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Classroom Activities, Classroom Anxiety and Teacher Roles: Three Dimensions Revealing Class Reality of a University English Course

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Language learning in classrooms has been studied from different perspectives. Among numerous focuses, the present study aims to examine three dimensions—classroom activities, classroom anxiety and teacher roles as well as their interactions by investigating 49 students of an English class at university. Quantitative instruments of three 5-likert scales were used to measure the number and the frequency of classroom activities used in the English class, the level of classroom anxiety of students as well as their perceptions of teacher roles. Results showed that the English class was "often" dominated by interactive activities, coupled "sometimes" with language exercises and "occasionally" with real-life tasks. In this activity-dominated English class, learners revealed rather low level of classroom anxiety. In contrast, the overall higher mean of teacher role perceived indicated noticeably facilitating impact of the teacher in class. Correlational analyses disclosed that classroom anxiety was neither significantly correlated with teacher role nor with classroom activity. However, a significant correlation was found between classroom activities and teacher roles.

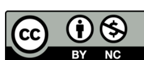
Keywords: classroom activities, classroom anxiety, teacher roles, class reality

Introduction

Language teaching and learning may take place in various contexts. Researchers hold that language classrooms constitute a crucial part of language learning experience (Collins & Munoz, 2016) and classroom reality and practices are often dynamic, complex and multifaceted (Jackson & Burch, 2017). What is happening in class, including what teachers and students think, feel and do, may best manifest not only theoretical principles and instructional pedagogies but also other teacher-related or learner-related variables (Collins & Munoz, 2016; Fareh, 2018; Fallah, 2017; Stapleton & Shao, 2017). Despite the diversity of language teaching and learning theories, there might not be a close coupling between theoretical principles and classroom reality as principles might be realized in different actions and distinct practices or a single practice may reflect more than one principle (Breen et al, 2001). In other words, classes in reality may be shaped by multiple factors and display diverse features probably beyond the theoretical boundaries (Branden, 2009; Huang, 2021; Jackson & Burch, 2017).

Classroom reality has been observed and studied from various dimensions (Heift & Rimrott, 2012; Stapleton & Shao, 2017; Thoms, 2014). Among these dimensions, the present study takes particular interests in three domains of classroom activities, classroom anxiety of students and their perceptions of teacher roles.

According to the researchers (Branden, 2009; Collins & Munoz, 2016; Huang, 2021; Newman, 2017), teachers play a pivotal role in classroom instruction in multiple ways ranging from adapting the textbook, selecting instructional materials, designing and conducting classroom activities in order to fit the levels of



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the learners and cater for their needs This is especially true with classroom activities. In many cases, teachers will adapt, design, implement and refine various learning activities to instruct the contents in class so as to bring about more desirable teaching effects and learning outcomes (Huang, 2017, 2021; Stapleton & Shao, 2017; Yang & Tao, 2018). These learning activities in class reality may span multiple theories or approaches and vary from more mechanical language drills to more interactive and communicative language tasks as well as more authentic real-life activities (Huang, 2021; Pyun, 2013). Studies have found that some classroom activities tend to be more challenging and induce greater level of anxiety while others might be "safer" and less demanding for learners (Jin & Zhang, 2018; Ustuk & Ay din, 2018). Researchers hold that there is the complex and subtle interplay among teachers, students and learning activities in class (Jackson & Burch, 2017). Therefore, the present research intends to look into the relationship among these three dimensions of classroom instruction indicated by teacher roles, classroom anxiety of students and classroom activities as well as their interactions in class.

Furthermore, it is hold that such classroom reality and practices might either reflect the theoretical fitness or reveal a gap from theoretical principles (Jackson & Burch, 2017). More importantly, by examining the three dimensions of classroom practices, researchers might have a glimpse into the pedagogical space where what classroom activities are actually enacted and what roles teachers have played in class and how learners are either cognitively or affectively influenced (Newman, 2017; Yang & Tao, 2018). Classroom reality could be examined in terms of its practical significance for language teaching and learning rather than solely from the perspective of theoretical approaches or methodological rigor (Jackson & Burch, 2017). It is thus hoped that observing these three different dimensions of the English class might help offer a hint of classroom reality.

Literature review

Classroom Activities

In the field of English language teaching (ELT) and second language acquisition (SLA), the term "activity" is often used in a general sense whereas the other two similar terms of "task" and "exercise" are more strictly and distinctly defined. For example, researchers have defined "task" in different ways and have argued over the subtle differences over time (Ellis, 2009; Long, 1985; Skehan, 1998). One of the simpler explanations of "task" is "an activity which requires learners to use language, with an emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (Bygate et al., 2001). In comparison, "exercise" is defined as form-focused or knowledge-focused language learning activities and mechanical language drills (Heift & Rimrott, 2012). These explanations show that "activity" is often used to explain "task" and "exercise" and thus encompass the learning behaviors incorporated in the two terms. Likewise, in this study, the term "activity" includes assorted learning behaviors and all kinds of language exercises practiced in the English class and is thus used in a broad sense.

As to studies of classroom activities, most researchers are concerned about their theoretical fitness or their effects on learning outcomes (Andon & Eckerth, 2009; Ellis, 2009; Heift & Rimrott, 2012; Stapleton & Shao, 2017). In the relevant literature, task-related studies are more frequently found and are especially popular with researchers (Stapleton & Shao, 2017). Teaching practices have been closely examined in terms of task implementation (Branden, 2009), process (Samuda, 2015) and outcomes (Shintani, 2016). Many studies tend to reveal clear-cut and direct relationships between certain task features and specific aspects of language learning (Branden, 2009). For instance, the link between certain task type, the task implementation conditions or the occurrence of specific interactional patterns and the quality of learners' output (Long, 2007; Pinter, 2007). Yet, however effective and popular it is, one single teaching method or classroom activity cannot probably satisfy diverse learning needs of all learners or maintain learners' motivations throughout the time. In reality, classroom practices might well go beyond theoretical boundaries and incorporate a wide range of learning behaviors that cannot be constraint by one single

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theory (Breen et al., 2001). Therefore, it is necessary to examine both the breadth and the frequency of all the activities, exercises and tasks that have been used in class over time. It is believed that a panorama view of the whole cluster of activities that have been spontaneously and actually used by teachers in classrooms will better reveal something about the class reality than the limited number of certain prescribed classroom activities designed to fit particular theoretical frameworks (Batenburg et al., 2019; Heif & Rimrott, 2012).

Furthermore, very few studies have employed quantitative instrument to examine and measure the overall use of classroom activities (Batenburg et al., 2019; Stapleton & Shao, 2017; Thoms, 2014). In contrast, the present study used a 23-item and 5-Likert scale to measure the number of classroom activities used in the English class and their frequencies as well. It is hoped that the quantitative data will reveal the hidden trend and pattern of the classroom activities and provide a hint for understanding English teaching and learning classrooms.

Classroom Anxiety

In addition to classroom activities, affective variables of learners such as classroom anxiety also capture researchers' interests. Classroom anxiety has been one of the most studied topics in the field of language learning and has been studied in relation to a number of learner variables (Dewaele & Maclntyre, 2014; Shirvan & Taherian, 2021). One very common perspective to study classroom anxiety lies in its effect on learners' performances (AI-Shboul et al., 2013; Kim, 2018). For example, Bosmans and Hurd (2016) investigated the link between foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and phonological attainment in distance learning and found a significant correlation between good pronunciation skills and low levels of FLA. Similar negative correlations were also found between FLCA and different language skills such as reading & writing, listening, speaking and overall achievement (AI-Shboul et al., 2013; Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Elaine et al., 2011; Jeon, 2005; Szyszka, 2011). Moreover, researchers also found positive correlations between FLCA and English learning, which is termed "facilitating anxiety" (Collins & Munoz, 2016).

Apart from its correlations with learning performances, classroom anxiety has also been examined in relation to different teaching methods (Onem & Ergenc, 2013), self-efficacy beliefs (Torres & Turner, 2016) and foreign language enjoyment (Shirvan & Taherian, 2021). Moreover, researchers have attempted to identify potential sources of classroom anxiety. Some sources were related to low level of self-efficacy, low level of self-esteem, proficiency, peer competitiveness and personality traits like perfectionism etc. (Shirvan & Taherian, 2021). Other sources included variables related to learners and teachers such as learner beliefs and instructor beliefs as well as the instructional practices like classroom procedures (Alrabai, 2015). Although researchers could not reach a consensus about the causes of anxiety, they have tried to employ various strategies to reduce classroom anxiety (Fallah, 2017; Onem & Ergenc, 2013). Nonetheless, among abundant research of classroom anxiety in language teaching and learning environment, very few studies have looked into classroom anxiety in relation to teacher roles especially in an English class with assorted learning activities. The present study thus attempts to quantitatively measure with FLCAS (Horwitz et al, 1986) the level of learners' classroom anxiety and explore its possible relationships with teacher roles and classroom activities as well.

Teacher Roles

Teacher roles are conceptualized as "all the teaching activities and teaching-related behaviors that teachers conduct or are expected to conduct across different instructional contexts" (Huang, 2019). And Fareh (2018) defined teacher role as "the duties, functions and responsibilities that teachers assume in the teaching-learning process". Consequently, teacher roles are more concerned about the actual behaviors and practices of teachers rather than their attitudes, beliefs and cognitions (Stapleton & Shao, 2017*)*. Research of teacher roles then is regarded as more behavior-based and practice-oriented rather than

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theory-driven. Since there often exists the gap between what one believes and what one actually does, it is then necessary to probe into the actual behaviors of teachers in classroom practices, that is, teacher roles to unfold the complex class reality.

Teacher roles have been generalized and classified with miscellaneous terms. Some of the examples include knowledge provider and authority (Yang & Tao, 2018) metaphorical roles of encyclopedia, searching machine, friends, magician, tour guide and lighthouse (Huang, 2017a); the role of guiding, encouraging, recommendation and providing controlled resources (Lai et al., 2016); the role of transmitting knowledge, managing communicative activities, introducing activities and directing students' work (Mak, 2011); the role of skilled communicator, and the more "teacherly" role (Ellis, 2009); cognitive role, affective role and managerial role (Coppola et al., 2002; Huang, 2019, 2017b). In this long yet not exhausted list, cognitive role, affective role and managerial role are considered to be central and common to classroom teaching (Huang, 2019). According to Coppola et al. (2002), cognitive role of the teacher refers to teaching processes pertaining to learning, information storage, memory, thinking and problem solving etc; affective role is related to teacher-student relationships and classroom atmosphere; and managerial role deals with course management incorporating tasks like course planning, organizing, leading and controlling. It is these three main domains of teacher role that are under study in the present research.

In the literature of teacher roles, review of previous studies indicates that the research has generated more conceptual generalizations and has focused more on theoretical discussions. Only a few empirical studies have utilized quantitative methods to explore teacher roles (Admiral et al., 2017). Findings of these studies revealed that teachers had exerted different impacts in the three main domains across different instructional contexts (Huang, 2019). Actually, quantitative research of teacher roles is rather scarce in relation to areas of subject contents, classroom pedagogies and even personal traits of teachers. In particular, the interactions of teacher roles with such dimensions of classroom reality as classroom anxiety and classroom activities are also understudied areas (Huang, 2019; Stapleton & Shao, 2017). Hence, the current survey intends to use a 27-item and 5-likert scale, the STRI (Huang, 2017b), to inspect teacher roles in the English class and find out their possible interactions with classroom anxiety and classroom activities. In all, the present research aims to quantitatively examine the three dimensions of a university English class where English is learned as a foreign language by addressing the following research questions:

1. What kinds of classroom activities are used in the English class and how frequently are they used?
2. What level of classroom anxiety do the students in the English class experience?
3. What are the teacher roles performed in the English class and what are their possible differences?
4. How do the three dimensions of the English class, i.e., classroom activities, classroom anxiety and teacher roles, relate to each other?

Method

Study Context and Participants

The English course in question is one of the compulsory English courses for English majors from School of English Education at a state-run university. The English course consists of four semesters in the first two academic years at the university. Students take four sessions of the English course every week for a total of 32 weeks in one academic year and each session lasted 40 minutes. This English course for general purpose intends to develop English language knowledge and communication competence of learners who learn English as a foreign language (EFL). It covers a total of 8 units in each academic year

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and 16 units in two academic years. The 16 units covered typical topics of English for general purpose like “Education”, “Food & Drink” and “Holidays & Celebrations” etc.

Participants of the study were two parallel classes of 49 sophomores who were all English majors at the university. The average age of the participants was 20. Among the 49 students, only 5 were male students and the rest 44 were all female students. They were admitted to the university and were admitted into the same school to learn the same major of English Education on the same criteria. In other words, participants had similar learning background and were similar in terms of their English level. The three classes took the same English course that was taught by the same English teacher. The English teacher had applied the same course materials in the two classes and had exerted the same teaching plans and schedules. In terms of professional background, the English teacher, with a MA degree in linguistic and applied linguistic, is an experienced English teacher who has been teaching English at university for twenty-five years.

Instruments

To quantitatively measure the three dimensions of the English class, i.e., classroom activities, classroom anxiety and teacher roles, the study used three 5-likert scales: Classroom Activities Inventory (CAI), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and The Scale of Teacher Role Inventory (the STRI).

CAI

The survey used Classroom Activities Inventory (CAI) to measure the number of classroom activities practiced in the English class and their frequencies as well. The inventory lists 23 different activities that are thought to be common in English courses and all the items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from point 1 *never* to point 5 *always.* The list derived largely from previous relevant literature that discussed various learning activities (Andon & Eckerth, 2009; Batenburg et al., 2019; Ellis, 2009; Heift & Rimrott, 2012; Jackson & Burch, 2017) and classroom practices as well. Before researchers could be congruent with what approach or principle some activities and exercises theoretically fit (Ellis, 2009; Jackson & Burch, 2017), classroom teachers have embraced miscellaneous activities to enhance practical teaching effects irrespective of the theoretical fitness. To this end, the inventory comprised a wide range of language exercises and learning tasks such as MC question, blank-filling, role-play, group discussion, research and debate etc. For the purpose of quantitative analyses, the 23 classroom activities in CAI were generalized into three groups, i.e., one-way language exercises (item 1-10), meaning-focused interactive activities (item 11-16) and real-life tasks (item 17-23). Reliability tests were conducted and revealed that CAI was quite reliable and valid as the Cronbach’s Alpha value of the overall scale reached .822 and those of the three groups were .676 of language exercises, .737 of interactive activities and .775 of real-life tasks respectively. The four Alpha values indicated good validity and reliability of both the overall instrument (above .80) and its three constructs (all above .60) (Wu, 2012).

FLCAS

Classroom anxiety of the participants in the study was gauged through the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986). FLCAS is the most widely exploited anxiety questionnaire worldwide (Fallah, 2017). The scale includes 33 statements that describe learners’ classroom anxiety and each item is also rated on a 5-likert scale from point 1 *strongly disagree* to point 5 *strongly agree (*Horwitz et al, 1986). Its reliability and concurrent validity have been proved in numerous studies throughout decades (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Fallah, 2017; Horwitz et al., 1986; Torres & Turner, 2016).

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To adjust to the current research context, some of the items and expressions of the FLCAS were adapted. For example, item 3 of Horwitz's FLCAS (*I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class*.) was changed to "*I fear doing speaking activities (e.g. role-plays) more than doing grammar exercises*"; item 9 (*I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class*) was revised as "*I start to worry when the teacher monitors our group discussion in the English class*"; item 14 (*I would not be nervous speaking foreign language with native speakers*) was adapted to "*I feel relaxed while speaking English with my partners in class*", etc. Then the adapted FLCAS also showed very good reliability and validity as the Cronbach Alpha value of the entire scale was .904.

In terms of the main constructs of FLCAS, Horwitz et al. (1986) did not classify the underlying constructs along with their constituent items and researchers have since generated divergent constructs with different combinations of the 33 items (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2018). Subsequently, to gear to the research purpose and to suit the current research context, the present study generalized four main constructs. They were speaking anxiety (items 1 3 14 24); general English class apprehension (items 4 5 6 7 11 12 16 17 18 22 25 26 30 31); test anxiety (items 8 10 21 28) and fear of communication and negative evaluation (items 2 9 13 15 19 20 23 27 29 32 33). Their corresponding Cronbach Alpha values were .733, .820, .679 and .747 respectively. Together with the alpha value of the overall scale (.904), the adapted FLCAS proved pretty reliable and valid in the present study.

The STRI

The Scale of Teacher Role Inventory (the STRI) was developed by Huang (2017b) to quantitatively examine teacher roles. The STRI is a 27-item instrument that describes different teaching behaviors of instructors in practice. It is also measured with a 5-Likert scale ranging from point 1 *strongly agree* to point 5 strong disagree. According to Huang (2017b), the STRI consists of three main constructs conceptualized by Coppola et al, (2002) and they are cognitive role (items 1-10), affective role (items 11-20) and managerial role (items 21-27). Previous studies showed that the STRI was highly reliable and valid (Huang, 2019, 2017b). In this study, the Cronbach Alpha value of the overall scale was .913 and those of the three main constructs were .863, .803 and .764 respectively, indicating its great reliability and validity in the current research.

Data Collection and Analyses

Due to the total item numbers of the three scales, the participants might easily lose patience with the long list if the three scales had been combined together within one single questionnaire. To this end, the study separated the three scales into three independent versions of questionnaires and administered them to the participants discretely in three different sessions of the English course to ensure the quality of the responses. The survey was conducted near the end of the second semester so that the students would have a global view of the English class for the whole academic year.

Prior to collecting the data, the researcher obtained consent from the participants to take the survey. Upon taking the paper-print questionnaires to the classroom, the researcher explained to the participants the academic purpose and assured them that all the questionnaires could be anonymous. Anyone who wouldn't take the survey could simply leave their questionnaires blank. Once completed, the questionnaires were then submitted to the researcher on the spot. In the end, 49 valid questionnaires were collected after blank questionnaires or questionnaires that were not completely or correctly finished were excluded.

Data was then input in the computer for a series of statistical analyses. In addition to reliability tests of all the three scales, descriptive statistics, t-tests and correlational analyses were conducted to reveal possible features of the three main dimensions as well as their interactions in the English class.

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Results

Classroom Activities

Regarding the first research question about the number of classroom activities practiced in the English class as well as their frequencies of use, descriptive statistics and paired *t*-tests of means were conducted. First, results of descriptive statistics of means were displayed in Figure 1. Figure 1 showed that group discussion had the highest mean 4.88 of all activities whereas microteaching had the lowest mean of 1.57. The results indicated that almost all the 23 classroom activities had been practiced in the English class and that the English class had employed assorted classroom activities. Among them, classroom activities rated between point 4 "*often*" and point 5 "*always*" included open-ended questions, oral presentation, role-play, note-taking, summarizing, exchanging information, dialogue, group discussion. The results revealed that most of the "often" and even "always" practiced activities turned out to be meaning-focused interactive activities.

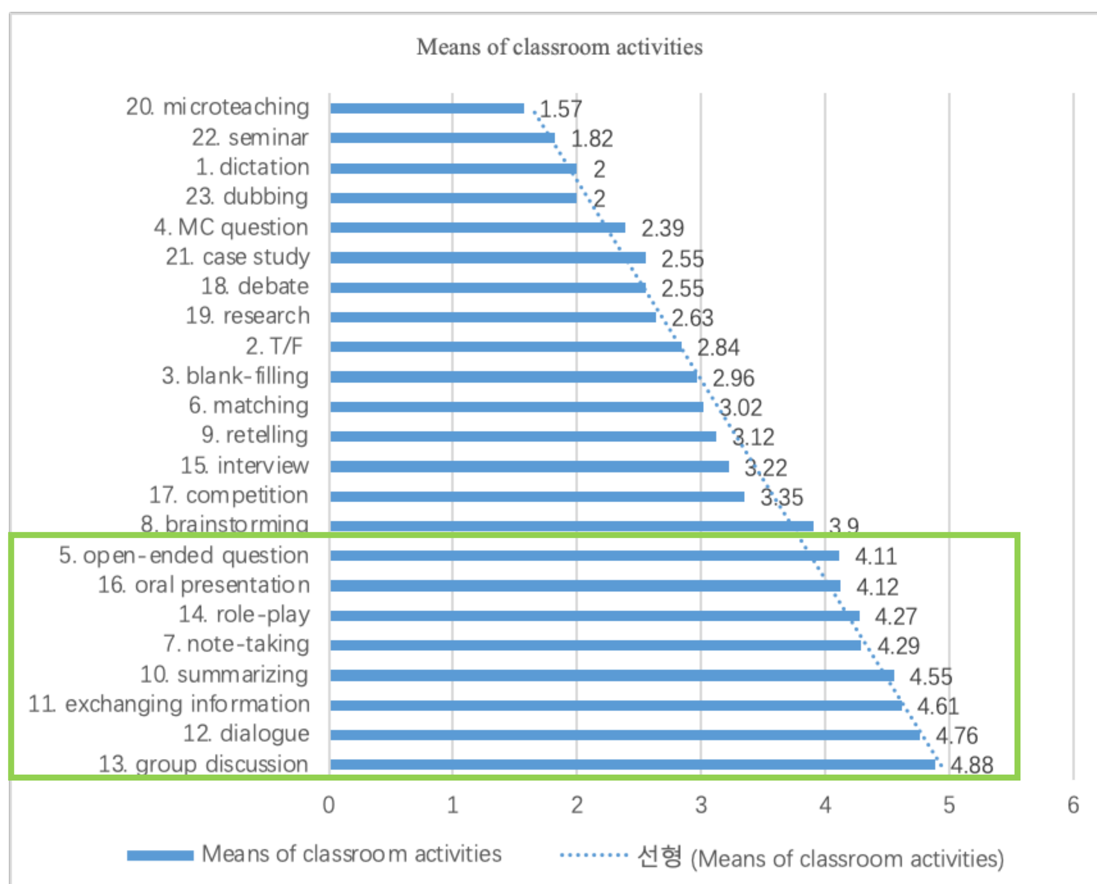

Figure 1. Means of all the 23 classroom activities.

Table 1 listed the means of the overall CAI scale along with its three main groups of activities. The mean of the overall CAI was 3.2822, meaning that all the classroom activities, on average, had been practiced "sometimes". Moreover, meaning-focused interactive activities (items 11-16) had the highest mean of 4.3095 whereas one-way language exercises (items 1-10) had a mean of 3.0041 and real-life tasks (items 17-23) had the lowest mean (2.3528). The results suggested that students "often" practiced interactive activities, "sometimes" did language exercises and "seldom" performed real-life tasks in the

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English class. The English class was then thought to be dominated by assorted activities that went beyond the constraint of one or two particular theories.

TABLE 1
Means of the Overall CAI and its Three Main Groups

	N	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*
Overall CAI	49	*3.2822*	.41874	.05982
Meaning-focused interactive activities	49	4.3095	.48591	.06942
One-way language exercises	49	3.0041	.39156	.05594
Real-life tasks	49	2.3528	.69748	.09964

Further paired t-tests were conducted to reveal whether frequency differences among the three main groups were significant or not. Table 2 reported the data. Data showed that all the p values of the three pairs of mean differences were .000 < .050 and were thus all statistically significant (Wu, 2012). The results indicated that the frequencies of the use of the three groups of classroom activities were all significantly different from each other. Besides, the corresponding three eta squared values were .487, .338 and .408 respectively and all went above the high level of .140 (Wu, 2012). The data reflected that the findings had not only statistical significance but also practical significance as well (Lakens, 2013).

TABLE 2
Comparison of the Mean Differences of Classroom Activities

	Paired Differences					*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	
	Mean differences	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				η^2
Pair 1 IA - LA	1.30544	.42776	.06111	1.18258	1.42831	21.363	48	.000	.487
Pair 2 IA - RLT	1.95675	.68869	.09838	1.75894	2.15457	19.889	48	.000	.338
Pair 3 LA - RLT	.65131	.68435	.09776	.45474	.84788	6.662	48	.000	.408

Note. N = 49. LA = one-way language exercises; IA = meaning-focused interactive activities; RLT = real-life tasks.

Classroom Anxiety

The second research question addresses the issue of classroom anxiety level the students had experienced in the English class. Table 3 reported all the means of both the entire FLCAS and its four main components. The overall mean of the entire classroom anxiety scale was only 2.8695. Test anxiety had the highest mean of 3.0153 and general English class apprehension had the lowest mean of 2.8280. It turned out all means ranged between "*disagree*" and "*neither disagree nor agree*", which suggested that the students had experienced quite low level of classroom anxiety in the activity-dominated English class.

TABLE 3
Means of the Overall FLCAS and its Four Components

	N	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*
Overall FLCAS	49	*2.8695*	.46807	.06687
Test anxiety	49	3.0153	.65830	.09404
Fear of communication and evaluation	49	2.8738	.49613	.07088
Speaking anxiety	49	2.8571	.71988	.10284
General English class apprehension	49	2.8280	.52040	.07434

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Teacher Roles

The third research question investigates what teacher roles were exerted in the English class and what might be their differences. Table 4 listed the statistical results of all the means. Results indicated that the mean of the overall STRI was 4.1897, which revealed that students, on average, recognized the impact of the teacher. In particular, cognitive role had the highest mean of 4.4224, affective role had the medium mean of 4.1306 and managerial role had the lowest mean of 3.9417. With students' average ratings centering around point 4 of "*agree*", the findings implied that the teacher had exerted noticeable impact in the activity-dominated English class.

TABLE 4
Means of the Overall STRI and its Three Main Roles

	N	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*
Overall STRI	49	*4.1897*	.41948	.05993
Cognitive role	49	4.4224	.44077	.06297
Affective role	49	4.1306	.48270	.06896
Managerial role	49	3.9417	.52644	.07521

Further paired-samples t-test was run to reveal whether the different impacts of the three teacher roles were significant or not. Results were reported in Table 5. In Table 5, the three p values were .000, .008, .000 respectively. Since all the three p values were lower than .050, the differences between the three pairs of teacher roles were thus statistically significant. In other words, cognitive roles had significantly higher mean than both affective role and managerial role. And affective role had significantly higher mean than managerial role. In addition, the three corresponding eta squared values were .734, .514, and .481 respectively and they all went well above the high level of .140 (Wu, 2012). Overall, the results indicated that the differences between three pairs of teacher roles were both statistically significant and practically significant (Lakens, 2013).

TABLE 5
Comparison of the Mean Differences of Teacher Roles

Teacher roles compared		Paired Differences					*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	η^2
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	cognitive - affective	.29184	.28419	.04060	.21021	.37347	7.188	48	.000	.734
Pair 2	affective - managerial	.18892	.48052	.06865	.05090	.32694	2.752	48	.008	.514
Pair 3	cognitive - managerial	.48076	.46643	.06663	.34678	.61473	7.215	48	.000	.418

Correlational Analyses of the Three Dimensions

The last research question examines the interactions of the above-mentioned three dimensions of the English class. Correlational analyses were conducted and results showed that no significant correlations were found either between classroom activities and classroom anxiety (r = .148, p = .311 > .050, r^2 = .0219) or between classroom anxiety and teacher roles (r = .164, p =.259 > .050, r^2 = .0269). Instead, significant correlation existed between teacher roles and classroom activities (r = .566**, p = .000 < .050, r^2 = .3204). The correlation coefficient of .566 showed a moderate but near strong positive relationship between teacher roles and classroom activities (Bosmans & Hurd, 2016). In this study, squared correlation coefficients r^2 was used to estimate the effect size. According to Bosmans and Hurd (2016), values above 26% suggest large effect sizes. With r^2 = .3204, it meant classroom activities could explain 32% of the variances of teacher roles, suggesting quite large effect in the present study.

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In sum, by examining the three dimensions of the English class, the overall findings of the present study unveiled some features that characterized the class reality. Rather than being framed by particular theoretical principle, the English teacher had resorted to assorted activities to facilitate English learning in class. And in this activity-dominated English class, the teacher had exerted noticeable impact in cognitive, affective and managerial domains and students had experienced lower level of classroom anxiety. Further tests revealed that significant correlations were found only between classroom activities and teacher role but not between classroom activities and classroom anxiety or between classroom anxiety and teacher role.

Discussion

Classroom Activities

Findings of the present research are to be discussed in relation to the relevant literature. To begin with, the present survey showed that the English class was dominated with assorted learning activities rather than adhering to one particular theoretical framework (Ellis, 2009; Long, 2015). It doesn't seem to present a strict match between the class reality and theoretical principles but may reveal some practical significance. (Andon & Eckerth, 2009; Jackson & Burch, 2017). In particular, the teacher of the English class in question had resorted to around 23 different kinds of activities and exercises for the whole academic year. The researcher holds that learning activities vary according to learning goals and accommodate learner variability. For instance, activities such as role-play, dialogue, exchanging information, interview and group discussion convey meanings and ideas and help generate more language use. They require more interaction, collaboration and cooperation among learners (Andon & Eckerth, 2009; Ellis, 2009). Exercises like multiple choice question, true or false, matching and blank-filling, instead, emphasize language form and knowledge and elicit less language output. With little effort, these exercises can provide fairly specific and accurate feedback on language learning like grammar or vocabulary mistakes (Heift & Rimrott, 2012). On the contrary, complex tasks that simulate real-world works of seminar, debate and research may require more complicated and comprehensive abilities other than just language knowledge and skills (Andon & Eckerth, 2009).

Actually, no matter how effective or how popular it is, one particular teaching approach or technique is unlikely to cater for the divergent needs of all learners especially in the long run. In other words, the combination of various learning activities might help to accommodate various learning goals, maintain students' interests and eventually facilitate the overall classroom teaching and learning (Branden, 2009; Heift & Rimrott 2012; Huang, 2021; Kamalian et al., 2017). This finding echoes to some previous studies. Yang & Tao (2018) found that merely involving students in interactions was not enough and teaching with similar interactive learning activities had produced very disparate classroom effects. Teachers needed to do more to diversify not only the information types, content types but also task types. In similar vein, Heift and Rimrott (2012) stated that different task types reflected different learning goals and should be employed to provide a rich practice environment so that learners could explore language constructions in numerous learning contexts and teachers could guide and assess their language development more properly.

What matters in class reality is probably not limited merely to the diversity of classroom activities. The appropriate proportion and weight of different activities that are employed in class as well as their frequencies of use also matters. In this study, the English class was "*often*" dominated with meaning-focused activities, "sometimes" balanced with one-way language exercises and "occasionally" complemented with real-life tasks. As descriptive and correlational analyses of the present study could not identify causal relations, what makes a more desirable combination and frequency of the classroom activities and how instructors could design and implement teaching to bring forth more desirable class effect need further research.

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Teacher Roles

In terms of teacher roles, quantitative studies are rather limited. Among these studies, teachers are found to have exerted dissimilar impacts in the three main domains across different instructional contexts and different subject areas (Huang, 2019). This holds true with the findings of this survey. In the current study, the overall impact of teacher role was fairly significant with an average rating at point 4 "agree". In particular, cognitive role was perceived to be the most impactful, which aligns with previous findings in both face-to-face instruction and online learning (Huang, 2019).

Previous studies show that students do prefer teacher's instructions in classrooms to self-learning online as the instructions tended to help them to learn more knowledge (Guzer & Caner, 2014; Huang, 2016). One primary goal of teaching is to transmit knowledge (Mak, 2011) or help students to construct knowledge in class (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). Nevertheless, with extensive and limitless resources online, teachers cannot parallel the Internet in terms of providing learning resources (Huang, 2019). Neither can they teach well by merely acting as the provider of content knowledge or the authoritative knower (Yang & Tao, 2018). Instead, teachers have to assist learners with deeper cognitive learning processes (Coppola et al., 2002; Huang, 2019). For instance, teachers might separate out, identify and classify qualified information from misinformation for students (Wheeler, 2001). They could also help students to analyze and digest information as well as overcome ambiguity and misunderstanding (Donnelly, 2013). Such impact of teachers on assisting students with deeper cognitive learning processes were validated by the findings of both this survey and previous studies (Huang, 2019). The 10 items of cognitive role mostly concern deeper cognitive learning processes such as "explain the learning materials and clarify the focuses", "help students to overcome misunderstandings", "make comments on students' performance", "give advice on doing exercises", "correct mistakes" and "show the directions of doing activities" etc. The higher mean of the overall cognitive role in the present study quantitatively substantiated the notable cognitive impacts of the teacher in the English class and the subsequent recognition of the students.

Another important finding of the present research lies in the enhanced affective role of the teacher in the English class. Contrary to previous studies where teachers had exerted the least influential affective role in class (Huang, 2019), the teacher in the present survey had played stronger affective role. Researchers state that various factors contribute to teacher-student relationship and classroom atmosphere (Henry & Thorsen, 2018). Although descriptive analyses are unable to explain the causes, findings of specific items of affective role in this study could help disclose particular features of the class reality. For example, item 13 (the teacher encourages students to exchange ideas in English) had the second highest mean of all scale (*Mean* = 4.57, *SE* = .082, *SD* = .577, η^2=.617). Together with the above-mentioned results of classroom activities, this finding indicated that students frequently practiced interactive activities in class and often exchanged ideas in English and expressed their feelings in English (item 12, *Mean* = 4.14, *SE* = .124, *SD* = .866, η^2 = .584). With more interactions among students and interactive activities often practiced in class, the teacher made students interested in learning English (item 18, *Mean* = 4.08, SE = .096, *SD* = .672, η^2 = .534) and quite confident of themselves (item 17, *Mean* = 4.10, *SE* =.121, *SD* =.848, η^2 =.678). And they were not so anxious either (item 19, the lowest mean of the overall scale *Mean* = 3.53, *SE* = .149, *SD* = 1.043, η^2 =.462). Students also agreed that the teacher had brought them closer to each other (item 14, *Mean* = 4.22, *SE* = .118, *SD* = .823, η^2 = .775)

Obviously, the teacher has managed to build up a stronger sense of learning community where students were encouraged to exchange ideas and feelings in English and where students were made less anxious but more confident of themselves and more interested in learning English. Researchers believe that such learning community enhance and facilitate classroom learning (Senior, 2010). Learners tend to learn better in a friendly atmosphere where students' interests in learning are stimulated (Yang & Tao, 2018). Besides, interactive learning activities like those often practiced in this English class do have an effect on learners' affect and could instigate a significant increase in learners' self-confidence (Batenburg et al., 2019). In a way, findings of the current study reveal that the teacher had built closer learning community

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and friendlier learning atmosphere that were positive for learners' affect. The teacher had exerted more notable affective impact on learners and their learning and the affective role had thus been strengthened.

Classroom Anxiety

Classroom anxiety is one commonly observed domain of learners' affect (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2018). Results of the study revealed that students in the current research had experienced lower level of classroom anxiety in the English class that was dominated by assorted classroom activities and was characterized by more impactful teacher roles. Researchers think that different learning contexts may have different effects on the level of students' anxiety. Students tended to feel less anxious in some learning contexts. For example, the learning contexts involved the use of MTAS, a new teaching model that employed a series of cognitive study strategies like summarizing, retelling and guessing to counteract anxiety (Onem & Ergenc, 2013) and the application of a synchronous computer-mediated communication to reduce anxiety in classroom English teaching (Côté & Gaffney, 2021). Furthermore, researchers discover that such components of learning context as cognitive learning processes, classroom atmosphere along with teacher-student interaction might also influence anxiety (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002).

Due to its exploratory nature, this survey was unable to establish causal relation among the three dimensions in the English class. However, the present findings indicated that the English teachers had exerted distinct impacts on assisting students with deeper cognitive learning processes and had built a friendly classroom atmosphere. With many meaning-focused interactive activities practiced in class, the students had more chances to participate in group works such as dialogue, group discussion and interview etc. According to Torres & Turner (2016), students preferred their teachers to incorporate group work in language classrooms and they tended to feel more comfortable speaking with partners than speaking in front of the class. When students collaborated in groups and engaged in speaking tasks in small groups, they felt less anxious. Collaboration can enhance learners' confidence, develop positive student-teacher attitudes and reduce classroom anxiety (Haruehansawasin & Kiattikomol, 2018). Researchers think that such an interactive and non-threatening learning environment tends to lead to improved willingness to communicate and reduced anxiety (Ustuk & Aydin, 2018).

Correlations among the Three Dimensions

The final correlational analyses showed that significant correlation only existed between classroom activities and teacher roles but not between classroom activities and classroom anxiety or between classroom anxiety and teacher roles. The quantitative result that classroom activities and teacher roles were positively correlated is consistent with the findings of many qualitative studies. Researchers think that classroom activities do not always meet theoretical criteria (Calver & Sheen, 2015; Viet, 2014). In fact, they are often flexible and kneadable as well as dynamic and complex. Theories on paper cannot always predict language use and the actual teaching and learning in authentic classrooms. Thus, there is the pedagogical space where teachers play significant roles (Branden, 2009). To accommodate learning needs and learner variability (Calver & Sheen, 2015), teachers may modify and adapt classroom activities in diverse ways. The variations may include changing instructional focuses, task types and educational formats, simplifying the input, modifying output demands, skipping certain steps and introducing additional procedures etc (Branden, 2009). Besides, researchers also find that during while-activity processes, teacher-led discourse can provide better exposure than small group learner-led discourse (Collins & Munoz, 2016). Or on a more macro level, teachers might directly establish their own class-specific curriculums by assessing needs, selecting learning resources, developing materials, designing activities, evaluating processes and finally conduct classes (Jackson & Burch, 2017). Taken together, the previous studies mentioned above explain very well the quantitative finding of the positive correlations between classroom activities and teacher roles in the present research (Ackson & Burch, 2017; Calver & Sheen, 2015; Collins & Munoz, 2016).

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Contrary to the significant correlation between classroom activities and teacher roles, classroom anxiety was not significantly correlated with either classroom activities or teacher roles in this study. These quantitative findings contradict many previous studies. Most research has focused on the negative relationship between classroom anxiety and students' achievements of certain language skills (AI-Shboul et al., 2013). Fewer studies have looked into the association between classroom anxiety and classroom activities and those that do have produced mixed results in this regard.

Researchers thought that different experiences of classroom activities, either positive or negative, could lead to either diminishing or uplifting classroom anxiety (Pyun, 2013). On the one hand, classroom activities may constitute a source of anxiety. To illustrate, Kessler (2010) found that speaking activities in classrooms might lead to discomfort of language learners and trigger anxiety. Being corrected by peers or teachers was also anxiety-provoking (Mak, 2011). Pyun (2013) found that classroom anxiety was negatively related to students' attitudes towards task-based language learning (TBLL) and anxious students tended to dislike TBLL that includes classroom activities such as dialogues, role-plays, problem-solving tasks and information-gap activities. In contrast, Peng and Woodrow (2010) viewed that interactive activities such as role-play, dialogue, interviews and group discussion were more likely to construct a friendly and more relaxing environment that helped to alleviate anxiety. Collaboration among learners especially in small groups or pairs often put learners at ease and reduce their pressure of incorrect answers in front of the whole class (Haruehansawasin & Kiattikomol, 2018). In addition, some real-life classroom tasks that involved out-of-class project works like survey, review and research helped expose students to richer linguistic resources and could also lessen their anxiety in class (Ustuk & Aydin, 2018).

Obviously, researchers so far cannot reach a consensus regarding the association between classroom anxiety and classroom activities. In fact, classroom anxiety and classroom activities could impact each other and their relationship might not be linear but rather reciprocal. Whether the relationship would be positive or negative and whether they facilitate or impede each other may involve interaction with more dimensions like teacher roles and may vary according to different implementations in class reality.

Even though classroom anxiety was not significantly correlated with teacher roles in this quantitative survey, researchers do find that teachers play a role not only in managing classroom activities but also in tackling classroom anxiety (Alrabai, 2015). Teaching behaviors in classrooms might either generate or diminish classroom anxiety. Interaction of classroom activities alone does not naturally increase students' confidence and lower their anxiety (Yang & Tao, 2018). When instructional support from teacher is missing, classroom activities like interactive activities, information gap tasks and group works are likely to be more challenging and students might be less confident but more anxious (Batenburg et al., 2019). To construct a friendly classroom atmosphere that affect students' anxiety, teachers might adopt a multitude of strategies. Some macro tactics comprise cognitive strategies, affective strategies and behavioral strategies (Ustuk & Aydin, 2018). Take cognitive strategies for example, teachers' scaffolding for students to facilitate deeper cognitive learning processes as indicated by the present survey could enhance learning experience and would probably relieve students' classroom anxiety. Others might include more micro techniques like question techniques, feedback techniques (Newman, 2017) and even paralinguistic cues like gesture, posture, facial expression, intonation and stress (Ustuk & Aydin, 2018). Teachers should promote cooperation and avoid over competition among students. Such teaching behaviors as making harsh error correction (Shirvan & Taherian, 2021) or using students mistakes to elaborate teaching points were anxiety provoking and should be avoided in class (Mak, 2011).

Conclusion and Implication

Researchers often examine classroom teaching within the framework of theories and principles (Ellis, 2009; Jackson & Burch, 2017; Long, 2015) and evaluate classroom learning with students' learning achievement (Stapleton & Shao, 2017). On the one hand, classroom teaching is often dynamic and complex and might well go beyond theoretical frameworks (Braden, 2009; Jackson & Burch, 2017). On

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the other hand, classroom learning should not be measured merely by students' learning achievements or cognitive performances. Other learner variables such as classroom anxiety should be taken as alternative outcomes of classroom teaching. Factors like classroom anxiety and activities should not be treated merely as a mediating factor affecting learning achievement. Instead, whether learners are willing to learn with lower level of anxiety and stronger interests or whether teachers have exerted noticeable impact on engaging learning should also be regarded as one of the alternative criteria to evaluate classroom reality or as one optional goal. In other words, classroom reality should be examined not only by learning outcomes such as exam marks but also by other learner-related variables such as classroom anxiety as well as teacher-related variables such as teacher role and classroom activities implemented. It is hoped that teaching and learning can be evaluated in more diverse dimensions other than just learners' achievements and performances.

Limitation and Future Study

Due to its exploratory nature, the present research has some limitations. First, the current findings are supported by quantitative data but fail to be substantiated by qualitative data to reveal possible causal relationship among the dimensions, especially between classroom activities and teacher roles. Qualitative methods such as classroom observations might triangulate the research methodologies and results as well. Furthermore, quantitative instruments have their own constraints in terms of their scope and might not have gauged all the possibilities of the three dimensions of classroom reality. For instance, the 23-item CAI scale probably does not exhaust all the activities in classrooms and extra ones might be left out. The case holds true with the dimensions measured by teacher roles. Teachers in authentic language teaching perform much more duties and responsibilities than described by the 27 items in three domains of the STRI. Consequently, future studies may probe into more accurate and specific relationships among the three dimensions or more domains of classroom teaching and learning. Larger and more heterogeneous sample of subjects are also likely to generate wider perspectives and different dimensions of class reality as well as their relationships.

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Appendix A

Scale I. The Scale of Teacher Role Inventory (the STRI)

1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, neither disagree nor agree; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree

1. The teacher uses videos to help students to learn English.	1 2 3 4 5
2. The teacher uses audios to help students to learn English.	
3. The teacher recommends English websites etc to students for learning.	
4. The teacher explains the learning materials and clarify the focuses.	
5. The teacher helps students to overcome misunderstandings.	
6. The teacher helps students to analyze the learning content.	
7. The teacher makes comment on students' performance.	
8. The teacher gives advice on doing exercises.	
9. The teacher helps students to correct mistakes.	
10. The teacher shows students the right direction of doing activities.	
11. The teacher leads students to play games to learn English.	
12. The teacher encourages students to express their feelings in English.	
13. The teacher encourages students to exchange ideas in English.	
14. The teacher brings students closer to each other.	
15. The teacher helps students to stay focused.	
16. The teacher encourages students to explore answers on their own.	
17. The teacher makes me more confident of learning English.	
18. The teacher makes English learning interesting to me.	
19. The teacher makes English learning stressful to me.	
20. The teacher brings up different issues for discussion.	
21. The teacher makes learning plan for students.	
22. The teacher decides teaching schedule in class.	
23. The teacher controls learning pace.	
24. The teacher disciplines the class.	
25. The teacher sets up rules and regulations for doing activities.	
26. The teacher keeps a record of students' exercises.	
27. The teacher adapts the exercises to meet students' needs.	

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Appendix B

Scale II. Classroom Activities Inventory (CAI)

1.Never 2. Occasionally 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always

1	Dictation	1 2 3 4 5
2	T/F questions	
3	Blank-filling exercises	
4	Multiple choice questions	
5	Open-ended questions	
6	Matching	
7	Note-taking	
8	Brainstorming	
9	Retelling	
10	Summarizing	
11	Exchanging information	
12	Dialogue	
13	Group discussion	
14	Role-play	
15	Interview	
16	Oral presentation	
17	Competition	
18	Debate	
19	Research	
20	Microteaching	
21	Case study	
22	Seminar	
23	Dubbing	

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Appendix C

Scale III. Adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, neither disagree nor agree; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when speaking English.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in class	
3. I fear doing speaking activities (e.g. role-plays) more than doing grammar exercises.	
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.	
6. During the class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	
8. I am usually at ease during written tests of English class.	
9. I start to worry when the teacher monitors our group discussion.	
10. I worry about failing English class.	
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English class.	
12. In ENGLISH class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in class.	
14. I feel relaxed while speaking English with my partners.	
15. I get awkward when the teacher is correcting my mistakes in class.	
16. Even if I am well prepared for the class, I feel anxious about it.	
17. I do not feel like going to English class.	
18. I feel less worried if there are adequate help from the teacher.	
19. I am more stressed about doing individual work than group work.	
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm called on in class.	
21. The more I study for the tests, the more confused I get.	
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for class.	
23. I always feel reluctant to join in group work.	
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of the whole class.	
25. English class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	
26. I feel more tense and nervous in English class than in my other classes.	
27. I get upset about negative comments from my partners during group work in class.	
28. I am more worried about the evaluation of speaking tasks.	
29. I get nervous when I don't understand what the teacher says.	
30. I feel overwhelmed by how much I have to learn in English class.	
31. I often feel discouraged as English class is too difficult for me.	
32. I feel more comfortable while doing individual work by myself.	
33. I feel frustrated when I could not complete the tasks/exercises well.	

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