that the reliability of the analysis was satisfactory as the value obtained was above 70 %.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings about the predictive level of perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination on academic achievement

In Table 2, values of descriptive statistics of dependent variable and independent variables were illustrated.

Table 2

Range, Minimum and Maximum, Medium, Standard Error, Standard Deviation Values of Academic Achievement, Perfectionism, Anxiety and Procrastination

Variables	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	X-Value	SE	SD
Acad. Achievement	522	81.00	19.00	100.00	75.80	.69	15.74
Perfectionism	522	99.00	55.00	154.00	100.77	.79	18.11
Anxiety	522	105.00	51.00	156.00	92.03	.82	18.86
Procrastination	522	29.00	29.00	58.00	42.19	.26	6.04

When Table 2 is assessed, it can be realized that the arithmetic means of perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination behaviors are 100.77, 92.03 and 42.19, respectively. The standard deviation values of the subject variables are calculated as 18.11, 18.86 and 6.04, respectively.

Table 3

The Correlation Analysis between Dependent Variable and Independent Variables

	1	2	3	4
(1) Acad.Achievement	1			
(2) Perfectionism	-.73**	1		
(3) Anxiety	-.72**	.69**	1	
(4) Procrastination	-.65**	.54**	.55**	1
N	522	522	522	522

** p<0.01

The figures in Table 3 show the correlation analysis between dependent and independent variables. It is seen that there is a significant and negative ($p<0.01$) relationship between perfectionism and academic achievement ($r = -0.73$); anxiety and academic achievement ($r = -0.72$); procrastination and academic achievement ($r = -0.65$). On the other hand, the relationships between perfectionism and anxiety ($r = 0.69$); perfectionism and procrastination ($r = 0.54$) as well as anxiety and procrastination ($r = 0.55$) ($p<0.01$) are significant and positive.

After identifying that the independent variables correlate with the dependent variable, the regression analysis for the predictive power of perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination over academic achievement has been calculated. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4:

Table 4

The Predictive Degree of Perfectionism, Anxiety and Procrastination over Academic Achievement

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Constant	162,421	2.924	-	55.551	.000
Perfectionism	-0.310	0.031	-0.357	-9.859	.000
Anxiety	-0.266	0.030	-0.319	-8.725	.000
Procrastination	-0.732	0.081	-0.281	-9.022	.000
R = .61	$R^2 = .54$	$p<0.01$			

In Table 4, the predictive degree of perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination over academic achievement was illustrated. The results of multiple linear regression analysis indicate that perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination behaviors together explain 54% ($R^2 = .54$) of the total variance in academic achievement. Thus, the regression analysis illustrates that perfectionism ($\beta = -.35$, $p<0.01$); anxiety ($\beta = -.31$, $p<0.01$) significantly predicted academic achievement, as did procrastination ($\beta = -.28$, $p<0.01$).

According to the standardized regression coefficient, the relative importance of the predictive variables on academic achievement is procrastination behaviors, anxiety and perfectionism. When the t test results on the significance of the regression coefficients are assessed, it is seen that the three variables (perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination behaviors) are significant predictors of academic achievement.

3.2. Findings about the most predictive variable for academic achievement

To find out the predictive variables for academic achievement, the researchers organized a focus group interview with the participation of seven students after collecting the quantitative

data; they converted the data that they obtained into transcripts, and they content analyzed the transcripts as researchers. Table 5 indicates that one main theme emerged at the end of the content analysis:

Table 5

The most predictive variable for academic achievement

Theme	Category	Sample Codes	Quotation
Anxiety	Fear of making mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error-free speaking • Pronunciation mistakes 	“I worry about making mistakes even though I know everyone in the class, so I feel so much excitement. If I make a mistake, nothing will happen, but it sounds like I should not make mistakes” (S2, Female, 18)
	Peer-pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative thoughts • Mockery • Criticism 	“Speaking in front of my friends is very challenging! I am so afraid of being mocked! It affects my performance inevitably in the learning process.” (S5, Male, 18)
	Over-excitement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervousness • Palpitation 	“You need to practice a lot if you want to achieve in learning English. When you feel anxiety, you become so nervous and fail in doing so. It affects your performance badly.” (S2, Female, 18)

The anxiety theme is comprised of three categories: fear of making mistakes, peer-pressure, and over-excitement. One of the most frequently observed issue during the interview was the students' intolerance towards making mistakes. They repeatedly referred to a desire to be able to express themselves accurately and to the fear and frustration because of their incompetence in conveying their ideas in a precise way. In addition, students signaled the existence of a stress factor by saying that they felt distinctly uneasy when they were being watched and listened to by their classmates while they were speaking during the lessons. One of the most commonly mentioned opinion was that they felt nervous because of the possibility of negative thoughts, mockery, and criticism of their peers in the foreign language learning process. Finally, students reported being over-excited during the lessons by adding that they felt nervous and had palpitation problems when it was their turn to reply to a question. Therefore, the mentioned categories of fear of making mistakes, peer-pressure, and over-excitement referred to anxiety, which was mentioned as the most predictive variable for the academic achievement in foreign language learning process.

3.3. Findings about the factors increasing the level of anxiety

Another research question in the qualitative part of the study was the factors increasing the level of anxiety in the process of foreign language learning. As students' views were examined via content analysis, two main themes were encountered, which can be examined in Table 6:

Table 6

The factors increasing the level of anxiety

Theme	Category	Sample Codes	Quotation
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Intrapersonal factors	Fear of making mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error-free speaking • Pronunciation mistakes 	“When we need to read a word, we want to read it exactly right, but sometimes we cannot read as we are afraid of making mistakes.” (S3, Male, 20)
	Lack of courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of participation • Hesitation 	“I certainly believe that too much anxiety leads someone to lose his/her courage. S/he might hesitate in doing even the things that s/he can do!” (S7, Female, 18)
	Lack of self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of incompetence • Sense of inadequacy • Sense of incapability of completing tasks 	“We doubt ourselves even if we know something, and we have troubles expressing it. I think that this is what keeps us backward. We cannot get to the foreground as we wish, even if we can.” (S4, Female, 19)
Interpersonal factors	Peer-pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative thoughts • Mockery • Criticism 	“I think it is worrying to think about how the other students, your classmates, will think, and what criticisms they will make. This is an important factor affecting learning and the whole process.” (S5, Male, 18).
	Teacher attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manner of teaching • Reaction towards mistakes 	“Some teachers’ style makes me feel very nervous! They start correcting the mistakes the moment I start speaking, and this makes me feel terribly embarrassed in the middle of the classroom!” (S4, Female, 19)

The factors increasing the level of anxiety were gathered in two themes: intrapersonal factor and interpersonal factors. In the intrapersonal factors theme, the fear of making mistakes was the first category to emerge. Almost all the students referred to the existence of an underlying fear about participating, and this fear prevented them from being as active as they desired. Secondly, some of the students mentioned that they hesitated to participate in the lessons as they lacked the courage to take part. Thirdly, some students’ statements revealed that they had low self-efficacy beliefs as they felt incompetent and incapable of completing most of the tasks in the foreign language learning process. Fear of making mistakes, lack of courage, and lack of self-efficacy categories merged to create the intrapersonal factors theme. In the interpersonal factors theme, peer-pressure and teacher attitude were the two categories of factors increasing the level of anxiety. In the peer-pressure category, the students stated that the criticism they received from their friends, being mocked during the lessons or negative thoughts about their progress or participation, damaged their state of mind in the learning process. Furthermore, the students highlighted the importance of the teacher’s demeanor about approaching students’ mistakes and choosing the ideal way of teaching a foreign language. These external components also had an important share in increasing the level of anxiety.

3.4. Findings about the causes for procrastination

Another research question constituting the qualitative part of the study was about the originating reasons for procrastination. At the end of the content analysis two main themes, namely inner causes and outer causes emerged, which can be examined in Table 7:

Table 7
The causes of procrastination

Theme	Category	Sample Codes	Quotation
Inner causes	Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of view Attitudes Lifestyle 	“Procrastination is related to an individual’s own personality. S/he procrastinates not only tasks about learning English, but also jobs in daily life.” (S1, Male, 19)
	Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging worksheets Successful peers 	“I feel worried when we are doing difficult exercises in the class in turn. For example, an answer is empty, and it is my turn. How can I express my feelings... I feel so anxious.” (S6, Male, 18)
	Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to learn English Interest in assignments 	“I am too picky about doing homework. If it looks easy, I can do it, but if it seems difficult, I procrastinate doing it, or I sometimes do not do it at all!” (S2, Female, 18)
Outer causes	Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important deadlines Loaded assignments Teacher control 	“The feeling of being obliged to an assignment makes me procrastinate it until last minute. Yes, I know is not something right...” (S7, Female, 18)
	The level of difficulty of a task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging grammar items Speaking English accurately 	“If I have difficulty in understanding a topic, I do not want to face it and procrastinate as long as I can!” (S2, Female, 18)

In the inner causes theme, personality, anxiety, and motivation emerged as categories since they were frequently mentioned by students as inner causes of procrastination. In the personality category, students referred to procrastination as a way of life, which affects not only academic duties, but also daily routines. They mentioned anxiety as another inner cause of procrastination, the level of which increases dramatically when faced with challenging worksheets or high-achiever peers in the learning environment. In the inner causes theme, students lastly talked about motivation, which was described as an important inhibitor because of unwillingness to learn English or disinterest in given assignments or tasks. In the outer causes theme, obligations directed by the authorities and the level of difficulty of a task were referred to as important determiners of procrastination. Students emphasized that they mostly procrastinated by taking into consideration the deadline of an assignment. They also added that having too much homework all the time and feeling too much teacher control made them procrastinate doing their duties. In the level of difficulty of a task category, students expressed that they procrastinated more if they had to deal with challenging grammar items, or they were in situations in which they felt that they had to speak English fluently.

3.5. Findings about the domains of perfectionism

The domains of perfectionism were another research question that was directed to students during the interview. The content analysis revealed the themes academic achievement and anxiety, which can be found in Table 8:

Table 8
The domains of perfectionism

Theme	Category	Sample Codes	Quotation
Academic achievement	Positive effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in effort Achievable targets 	“A moderate amount of perfectionism helps you increase your efforts. You cannot learn a language by being so relaxed! You might learn better if you strive for accomplishment.” (S7, Female, 18)
	Negative effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unachievable targets Fear of failure 	“If a person sets the highest standards to himself or herself, that is, if he cannot succeed despite hard work, he can quit everything completely. Failing academically might lead to depression.” (S6, Male, 18)
Anxiety	Existing relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggle in the inner world Obsession with mistakes Strong objectives The amount of anxiety 	“I think the amount of anxiety is important. Being anxious too much is related with perfectionism, and it affects learning negatively. It does not contribute anything. I think it is necessary to have some amount of anxiety because lack of it can affect studying negatively, so people should have some amount of anxiety.” (S5, Male, 18)
	Non-existing relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opposite personality traits Irrelevant concepts 	“It is difficult for an anxious individual to be a perfectionist. S/he needs to get rid of this anxiety to become a perfectionist. If you are a perfectionist, there is no worry anymore.” (S3, Male, 20)

Among the domains of perfectionism, academic achievement is the first theme mentioned by the students. Half of the students referred to perfectionism as a mechanism having a positive effect on academic achievement, while half of them made a remark about its negative effect. The students who mentioned perfectionism as a positive factor stressed that being a perfectionist increased an individual's efforts to succeed on the condition that they set up achievable targets for themselves. Students with a negative point of view towards perfectionism's effect on academic achievement referred to the fear of failure, which might be hazardous for learners to pursue their aims. In the second theme, anxiety, some of the students highlighted the existence of a relationship between perfectionism and anxiety, while some other students believed in the absence of this relationship between the two. Students in favor of the existing relationship mostly believed that the amount of perfectionism is a strong determiner of anxiety, adding that the struggle in the inner world and obsession with mistakes might hinder learning. Students disagreeing with this existence regarded perfectionism and anxiety as opposite personality traits, which made it impossible for an individual to be too worried and target-oriented at the same time.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

An important insight that has been obtained from the study can be that perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination explain 54% of academic achievement. By highlighting the predictive degree of a set of some specific variables that are crucial in foreign language learning, the

researchers believe that the current study sheds light on certain obstructs confronted by students in that process. Despite studies (Baran-Lucarz, 2013; Boysan & Kiral, 2017; Chang, 2014; Closson & Boutilier, 2017; Shih, 2017; Walsh & Ugumba-Agwunobi, 2002) examining the relationships among similar psychological constructs, the research about perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination is scant. Given the potential effects of the aforementioned variables on achievement, it can be proposed that future studies should add on intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation since these are closely related to each variable. Further, it can be suggested that it would seem helpful to make a distinction between healthy and unhealthy perfectionism in that data could yield more explicit findings.

Although the quantitative and qualitative databases yielded similar findings, the qualitative portion differs from the quantitative one in the sense that it introduces anxiety as the most profound variable affecting academic achievement. There might be two main reasons behind students' this way of thinking. Firstly, anxiety, which is an intuitively perceived state by learners, affects their performance visibly, and it becomes almost impossible to reach intended outcomes especially about speaking when students feel high levels of anxiety in the learning process (Hashemi, 2011; Horwitz, 2001). Unlike perfectionism and procrastination, anxiety might have propelled the students to face their weaknesses and make their shortcomings more apparent as they are quite frequently exposed to this feeling within the boundaries of the classroom, especially while they are expressing themselves in the target language. In a similar study, Kim (1998) discovered that there was a negative relationship between learners' anxiety levels and final grades, which meant that when the level of anxiety increased, the final grades that the learners' got decreased. More importantly, the study revealed that language classrooms which required communication in the target language were more anxiety-tempting than conventional classes in which students were usually supposed to read texts and answer the related questions. Therefore, this aspect of the current study puts forward implications to make further research to struggle with anxiety efficiently in order to obtain better results in the foreign language learning process.

The second reason behind this finding can be that the amount of anxiety is a crucial determiner in the foreign language learning process to achieve success. Despite the widely-known adverse impacts of anxiety on achievement, some researchers (Alpert & Haber, 1960; McIntyre, 1995; Scovel, 1978) suggest that a decent amount of it can be the driving force for students to show interest and increase efforts in the learning process. During the interviews, most of the students referred to the necessity of some amount of anxiety to keep being alert and attentive in the foreign language learning process. To that end, the researchers might have come across with the finding that anxiety is the most predictive variable in this study as students need a moderate amount of it to concentrate on learning. Although most studies (Aida, 1994; Coulombe, 2000; Horwitz, 1986; Kim, 1998; Saito & Samimy, 1996) in the literature commonly refer to a negative relationship between anxiety and academic achievement consistently, the studies (Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977) indicating a positive relationship between anxiety and academic achievement are quite rare. In addition, there is a scarcity of research about the amount of anxiety that the students encounter in language learning process. Therefore, future studies can examine the effect of the amount of perceived anxiety in the foreign language learning process.

Fear of making mistakes, lack of courage, and lack of self-efficacy are the intrapersonal factors increasing the level of anxiety. The fear of making mistakes in the classroom setting, especially in the presence of the teacher and peers constitutes an important part of the factors contributing to the amount of anxiety (Gkonou, 2012), and this factor influences students' performance in a dramatic way (Haidara, 2016). In our study, students similarly complained

of this kind of a fear, which hindered their willingness to show active participation during the lessons. Exposure to negative experiences in the foreign language learning process might discourage learners from learning by causing them to lose their courage to continue studying (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Na, 2007). This reason might have led the students to think that they needed more encouragement to lessen the level of anxiety. In the foreign language learning process, anxiety plays an important role in learners' performance, and anxiety is partly associated with the individuals' lack of positive beliefs about themselves (Sadiq, 2017). An important reason for students to feel higher levels of anxiety and lack of self-efficacy can be exposure to genuine and original native talks with the audio and video materials used in the classroom. By constantly listening to error-free samples of speaking, learners start to set high standards and goals for themselves, which might be unattainable in a short period of time (Kitano, 2001; Zhang & Zhong, 2012). This might, in turn, have caused them to think they were not capable enough to tackle the process and to feel anxious. In similar studies (Asif, 2017; Bhatti, Memon, & Pathan, 2016; Florescu & Pop-Pacurar, 2016; Zheng, 2008), fear of making mistakes, lack of courage, and lack of self-efficacy were found to have substantial effects on the level of anxiety in the foreign language learning process. These findings imply that further and more detailed studies are needed about how people struggle with the inner causes of anxiety in the foreign language learning process.

Peer pressure and teacher attitude are the interpersonal indicators of the reasons for anxiety to increase. Most of the learners are in need of a positive social impression on others, especially on their peers (Horwitz et al., 1986). They want to create this impression usually by speaking, and this causes anxiety when learners fall short of this skill, compared to their classmates (Kitano, 2001). The idea of being observed or looked down on by their peers adds to the anxious learners' fear of appearing incompetent and awkward in a tremendous way (Young, 1991). In the current study, the students might have had similar feelings about their peers' existence in the classroom setting as observers and criticizers of their mistakes. Likewise, teachers' attitudes towards their students' ideas, mistakes, and the learning process is a determining dimension for the feelings of anxiety and focal for the satisfactory academic outcomes to emerge. On the condition that teachers adopt a supportive and constructive attitude towards the foreign language learning process, especially students' mistakes, the number of anxiety-provoking circumstances can decrease considerably (Chen, 2008; Han, Tanriover, & Sahan, 2016; Ranjbar, 2016). The current study sheds light on this reality as students mainly addressed that the manner in which their peers and teachers approach their contribution to the lessons was important. In a similar study by Cebberos (2003), it was concluded that the fear of negative evaluation by peers and teachers was the most frequently addressed factor increasing the level of anxiety, which was accompanied by prevention of communicating in English and feelings of being anxious and perplexed. In another study, Alrabai (2015) found that teachers' attitudes in the language learning process played a crucial role on anxiety, the level of which could be brought down by the use of certain anxiety-reducing strategies. Altogether, these findings refer to the crucial importance of teachers' manner of dealing with the process of foreign language learning effectively and creating a classroom climate in which students are surrounded by a welcoming and non-threatening atmosphere, where their ideas and contributions are valued.

In compliance with the study findings, the literature shows that academic procrastination stems mostly from the features of a task, personal characteristics and attitudes, such as fear of failure, individual differences and psychological states such as anxiety (Hannok, 2011; Rabin, Fogel, & Nutter-Upham, 2011; Schraw, Wadkins, & Olafson, 2007). Although the source of procrastination is well-known, additional studies about how people struggle with it are

needed, especially in the foreign language learning process. Therefore, future studies can expand on our findings and take into consideration the solutions for procrastination to provide a more comprehensive picture for academic achievement in the foreign language learning process.

As Baran-Lucarz (2013) point out, an important impetus behind the perfectionism is the fear of failure, which is predominantly associated with anxiety along with many psychological factors such as distress, depression, lack of self-esteem and obsessive-compulsive disorders (Ghorbandordinejad & Nasab, 2013; Gnilka, Ashby & Noble, 2012). Being not only related to the affective domain but having a relationship with academic field as well (Ghorbandordinejad), perfectionism has been studied in terms of academic achievement, and the studies have provided mixed results. For instance, in Khosropour and Nikoie's study (2015), they concluded the link between perfectionism and academic achievement was not meaningful. On the other hand, Pishghadam and Akhondpoor (2011) assert that perfectionistic tendencies are linked with low and poor academic performance. Similarly, another study conducted by Yıldırım, Gençtanırım, Yalçın and Baydan (2008) revealed a negative and significant correlation between perfectionism and academic achievement. In the present study, similarly, it has been found that there is a significant and negative relationship between perfectionism and academic achievement. As for the results of the qualitative data, while half of the participants express negative attitudes towards perfectionism as far as academic achievement is concerned, the others assert that perfectionism has a positive impact on academic achievement. This might have stemmed from the multifaceted nature of perfectionism. Hence, future studies can concentrate on the effects of various dimensions of the concept separately along with anxiety and procrastination.

The purpose of the present study was to determine whether perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination predict academic achievement and the degree of their prediction. What is more, identifying the interdependence among the variables was also a target. The findings suggest that perfectionism, anxiety and procrastination behaviors are significant predictor variables of academic achievement. In addition, anxiety is regarded as the most predictive variable for academic achievement. For the level of anxiety to increase, intrapersonal elements such as fear of making mistakes, lack of courage, and lack of self-efficacy are effective as well as interpersonal factors like peer-pressure and teacher attitude. Procrastination is also an important factor in the foreign language learning process, the causes of which might be either inner (personality, anxiety, motivation) or outer (obligations, the level of difficulty of a task). Lastly, the most frequently mentioned domains of perfectionism are academic achievement and anxiety.

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