AN INVESTIGATION ON TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPEAKING ANXIETY OF EFL STUDENTS

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MASTER'S THESIS

Department of Foreign Language Education
English Language Teaching Program with Thesis
Advisor: Prof. Dr. Aysu Aryel ERDEN

İstanbul
T.C. Maltepe University
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JÜRİ ve ENSTİTÜ ONAYI

Bu belge, Yükseköğretim Kurulu tarafından 19.01.2021 tarihli "Lisansüstü Tezlerin Elektronik Ortamda Toplanması, Düzenlenmesi ve Erişime Açılmasına İlişkin Yönerge" ile bildirilen 6698 Sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanunu kapsamında gizlenmiştir.

ETİK İLKE ve KURALLARA UYUM BEYANI

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Thank you.

Sinem YAVUZ

September, 2023

ÖZET

İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ ALAN ÖĞRENCİLERİN KONUŞMA KAYGILARINA YÖNELİK ÖĞRETMEN TUTUMLARININ INCELENMESI

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Maltepe Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, 2023

Konuşma becerisi birçok yabancı dil öğrencisi için önemli bir kaygı kaynağı olarak kabul edilirken öğretmenler bu konuyu en yakından gözlemleyen bireylerdir. Bu bağlamda araştırma; öğretmenlerin dil öğrenimi sırasında öğrencilerinin kaygılarına ilişkin görüşlerini ele almayı ve öğrencilerin konuşma kaygısına katkıda bulunan temel etkenlere ilişkin farkındalıklarını araştırmayı, aynı zamanda bu konudaki tutum ve stratejilerini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, bir vakıf üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda görev yapan 20 öğretim elemanı ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere dayalı nitel araştırma olarak desenlenmiştir. Veri analizi katılımcıların yabancı dilde konuşma kaygısına ilişkin mesleki deneyimlerine odaklanırken, aynı zamanda ifadelerindeki ortak noktaları ve kalıpları vurgulamayı amaçlar. Verilerin bulguları, konuşmanın diğer dil becerilerine kıyasla özellikle en fazla kaygı uyandıran beceri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenciler kelimeleri unuttuklarında, sınıfta arkadaşları arasında konuşmaları gerektiğinde veya hazır olmadıkları bir soru ile karşılaştıklarında, kaygı düzeyleri önemli ölçüde yüksek gözlenmektedir. Yanlış telaffuz, dilbilgisi hatalarına kıyasla daha az kaygı yaratmaktadır. Konuşmadan önce düşünme zamanı verilmesi, özellikle kaygıya eğilimli öğrenciler için kaygıyı azaltmada etkili bir uygulamadır. Etkili bir öğrenme atmosferi geliştirmek için müdahaleden uzak bir ortam oluşturmak ve öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisinde güven duygusu geliştirmek, kaygının kontrol altına alınmasında önemli rol oynamaktadırlar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kaygı, Yabancı Dil Kaygısı, Yabancı Dilde Konuşma Kaygısı

ABSTRACT

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While speaking is considered one of the prominent sources of anxiety for many foreign language learners, teachers are the individuals who observe this issue most closely. Within this context, this study aims to address teachers' viewpoints on their students' anxiety during language learning and to investigate the extent of teachers' awareness concerning the underlying factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety, as well as to explore their attitudes towards this issue. The study has been designed as qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 instructors working at the School of Foreign Languages of a foundation university. The data analysis focuses on shedding light on participants' firsthand experiences of students' foreign language speaking anxiety while highlighting commonalities and patterns in participants' statements during the interviews. The findings of the data reveal that speaking is notably the most anxiety-inducing skill compared to other language skills. Furthermore, anxiety levels are significantly high when students forget words, address a classroom audience, or handle impromptu questions. Mispronunciations evoke less anxiety compared to grammatical errors. Additionally, allowing time before delivering the speech is an anxiety-reducing method, particularly for anxious students. Establishing a non-intrusive environment to cultivate a harmonious learning atmosphere and fostering a sense of trust in the student-teacher relationship play a significant role in reducing anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Foreign Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ ALAN ÖĞRENCİLERİN KONUŞMA KAYGILARINA YÖNELİK ÖĞRETMEN TUTUMLARININ İNCELENMESİ

Konuşma yabancı dil eğitiminde en önemli amaçlardan biridir. Bireylerin yabancı bir dile tam anlamıyla hâkim olabilmeleri, anlama ve anlatmaya dayalı temel dil becerilerini etkin bir şekilde kullanabilmeleri ile değerlendirilir. Öğrenilen dili hayata geçirebilmenin ve o dili kullanan diğer bireylerle iletişim kurabilmenin yolu konuşma becerisinden geçmektedir. Öğrenciler kendilerini sözlü olarak ifade ederken kendine güvenmeme, yanlış yapma, yetersizlik, arkadaşları tarafından olumsuz değerlendirilme ve benzerleri gibi olumsuz duygu ve düşünceler taşıyabilirler ve bu sebeple düşüncelerini düzgün şekilde aktaramayabilirler. Konuşma sadece dil üretimine değil aynı zamanda iletişime de dayalı bir beceridir ve bu nedenle kaygıyı arttırdığı bilinmektedir. Yabancı dilde konuşma kaygısı yaşayan öğrencilerde fiziksel ya da duygusal değişimler gözlemlemek mümkündür. Kaygı düzeyinin yüksek olması kaçınma davranışını tetiklemesinden ve konuşmaya ket vurmasından ötürü dil öğrenim sürecini olumsuz etkilemektedir. Bu nedenle öğrencilere konuşma becerisi kazandırılırken öğretmenlerin gözlem ve tutumları önemle dikkate alınmalıdır. Öğretmenlerin sınıf içi gözlem ve deneyimlerini araştırmak, öğrencilerin yaşamakta oldukları konuşma kaygısına yönelik farklı bir perspektif sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

1) Öğretmenlerin gözlemlerine göre konuşma kaygısının sınıf performansı üzerindeki etkileri nelerdir?
2) Öğretmenlerin öğrencilerinin konuşma kaygısına yönelik tutumları ve farkındalık düzeyleri nasıldır?

Araştırma sorularına yanıt bulabilmek amacıyla bu çalışma bir vakıf üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda görev yapan 20 öğretim elemanı ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere dayalı nitel bir araştırma olarak desenlenmiştir. Veri analizi yapılırken katılımcıların ifadelerindeki ortak noktaları ve kalıpları tespit etmeye odaklanılmış, bulgular ışığında temalar, kategoriler ve kodlar oluşturulmuş, bulgular katılımcıların söylemlerinden oluşan kanıtlar, tablo ve figürlerle desteklenmiştir.

Verilerin bulguları konuşmanın diğer dil becerilerine kıyasla en fazla kaygı uyandıran beceri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenciler ilgili kelimeleri unuttuklarında, sınıfta arkadaşları arasında konuşmaları gerektiğinde veya hazırlıksız soru sorulduğunda kaygı düzeyleri önemli ölçüde yükselmektedir. Yanlış telaffuz, gramer hatalarına kıyasla daha az kaygı uyandırmaktadır. Konuşmaya hazırlanmak için zaman tanınması, özellikle kaygısı yüksek öğrenciler için kaygı hafifletici bir yöntemdir. Uyumlu bir öğrenme atmosferi geliştirmek için müdahaleden uzak bir ortam oluşturmak ve öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisinde güven duygusu geliştirmek, kaygının azaltılmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Öğrencilerle kaygının fiziksel ve duygusal dışavurumlarının yanı sıra, akademik performansları üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri hakkında bireysel ya da toplu olarak görüşmeler yapılmasının olumlu etkileri olduğu ve bu görüşmelerden sonra öğrencilerden olumlu geri dönütler alındığı belirlenmiştir. Katılımcılar yabancı dilde konuşma kaygısını azaltabilmek amacıyla çeşitli yöntemler kullandıklarını belirtirken, öğrencilerinin kaygıyla baş edebilmek için herhangi bir yöntem ya da stratejilerinin bulunmadığını bildirmişlerdir.

Genel anlamda bu çalışma konuşma kaygısını dil öğreniminde/öğretiminde belirleyici bir unsur olarak görmenin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu konuda yapılacak olan her türlü farkındalık çalışması ve eğitim, öğretmenlerin uygun stratejiler benimseyerek destekleyici bir sınıf ortamı yaratmalarına fırsat tanıyacaktır.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CA : Communication Apprehension

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

FL : Foreign Language

FLA : Foreign Language Anxiety

FLCAS : Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

FLSA : Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

T : Teacher

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study, the significance of the study, limitations and finally, keywords and identification used throughout the text will be presented.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

While many people are keen on learning a new language, they consider it a challenging task and report uncomfortable experiences in relation to it. Complete commitment, full participation, and total physical, intellectual and emotional response are required to successfully send and receive messages in a second language. Language learning is not a series of easy steps that can be programmed quickly (Brown, 2000). While learning a foreign language, all four macro-skills are needed to be successfully acquired. Reading and listening are considered receptive skills since they entail receiving information. As speaking and writing include creating words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, they are known as the productive skills. Even though they are both productive skills, speaking differs from writing in terms of lexical, grammatical, and discourse patterns, and can be characterized as not only a productive skill but also a communicative skill. (Carter & Nunan, 2002). Inarguably, speaking is considered to be the skill in which the students' language egos are the most vulnerable since it requires a higher level of self-exposure that imposes on them (Pawlak, Bielak, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2013). As per Wilson (2006), speaking is one of the main sources of anxiety for many foreign language learners. Researchers have conducted ample research for students with speaking anxieties and how the students themselves can cope with the situation. However, there are relatively fewer studies on teachers' perspectives regarding their students' anxiety. Therefore, this research intends to bridge this gap in the literature by delving into teachers' viewpoints on their students' anxiety during language learning. By exploring the perceptions of educators, this study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the broader implications of speaking anxiety in the language learning/teaching context. Understanding teachers' perspectives can shed light on potential instructional strategies, classroom practices, and support systems that can aid students in overcoming their

language-speaking apprehensions. Ultimately, this research contributes to the improvement of language education and the overall learning experience for individuals who are trying to acquire a new language and teachers who are struggling with their students' speaking anxiety.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate FLSA awareness of teachers, the impacts of FLSA on classroom performance and teachers' attitudes towards FLSA.

During the course of this study, it is presumed that all participants engage in the interviews with their undivided attention and respond candidly to the questions posed. The hypothesis underlying this study is that the teachers possess a comprehensive understanding of their students' speaking anxiety, and they have specific observations regarding how this anxiety affects their students' performance in language learning classrooms. Furthermore, it is expected that the study yields substantial and well-founded information about teachers' attitudes toward their students' speaking anxiety and the strategies they employ in their daily classroom practices to alleviate and reduce foreign language speaking anxiety.

The assumption is that the participating teachers have a keen awareness of the challenges their students face with speaking anxiety and can provide valuable insights into its ramifications on language learning outcomes. Their firsthand experiences and close interactions with students in the classroom setting are believed to equip them with a deep understanding of the issue.

Moreover, the research anticipates that the data gathered from the interviews will offer concrete and practical information about the teachers' approaches to handling speaking anxiety among their students. These insights are expected to provide valuable guidance and potential solutions for language educators and institutions seeking to create a more supportive and conducive learning environment for language learners. By exploring teachers' perspectives on speaking anxiety, the study aspires to illuminate this complex phenomenon within the Turkish EFL context. Additionally, it strives to contribute to the

enhancement of language teaching methodologies and support mechanisms to alleviate students' anxieties and foster their language proficiency.

1.3 Significance of the Study

It has always been a challenge for language instructors to get students to speak in the classroom atmosphere. After a detailed analysis of the literature, it is apparently seen that one of the essential components of the problem is speaking anxiety, which is the main theme of this study. Examining the factors of anxiety and presenting the English teachers' attitudes towards this problem will contribute a lot to the significance of the study.

The classroom behavior of the teachers has been demonstrated to have a substantial impact on anxiety. Two major aspects that promote anxiety in a language lesson are the teacher's personality and the teacher-student interaction (Cheng, 2005). Investigating the awareness of teachers on their students' anxiety and identifying their attitudes towards this problem can help both novice and experienced teachers make better instructional decisions while teaching. As the quest to overcome speaking anxiety among foreign language learners is of paramount importance, this study provides critical insights and perspectives from professionals directly engaged in language education. Since teachers are one of the key elements of foreign language learning process, their thoughts and feelings are really important determinants in addressing the issue of FLSA among students. By understanding teachers' levels of awareness and perceptions regarding speaking anxiety, this study can help shape effective training strategies that equip educators with the necessary skills and strategies to address this issue within the classroom setting.

In summary, the findings derived from the interviews can be likened to a reflective mirror showing teachers a portrayal of themselves. Considering the perspectives of teachers who interact directly with language learners can guide the development of effective training strategies for educators. These strategies can help reduce anxiety, enhance confidence, and create positive learning environments; consequently, students can overcome their speaking anxiety and improve their speaking skills.

1.4 Limitations

This study is limited by 20 questions posed to 20 interviewees who are English instructors working at a foundation university situated in Istanbul. While the participants possess expertise in the field, the sample size of instructors may not fully encompass the diverse range of English instructors in various educational institutions. Consequently, the generalizability of the findings might be limited to similar higher education institutions in the same cultural context.

1.5 Keywords and Identification

Anxiety: An unpleasant emotional condition characterized by feelings of tension and apprehension (Spielberger, 1983). Additionally, it can be defined as an internal state of discomfort associated with nervous behavior, leading to avoidance of activities, physical complaints, indecision, and hesitation (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.125). Anxiety can impact various aspects of life, including social interactions and language learning, it negatively impacts language achievement, with students with higher levels receiving lower grades. Socially anxious individuals are more vulnerable and anxiety can manifest in future-oriented thinking, leading to difficulties in decision-making and planning (Buckner & Gross, 2010).

Speaking Anxiety: Speaking anxiety is characterized as an abnormal and overwhelming feeling of fear and apprehension, often accompanied by physiological manifestations, arising from concerns about the nature and extent of the risk associated with speaking, as well as self-doubt regarding one's ability to cope with it (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128). It is a specific type of anxiety that is associated with language learning and public speaking (Horwitz, 2001; Young, 1990). Speaking anxiety can have a significant impact on language learning outcomes and oral performance (Woodrow, 2006). Speaking anxiety is a significant anxiety-producing experience for language learners, particularly in front of the class. It is not limited to foreign languages, as speaking in any language in front of others can also be anxiety-provoking (Young, 1990).

Foreign Language Anxiety: Foreign language anxiety refers to the feelings of tension, apprehension, and nervousness that individuals experience when learning or using a

foreign language. It is a specific type of anxiety that is associated with language learning and can manifest in various language skills (Dewaele et al., 2019).

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety: Foreign language speaking anxiety is characterized as a negative emotion that significantly impacts learners' performance, manifesting as an emotional response that arises when individuals speak a target language in uneasy, fearful, nervous, or worrisome situations within the context of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom setting (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128). Individuals with higher levels of foreign language anxiety tend to have lower levels of oral proficiency and may struggle with effective communication in the target language (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the primary objective of this study is to analyze teachers' observations on foreign language speaking anxiety among university students and their attitudes towards this particular phenomenon. In alignment with this aim, the following chapter undertakes a comprehensive exploration of the existing literature on foreign language speaking anxiety. Firstly, the definition of anxiety is explained as an umbrella term. Next, foreign language anxiety speaking anxiety is discussed, and finally, foreign language speaking anxiety is explained with particular emphasis given to its sources and suggestions for reducing it.

2.1 Anxiety

Anxiety has been studied in various fields, as it is a multidimensional phenomenon that can impact individuals in different ways. Psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, sociology and education are some of the few examples of the diverse range of fields that study anxiety. The interdisciplinary nature of anxiety research allows for a comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon and informs the development of effective treatments and interventions. Zhanibek (2001) defines anxiety as a complex issue that researchers haven't been able to agree on a clear and concise definition. Scovel defines anxiety as an emotional state of "apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Scovel, 1978, cited in Cheng, 2005, p.8). Multiple scholars have proposed definitions of anxiety that share common characteristics. These include feelings of apprehension, fear, tension, and uneasiness (Brown, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1991; Scovel, 1991). According to Ehrman (1996), these characteristics are associated with individuals' negative evaluations of their own actions. Consequently, individuals may develop a mindset focused on failure, experience inhibition, and avoid tasks such as homework, exams, or public speaking. Anxiety can manifest in specific situations or be present throughout the entire learning process.

2.1.1 Physical and emotional manifestations of anxiety

Physical Manifestations: Spielberger (1966) asserted that Sigmund Freud was the first scholar to make an effort to comprehend the relevance of anxiety in the framework of psychology. Freud (1936, as cited in Spielberger, 1966) aimed to differentiate anxiety from anger, grief or sorrow and defines it as; *"an unpleasant affective state or condition by its unique combination of phenomenological and physiological qualities that are rapid heart rate, difficulty in breathing, sweating, shuddering, vertigo, and feeling nervous, weak or tired*" (p.9).

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, reality anxiety, moral anxiety, and neurotic anxiety are three types of anxiety that arise from different sources and have distinct characteristics. *Reality anxiety*, also known as objective anxiety, is a type of anxiety that emerges from a threat or danger present in the external world. It is a normal and adaptive response to real-life situations that may pose harm or danger to an individual. *Moral anxiety*, also referred to as superego anxiety, arises from conflicts between an individual's internalized moral standards or values and their impulses or desires. Freud believed that the superego, the part of the psyche that internalizes societal rules and moral standards, acts as a source of moral anxiety. *Neurotic anxiety*, also called neurosis, is a form of anxiety that arises from an unconscious conflict between the id (primitive desires and instincts) and the superego (internalized moral standards). It is triggered by the instinctual sense of risk. In certain ways, this is the fear of what could happen if the ego is unable to control the instincts' sudden desire to arouse (Arbiser & Schneider, 2018).

Hall (1955) defined the physiological reactions of the human body to anxiety as; "*a painful emotional experience which is produced by excitations in the internal organs of the body and these excitations result from internal or external stimulation and are governed by the autonomic nervous system*" (p.43).

The World Health Organization (2009) states that anxious people have a variety of physical symptoms, including headache, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, sweaty palms, and fatigue. Arıkan & Gorman (2001) claim that some specific symptoms can be considered potential markers for anxiety and listed as follows:

Table 1. Physical (Somatic) Signs of Anxiety

Dizziness
Light-headedness
Fainting
Nausea,
Gastrointestinal problems
Diarrhea
Feeling short of breath
Sensation of smothering or choking
Chest pain
Rapid or pounding heartbeat
Palpitations
Numbness
Sweating, chills
Hot flushes, shaking, tremors
Insomnia, restlessness, inability to relax, sleep problems

* Based on information from American Psychiatric Association

Emotional Manifestations: Köknel, Özuğurlu & Bahadır (1993) indicate that emotional manifestations of anxiety are concern, apprehension, and restlessness which results in feeling pressured and tense. According to Spielberger & Rickman (1990) anxiety can be distinguished from other emotions like anger or grief in terms of a unique combination of experiential qualities and physiological changes. An anxiety state covers the feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, worry and activation of nervous system. As a result, three categories of behavior resulting from anxiety have been identified:

a. *Arousal-mediated responses*: Individuals experiencing anxiety often exhibit physical reactions such as restlessness, fidgeting, playing with their hair, clothing, or objects, as well as experiencing speech difficulties like stuttering and stammering. They may appear jittery and nervous.

b. *Disaffiliative behaviors*: These behaviors involve reduced initiation of conversations, decreased participation, longer periods of silence, fewer attempts to break the silence, and shorter speaking durations.

c. *Image-protection behaviors*: Individuals engage in behaviors aimed at maintaining a positive image, such as frequent smiling and nodding, refraining from interrupting others,

providing regular feedback to others, and focusing on responsive cues like "uh-huh" during communication (Leary, 1982, as cited in Young, 1991).

2.1.2 Types of anxiety

Types of anxiety have been categorized by the scholars over the years. The first group of categorization includes trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (Cattell & Scheier, 1963; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Spielberger, 1966). Futhermore, another categorization presents debilitative anxiety and facilitative anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960).

2.1.2.1 Trait, state and situation-specific anxieties

Trait anxiety is a long-lasting feeling of anxiety rooted in a person's personality (Spielberger, 1983). Those with high trait anxiety tend to perceive situations as more threatening and experience apprehension (Spielberger, 1983). This type of anxiety influences cognitive features and memory in a negative way (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). According to Gidron (2013), trait anxiety or structural anxiety is characterized by experiencing negative emotions like fear and worry in various situations, accompanied by a predisposition to feel and express these emotions. It refers to a state of emotional imbalance and a nervous disposition that has become a part of an individual's personality. Philips (1992) further suggests that individuals with trait anxiety tend to display anxious reactions in nearly all circumstances, demonstrating concerns about multiple aspects of life. According to McCroskey (2015), there exists a connection between a person's lack of confidence in their abilities and their reluctance to engage in communication or social interactions. This connection arises from the fear of being evaluated by peers. In other words, individuals who doubt their skills may hesitate to communicate due to the anxiety surrounding how others will perceive them. In that sense, the relationship between trait and state anxiety is inevitable which means a high trait anxiety triggers state anxiety with higher levels.

State anxiety, on the other hand, is a temporary reaction that varies depending on the individual and the perceived danger of a stressful situation. It is specific to a particular time or situation, such as giving a speech or taking an exam (Spielberger, 1983). An

individual's current emotional state activates their memories and information associated with that mood, and the brain selectively processes them, as explained by Quigley, Nelson, Carriere, Smilek & Purdon (2012). This means that state anxiety is characterized by an individual's transient reactions to temporary situations, and its duration can vary depending on the circumstances. State anxiety differs in terms of duration, intensity, and frequency for each person, as every individual may experience it uniquely (Wiedemann, 2015).

Situation-specific anxiety occurs in explicit situations and is caused by the circumstances of that particular situation (Wang, 1998). Luo (2014) gives public speaking anxiety as an example of this category. Moreover, *foreign language anxiety* (FLA) falls under this category as it is specific to the learning of a foreign language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). FLA is distinct from other types of anxiety and can arise even in individuals who do not generally experience anxiety (Horwitz, 2001). Zhanibek (2001) states that public speaking, participating in class activities and written exams are some of the cases that situation specific anxiety can be seen.

Recent research was conducted by Damayanti et al. (2020) in the context of academic speaking classes in Indonesia. The research sought to investigate the elements leading to speaking anxiety among students in an English Language Education Program (ELEP) class. The study involved 52 second-year students who completed questionnaires adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986) and Angelia & Listyani (2019). The results identified three primary factors contributing to speaking anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Additionally, other factors such as inadequate vocabulary, self-underestimation, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about embarrassment from peers were also observed. The study emphasizes the significance of teachers in helping students overcome their anxiety and fostering a positive classroom environment.

2.1.2.2 Debilitative and facilitative anxieties

Debilitative anxiety refers to the negative impact of anxiety on individuals' performance and well-being. It can hinder individuals from effectively carrying out tasks or engaging in certain activities (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Debilitative anxiety is often associated

with excessive worry, fear of failure, self-doubt, and avoidance behaviors. It can lead to decreased confidence, impaired decision-making, and limited cognitive processing (Scovel, 1991). In the context of language learning, debilitative anxiety may manifest as a reluctance to speak or make mistakes, avoidance of language practice, or a negative self-perception regarding language abilities. It is important to manage debilitative anxiety as it can hinder the learning process and performance, moreover; it can lead directly to negative emotions (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992).

Facilitative anxiety, on the other hand, refers to the positive effects of anxiety on individuals' performance and motivation (Alpert & Haber, 1960). Facilitative anxiety is associated with optimal arousal levels that promote engagement, effort, and task performance. When anxiety is at a moderate level, it can stimulate individuals to be more attentive, motivated, and efficient in their activities. In language learning, facilitative anxiety can lead to increased effort, improved concentration, and a heightened state of readiness to accomplish challenges. Although some anxiety is beneficial in easy tasks, facilitative anxiety is ineffective in complicated tasks (Horwitz, 2001).

In accordance with these type of anxieties, a research was conducted by Moyer (2008), involving 32 students from a public university. The participants were requested to complete an anxiety questionnaire that assessed their type of anxiety prior to undertaking an assignment. The findings indicated that students who experienced high debilitating anxiety made more errors compared to those who had high facilitating anxiety. In another research conducted by Kleinmann (1977) involving two groups of Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic students learning English, it was observed that students with facilitating anxiety tended to utilize some syntactic structures more frequently compared to other students who either avoided using these structures or used them less frequently.

2.2 Foreign Language Anxiety

In language learning, it has been observed that individuals may struggle to learn a language despite being successful in other learning endeavors. This difficulty in language learning can be attributed to an anxiety reaction that some individuals develop towards the language (Horwitz et al., 1991).

According to MacIntyre & Gardner (1989), language anxiety is not initially present at the start of the learning journey but develops as a learned emotional reaction. Chastian (1976) suggests that high anxiety among students hinders their ability to focus on learning, thereby affecting their performance in classroom tasks. It is likely that this anxiety reaction gradually emerges as learners strive to make progress but find themselves unable to do so. Consequently, they may develop anxiety specifically related to language learning. The relationship between foreign language anxiety and poor language learning has been a subject of debate. While some scholars argue that poor language skills cause anxiety, others claim that anxiety is the root cause of poor language learning. In an instance, Horwitz (2001) reached a conclusion that links anxiety to poor language learning. According to her, the process of acquiring a second or foreign language necessitates taking numerous risks, which can have adverse effects on individuals' social perception. In other words, when learners make errors, they may become concerned about creating an unfavorable social impression. As a result, individuals with limited language proficiency may exhibit anxious behaviors.

Ellis (1995) also developed a model that examines the relationship between language learning experience and anxiety, along with its consequences. According to this model, when students initially start studying a foreign language (FL), they typically experience a low level of anxiety known as *trait anxiety*, which has minimal impact on their learning. However, if students encounter negative learning experiences that lead to negative expectations, they begin to develop situation-*specific anxiety*, believing that this anxiety will persist. Consequently, their performance starts to decline. Over time, disappointing performances and negative learning experiences further escalate anxiety levels, resulting in even worse performance. In essence, the model suggests that negative learning experiences and deteriorating performance contribute to an increasing cycle of anxiety.

2.2.1 The theoretical framework of Horwitz et al.

Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first to suggest that anxiety associated with acquiring a foreign language is a distinct and unique phenomenon. Their investigation resulted in establishing a theoretical framework of ‘foreign language anxiety’. In their analysis, it was emphasized that foreign language anxiety must be distinguished from general

communication anxiety. While general communication anxiety contributes to the development of foreign language anxiety, foreign language anxiety is characterized as a unique combination of self-perceptions, emotions, and behaviors that arise from the distinctive nature of the language learning process (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127). Learning a new language is such a transformative process that it shapes students' self-perception and identity. As highlighted by Brown (1994), a phenomenon known as language ego emerges during this process. This newly formed ego has the potential to create "a sense of fragility, defensiveness and a raising of inhibitions" (Brown, 1994, p.61). This also explains why foreign language lessons are at the top of the lessons where anxiety is frequently experienced. (Horwitz et al., 1991, Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). According to MacIntyre (2007) while using the target language, foreign language anxiety is related to worry and negative affective reaction emerging.

Foreign language anxiety has been examined using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In quantitative research, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The FLCAS is designed to assess foreign language classroom anxiety by capturing its three core components which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety.

The first one is communication apprehension which refers to the level of anxiety or fear that individuals experience when engaging in communication activities, such as speaking or interacting in a foreign language. It specifically pertains to the anxiety related to communication in a language-learning setting (Horwitz et al., 1991). Daly (1991) presents various hypotheses regarding the factors contributing to communication apprehension (CA). These hypotheses propose several causes for CA. Firstly, genetic susceptibility plays a role, meaning that individuals who are predisposed to anxiety are more likely to experience anxiety during communication. Secondly, the reinforcement or punishment associated with communication can impact CA. If individuals receive positive support for their communication efforts or are not penalized for breakdowns in communication, their anxiety levels tend to be lower. Thirdly, individuals who quickly acquire language skills in the early stages of learning tend to experience lower CA. Fourthly, language learners may develop a sense of helplessness. This means that repeated failures in communication reinforce feelings of inadequacy, leading to a harmful cycle of increasing communication

difficulties. Finally, a lack of suitable communication role models is identified as a cause of CA. If individuals have limited access to a supportive group of people who can help them develop their communication skills, they are more likely to experience CA.

The second anxiety related to foreign language learning is fear of negative evaluation. It refers to the concern individuals have about how others will evaluate them, leading them to hesitate in assessing situations and anticipating negative evaluations from others. This type of anxiety is similar to text anxiety but larger in scope. It extends beyond test anxiety and encompasses any social situation where evaluation takes place, such as speaking in a foreign language class or participating in a job interview. In foreign language education, ongoing evaluation by the teacher, who is often the only fluent speaker in the classroom, becomes a distinctive aspect. Learners can also be highly sensitive to evaluations made by their classmates, further contributing to their anxiety (Horwitz, 1986).

Finally, test anxiety is closely linked to foreign language anxiety (FLA) due to the constant presence of performance evaluation in foreign language classes. It stems from a fear of failure, where test-anxious learners often place unrealistic expectations on themselves and perceive any result that falls short of perfect test performance as a failure. This anxiety can significantly impact their experience in foreign language classes since tests and quizzes are frequent, and even the most talented and well-prepared learners can make mistakes. Additionally, oral tests have the potential to evoke both test anxiety and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). Test anxiety refers to the apprehension individuals feel towards academic evaluation. It can be described as a fear of failure in tests, creating an unpleasant experience that is held consciously or unconsciously by learners in various situations. Consequently, this concept is associated with the apprehension learners have towards academic evaluation, which stems from a fear of failure (Horwitz & Young, 1991).

In regards to these explanations, the research conducted by Abdullah et al., (2022) aims to find out what inspires and motivates students and whether these encouraging factors aid in helping students deal with their fears and anxieties. A survey was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of five sections: demography profile, motivation to learn, communication and apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The

questionnaire was administered to a sample of 221 students from three different disciplines at a public university in Malaysia. The findings of the study revealed that students indeed experience fear and anxiety during language lectures. However, the students' strong desire to learn motivated them to make efforts in overcoming these negative factors. As the students actively engaged in learning the Japanese language and applied their motivation and efforts, they gradually began to feel more comfortable and at ease during lectures. The research suggests that incorporating fun and interactive activities, as well as designing enjoyable lessons, can play a significant role in helping students overcome their anxieties and achieve success in mastering the language.

2.2.2 Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights the importance of addressing and managing anxiety in the foreign language classroom to facilitate effective language learning. Krashen (1982) proposes in his Affective Filter Hypothesis within second language acquisition theory that the impact of emotional factors on language learning is significant. The affective filter refers to the emotional and psychological barriers that learners may experience during the language learning process such as anxiety, self-consciousness, lack of motivation, and low self-confidence. When the affective filter is high, these emotional factors create a mental block that impedes language acquisition. Conversely, when the affective filter is low, learners are more open, relaxed, and receptive to language input, leading to improved language learning outcomes. He also suggests that a positive and supportive learning environment can help lower the affective filter and create optimal conditions for language acquisition. When learners feel comfortable, motivated, and confident, they are more likely to engage with the language, take risks, and acquire language skills more effectively.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights the importance of considering the affective domain in language instruction. Although Affective Filter includes other feelings like low self-confidence or lack of motivation, anxiety is one the most significant feelings that is capable of raising the barrier. It is normal for learners to experience a certain level of anxiety, especially when it comes to foreign language learning. However, it has been

observed that foreign language learning anxiety has a negative correlation with academic achievement and speaking skills.

To address this issue, teachers play a crucial role in creating supportive environments that encourage speaking practice and facilitate group activities, thereby enhancing learners' proficiency in the foreign language and boosting their self-confidence. Group activities are particularly beneficial for shy learners as they increase classroom interaction and provide opportunities for them to actively participate. By increasing the frequency of group activities and promoting positive interactions among learners, as well as fostering positive teacher attitudes, it is possible to reduce learner anxiety. Additionally, creating an environment that encourages classroom participation and modifying the curriculum to establish a low-risk learning environment for shy learners can effectively decrease anxiety levels. These strategies, as outlined by Oflaz (2019), aim to foster a positive and inclusive learning atmosphere, ultimately supporting learners in overcoming foreign language learning anxiety.

2.3 Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

In order to understand the phenomenon of foreign language speaking anxiety, the complexity of speaking is needed to be understood clearly. Speaking is one the four skills of language learning, commonly referred to as the macro skills. These skills are considered fundamental components of language proficiency and are often studied and assessed in language acquisition research. According to Carter & Nunan (2002), listening and reading are commonly referred to as receptive skills, whereas writing and speaking are categorized as productive skills. It is important to note that speaking stands out from writing as it is not only productive but also an interactive skill.

Nunan (2003) describes speaking as a productive skill that involves producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. It requires knowledge about the language and the skill of how to use it effectively. Speaking encompasses both accuracy and fluency, and it is an essential skill for effective communication and social interaction. According to Levelt (1989), the process of speaking involves four distinct stages: conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring. Conceptualization refers to the planning phase in which speakers organize their thoughts, drawing upon their background

knowledge of the topic and considering the speech context. Formulation involves selecting appropriate linguistic elements, such as words, phrases, and grammatical markers, to convey the intended message accurately. Articulation pertains to the physical production of sounds and words. Lastly, self-monitoring involves the speaker's active evaluation of their speech, identifying and correcting any errors or inconsistencies. However, in the context of foreign language learning, these stages can pose challenges for learners due to the lack of automaticity and familiarity with the language (Carter & Nunan, 2002). Automaticity is achieved through extensive practice and exposure to the language, which allows learners to internalize linguistic patterns and make them more readily accessible in real-time communication (Logan,1985).

According to Shumin (1997), it is necessary to develop communicative competence in order to speak a foreign language effectively. Communicative competence encompassed multiple dimensions of language use, including linguistic knowledge, sociolinguistic awareness, and pragmatic skills. Linguistic knowledge refers to the understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, enabling learners to construct meaningful utterances. Sociolinguistic awareness involves understanding appropriate language usage in diverse social and cultural contexts, such as using formal language in academic settings or informal language in casual conversations. Pragmatic skills entail the adeptness in using language to achieve specific communicative goals, such as making requests, offering advice, or expressing opinions. Brown (1994) explains that communicative competence refers to the capacity to effectively transmit and comprehend messages, as well as negotiate meanings in interpersonal interactions within particular circumstances. Through meaningful communication, learners have the opportunity to practice and refine their language skills, enhance fluency, and gain confidence in language use.

As initially mentioned in this section, the production of speech involves distinct stages within the brain. When engaging in oral communication, individuals may encounter difficulties during this process, leading to frustration and even anxiety (Tanveer, 2007). To thoroughly examine the foreign language speaking anxiety, it is necessary to identify it and explore the factors that contribute to it.

2.3.1 Defining foreign language speaking anxiety

Foreign language speaking anxiety is the worry or apprehension that language learners feel when using, speaking, or interacting in a foreign language (Li, 2022). It is a common phenomenon among learners of second or foreign languages (Akkakoson, 2016). It's also common knowledge that speaking in a foreign language is often cited as the most anxiety-producing experience for students (Young, 1990). This anxiety can negatively impact language acquisition and hinder speaking fluency (Karagol & Başbay, 2018). Young (1990) addresses that speaking in a foreign language can be more anxiety-inducing than other language skills such as reading, writing, or listening. Wilson (2006) also stated that the majority of students who are learning a language experience anxiety when speaking. MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) also argue that language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on processes of encoding, storage, and retrieval. Anxious students divide their attention between the task at hand and their reactions to it, resulting in a divided attention scenario. Anxious students may learn at a slower pace compared to relaxed students, which may hinder their ability to demonstrate their learning progress.

2.3.2 Foreign language speaking anxiety factors

In this section, the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) is explored through three primary categories: educational, individual, and environmental factors. These categories encompass a range of aspects that collectively contribute to the experience of speaking anxiety in language learning contexts.

2.3.2.1 Educational factors

Educational factors refer to aspects related to the language learning environment and instructional practices. Positive teacher attitudes, facilitating a positive classroom atmosphere and assessment procedures are significant on FLSA.

Teacher Attitudes: Learners' personal feelings towards their teachers and their perceptions of teacher-student interactions have a significant influence on learning. According to the research of Yan & Horwitz (2008), the behavior of the teacher influences the anxiety levels of students. Their qualitative research demonstrates that a teacher's sense of humor reduces students' anxiety. Similarly, the study indicates that a teacher's positive attitude

can reduce the anxiety levels of students. Williams & Burden (1997) also suggest that the type and amount of positive and negative feedback learners receive from both the teacher and their peers in the classroom impact their sense of achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy in the subject area. Consequently, the nature of feedback provided to learners holds great importance. For instance, studies have revealed that while language learners generally prefer error correction, the timing, manner, and attitude of the teacher when addressing these errors play a crucial role in the emotional well-being of the learners. Correcting errors in a harsh manner, for example, can induce anxiety. Tsui (1996) argues that students' fear of making mistakes and being negatively evaluated can be fostered by the teacher. Teachers' intolerance of silence also contributes to student anxiety in the classroom. Tsui's study found that many teachers expressed discomfort or impatience when met with silence, often repeating or modifying questions, providing answers themselves, or redirecting the question to another student. These actions were perceived by students as mild public humiliation. While the repetition of questions may be a strategy to fill silence, students may interpret it as a reminder of their incompetence. In addition, pressuring students to answer can lead to fear, hinder their thinking process, and suppress their willingness to participate. Similarly, when teachers turn to another student for an answer, it can negatively impact students' self-esteem.

Tsui (1996) notes that this is even more damaging when the first student is asked to remain standing until another student provides the correct answer. The first student may feel penalized and publicly humiliated for not being as competent as their peers. Furthermore, Williams & Burden (1997) state that feedback perceived by learners as informative rather than controlling can enhance motivation towards specific tasks by providing them with valuable information to perform current and future tasks with greater independence. Conversely, feedback perceived as controlling contributes to increased anxiety levels. A significant yet adverse relationship between motivation and anxiety is found in a recent study. Samad, Zafar & Mushtaq (2023) conducted a quantitative study with 318 participants and the findings of the study reveals that students with different motivations experience varying levels of anxiety. Higher motivation is associated with lower anxiety levels. Intrinsic motivation (motivation driven by personal interest and enjoyment) and amotivation (lack of motivation) have a more significant connection with anxiety and apprehension.

Classroom Atmosphere: The classroom atmosphere plays a significant role in shaping students' emotional well-being and their overall language learning experience. This aspect is linked with not only how the teacher interacts with the language and the students, but also their individual characteristics. According to student perspectives, anxiety levels are effectively reduced when teachers cultivate an engaging and pleasant classroom environment (Worde, 2003).

Establishing a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere encourages students to use the foreign language without having concerns about making mistakes (Saito et al., 2018). Certain classroom activities such as pair and group work, appear to be less anxiety-inducing than oral presentations. Similarly, Cheng's (2005) study investigated the relationship between language anxiety, classroom activities, and teacher attitudes. The study indicated that speaking in front of the class emerged as the most anxiety-provoking situation. Peer support and group work are suggested solutions to anxiety problems. Allowing students to check their answers with their peers helps them to have peer support as Tsui (1996) points out, is just as important as support from the teacher in creating an anxiety-free atmosphere in the classroom. Creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, promoting positive teacher-student and peer interactions, and addressing students' fear of negative evaluation can help alleviate speaking anxiety (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009).

Lack of readiness: According to research conducted by Albore (2019), students often feel anxious when required to speak in spontaneous oral sessions during class. On the contrary, preparing in advance appears to reduce this anxiety related to speaking. Engaging in rehearsals significantly supports students in improving their fluency and accuracy when speaking. Students can improve their fluency by developing a natural and fluid speaking style through regular practice. In addition, these rehearsals have a positive effect on the learners' pronunciation, intonation, and grammar, resulting in improved accuracy. Therefore, adequate preparation is unquestionably essential. A significant number of students experience frustration when asked to speak without prior notice, potentially leading to an unprepared state for their English lessons. They also believe that their active participation in classroom activities or discussing a topic extensively depend on their thorough comprehension of the lesson's subject matter or receiving clear instructions. Conversely, if they find the lesson content confusing, they chose to remain

silent. This indicates that a lack of preparation and unfamiliarity with the topic significantly contribute to the onset of speaking anxiety. Unpreparedness has been highlighted by Mak (2011), Sadeghi et al. (2013), and Tuan & Mai (2015) as a source of anxiety. Without adequate preparation, the possibility of delivering unsuccessful oral presentations is significantly increased. In addition, Brooks & Wilson (2015) related students' reluctance to speak to a lack of rehearsal opportunities. As a result, students are deprived of the positive effects that consistent practice has on their language proficiency. Particularly, the more the students' exposure to English as a foreign language, the less anxious they are when communicating in that language. This highlights the importance of gaining experience and practice in public speaking to reduce anxiety.

Assessments: Test anxiety in foreign language classes is common, as students often face frequent tests and quizzes, often making mistakes due to unfamiliar test items, formats, materials, and question types. As for Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, (1986) state anxious students often make careless errors in spelling and syntax, believing that less than a perfect performance is a failure. According to the study conducted by Phillips (1992), there is a negative correlation between language anxiety and students' performance on oral exams. Students who have higher levels of anxiety tend to speak less, use fewer dependent clauses, and use fewer target structures than students who have lower levels of anxiety, which results in lower exam grades. Additionally, he looked at the connection between attitudes and emotional responses in students and came to the conclusion that those who were extremely worried had negative attitudes concerning oral exams. Poor performance on the oral exam was a result of the interaction between the students' nervousness and their personality types, motivation, and willingness to take risks. His students felt that their abilities and performance in the foreign language were impacted by fear.

2.3.2.2 Individual factors

In this section, negative perception of self-ability, lack of motivation, lack of confidence, perfectionism, and learner beliefs is explained in order to perceive a better understanding of individual factors. However, individual factors in the context of foreign language speaking anxiety also refer to personal characteristics and traits that can significantly

influence an individual's experience of anxiety when speaking in a foreign language. These factors can also include language proficiency, prior language learning experiences, overall communication apprehension and even gender of the learner. In a recent study conducted by Suparia et al., (2022) a total of 159 students participated in the study, where the researchers utilized the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) scale. The findings revealed that female students exhibited higher levels of anxiety compared to their male counterparts when it came to speaking skills.

Negative perception of self-ability: Students may experience anxiety if they have negative self-perceptions. In addition to evaluating their own speaking abilities, Price (1991) notes that learners may experience anxiety when comparing their language proficiency to that of others. MacIntyre, Noels & Clement (1997) suggest that when learners assess their own abilities, it can facilitate learning by helping them develop strategies to improve their language competence. However, Young (1991) claims that students who initially perceive themselves as having low proficiency in a foreign language may be more susceptible to language anxiety.

Poor performance and anxiety, along with setting irrational goals and engaging in negative self-reinforcement, are outcomes of feelings of inadequacy. The relationship between anxiety and performance is influenced by the individual's perception of their own incompetence. MacIntyre, Noels & Clement (1997) discovered a negative correlation between students' perceived competence and language anxiety. As anxiety levels increased, students' ratings of expressed ideas, output quality, and self-rated competence declined. Anxious students tended to underestimate their abilities, communicate less information, and express themselves less effectively compared to more relaxed students. Anxious language learners tend to focus on their perceived shortcomings, the potential for failure, and the imagined consequences of failure rather than concentrating on the task itself. The perception of self-ability plays a crucial role in how students approach language learning and the use of a foreign language. According to Covington (1985), anxiety arises from the belief that one's abilities are inadequate for the task at hand, resulting in failure and feelings of worthlessness.

Lack of motivation: Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) proposed that high levels of anxiety might reduce motivation to learn a foreign language as the experience is perceived as distressing. Conversely, high levels of motivation lead to low levels of anxiety because students view the experience positively and tend to achieve success, thus reducing anxiety.

Lack of Confidence: In Tsui's (1996) study, a survey was conducted among students by having them complete a questionnaire regarding their participation in class. The findings revealed that 88% of the students lacked motivation to speak in English. When asked about the reasons behind this, 82% stated that they lacked confidence, while 46% mentioned not knowing what to say or how to express their thoughts. Additionally, 37% believed that their classmates' lack of English proficiency contributed to their own hesitation.

Perfectionism: Aydın (2001) proposes that learners might feel anxiety when they engage in self-evaluation and compare their own performance, leading to an internal sense of competition. In a similar vein, Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) undertook a study with the aim of exploring the connection between this form of self-competition and language anxiety. Their research particularly centered on investigating the influence of perfectionism in this context. They interviewed four students experiencing high levels of anxiety and four students with lower levels of anxiety to investigate the connection between language anxiety and perfectionism. The research took place in two phases. During the initial phase, the interviews of all eight participants were recorded on video as they responded to five straightforward conversational questions in English. In the subsequent stage, conducted one week later, all participants were asked to review their video-recorded interviews while discussing them in Spanish, their native language. The findings of the study revealed that all students who exhibited high levels of anxiety were also identified as perfectionists. Their responses indicated that they possessed a fear of receiving negative evaluations, emphasizing the significance they attached to how their peers perceived them. Concerning errors, all four highly anxious learners acknowledged their mistakes and were distressed by them. In contrast, the students with mild anxiety levels displayed a higher level of comfort while speaking and assessing their own performance.

Learner beliefs: Language learners' beliefs can be linked to foreign language anxiety and speaking anxiety. Ohata (2005) claims that that some students prioritize certain skills over others, such as grammatical structures over pronunciation or reading as the most crucial skill. These unrealistic ideas can negatively impact language achievement and lead to anxiety when they do not align with reality. Studies demonstrate that that learners hold diverse beliefs about language learning. For instance, a study conducted by Wang (1998) examined the beliefs of Chinese learners regarding learning English. The study revealed that many participants perceived English as a language of medium difficulty to learn. Furthermore, most participants acknowledged the importance of language aptitude but believed they lacked it. These beliefs not only shape learners' attitudes toward language learning but also have the potential to influence their levels of anxiety related to language acquisition and performance.

2.3.2.3 Environmental factors

Environmental factors refer to the external context in which language learning takes place. Environmental conditions, cultural and social backgrounds of the students and peer pressure in classroom environment are effective factors that raise FLSA.

Environmental conditions; Foreign language anxiety is significantly affected by environmental conditions which mainly revolve around the learning culture in an academic setting. The teaching practices employed by educators influence the culture of learning, which can affect students' perceptions of learning and contribute to anxiety levels. For example, a learning environment centered on the teacher can discourage student participation and inhibit their willingness to initiate communication (Hanifa, 2018). In addition, unfamiliar instructional methods can induce anxiety (Alsowat, 2016). Pedagogical objectives contribute to the learning culture as well. Institutions that prioritize written communication over verbal interaction tend to cultivate anxious students. In their study of EFL learners in Iran, Kasbi & Shirvan (2017) discovered that students aimed to excel on university entrance examinations, giving written tests priority over improving speaking skills. Another study by Mestan (2017), which investigated the causes of anxiety among Turkish students, revealed that many public institutions that teach English place more value on exam performance than on oral communication.

Numerous students experienced anxiety when required to speak because they lacked opportunities to practice public speaking in a competent manner in their educational system.

Another instructional policy that can contribute to EFL students' anxiety during public speaking is the prohibition of using their native language (L1). This requires students to communicate exclusively in their target language, which places a significant burden on those who are still in the beginning phases of language acquisition. In order to resolve these issues, it is crucial to foster students' language proficiency to their fullest potential by providing a supportive environment with encouragement and assistance. Certain educational systems may unintentionally foster a competitive atmosphere, generating anxiety and making students feel helpless and ashamed. Thus, careful selection of teaching methods and pedagogical objectives is crucial in creating a conducive environment that nurtures students' learning and development (Hanifa, 2018).

Cultural and social environment: The cultural background of the learners and their native language skills can hinder the acquisition process and lead to anxiety in the target language. Due to the perceived difficulty of Chinese compared to the parallels between Spanish & English, Luo (2014) contends that American students learning Chinese as a second language have higher levels of anxiety than students learning Spanish as a second language. It is a common knowledge that Chinese is far more difficult then Spanish. According to Aida's (1994) study on Japanese language learners, students learning a non-Western language like Japanese may experience higher anxiety than while learning a Western language like Spanish. Oxford (1992) also argues that learning a foreign language exposes people to the associated target culture, which might result in affective symptoms such feelings of alienation, anxiety, and grief. In comparison to students from monolingual cultures, Levine (2003) notes that students from multilingual cultures typically display lower levels of anxiety. On the other hand, Sparks & Ganschow (1991) claim that language learning difficulties encountered in one's native language may also manifest in the context of foreign language learning (FLL), leading to students' anxiety. In their study, when evaluating the native language skills of students who had difficulty acquiring a foreign language, the researchers identified difficulties with phonology and syntax. These students had effectively employed compensatory strategies in their native

language. However, when they attempted to apply these methods to acquiring a foreign language, they discovered that they were ineffective. This resulted in a crisis of confidence in their language-learning abilities, which triggered a state of panic.

Peer Pressure: In general, anxious students compare themselves to other students in the classroom and engage in competitive behavior because they do not believe that they are as valuable as others and that their communication is as effective as that of their classmates. Worde's (2003) study revealed that students experience enhanced apprehension during in-class speaking activities due to fears of potential peer criticism. Additionally, they might compete with their own expectations, which adds to the tension. Horwitz et al. (1986) found in their study that anxious students felt unable to handle the task of language learning. Additionally, they contend that competitive conduct raises anxiety levels. In Bailey's (1983) study, a thorough review of the student diaries showed that some students' self-comparison to others led to a motivating anxiety, and they studied more when they observed that their friends performed better. This is referred to as "positive competitiveness. However, when self-comparison leads to a negative competitiveness or interfered with learning, it produces severe anxiety (Zhanibek, 2001).

In conclusion, the literature on foreign language speaking anxiety has shed light on the significant impact of this phenomenon on language learners. From the various studies examined, it is evident that speaking anxiety can hinder learners' communicative abilities, impeding their language acquisition progress.

2.3.3 FLSA in Turkish EFL context

In the realm of foreign language anxiety research, Turkish scholars have made notable contributions over the years. This literature review delves into the examination of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) within a Turkish context.

One noteworthy study by Tuncer and Dogan (2015) shed light on the dynamics of FLSA in the Turkish educational landscape. Surprisingly, their findings indicated that at the beginning of preparatory classes FLSA was not a strong indicator of academic achievement. However, as the academic journey progressed, it became evident that students' anxiety levels, particularly related to speaking in language classes, played a

pivotal role in predicting academic performance. The study unveiled the powerful influence of evolving and escalating anxiety throughout English prep-education on students' academic outcomes.

Another study conducted by Tercan and Dikilitaş (2015) zoomed in on the issue of speaking anxiety among EFL learners within instructional settings. Their research advocated for the prioritization of socially non-threatening environments over high-pressure exam sessions when teaching and assessing speaking skills, as this approach was found to enhance learner performance.

Öztürk and Gürbüz (2013) probed into students' emotional experiences when speaking English in the classroom, the role of teachers in influencing this anxiety, and the ideal classroom environment from the students' perspective. Their findings revealed that anxiety negatively impacted students' self-confidence in speaking English in class, sometimes leading to avoidance. Teachers emerged as significant influencers of speaking anxiety, either positively or negatively. Students expressed a preference for a sincere classroom environment where they felt at ease while speaking.

In 2023, Bozkurt and Aydın delved into the persistence of speaking anxiety in EFL settings, highlighting the scarcity of research on how collaborative learning could impact this issue in diverse learning environments. Their study aimed to uncover the effects of collaborative tasks on the speaking anxiety of foreign language learners, both in face-to-face and online settings. The results revealed changes in speaking anxiety levels after collaborative instruction in face-to-face settings. However, interestingly, no significant differences emerged between face-to-face and online learning environments concerning the impact of collaborative instruction on learners' speaking anxiety.

Collectively, these studies provide valuable insights into the dynamics of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in Turkish educational contexts, offering potential strategies for improving language instruction and learner performance.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the research methodology used in the study, starting with the research questions and key inquiries. It then elucidates the research design, participants, data collection tools, procedures, and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to explore and understand the perceptions of a specific group of English instructors regarding the foreign language speaking anxiety experienced by their students. By focusing on the perspectives of these experienced instructors at the tertiary level in Turkey, the research aims to address the following key questions:

1) What are the impacts of speaking anxiety on classroom performance as per the teachers' observations?
2) What is the teachers' attitude towards speaking anxiety of their students and their degree of awareness?

3.2 Research Design

The study has been designed as qualitative research based on a semi-structured interview conducted with 20 Prep Class Instructors working at the School of Foreign Languages of a foundation university. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is an interpretive and naturalistic approach to understand the world, focusing on the meanings individuals attribute to social or human issues. Researchers begin with assumptions and adopt a theoretical lens to study problems, drawing conclusions from an in-depth understanding of situations. They collect data in natural settings and use inductive analysis to identify categories and themes. The final report reflects participants' voices, the researcher's reflexivity, and a composite narrative and interpretation of the problem, often serving as a call for action. Qualitative research is chosen when a complex and detailed understanding of an issue is required, allowing individuals to share their stories. It is also used to develop theories in cases where existing theories are inadequate in capturing the complexity of the examined problem for specific populations. This

methodology allows for a deep exploration and understanding of human experiences, perceptions, and motivations, contributing valuable insights to various fields of inquiry. In this regard, commonalities and patterns within participants' experiences are focused in order to provide accurate data and depict a complete description of their observations.

3.3 Participants

The present study was conducted at a foundation university which offers a full-year English preparatory class for all undergrad programs in English. The participants of this study are 20 English instructors of preparatory classes experienced in teaching from 3 to 35 years. Instructors whose teaching experience is below 3 years are excluded from this study. Both male and female instructors were eligible to participate due to their work experience and educational background. The face-to-face interviews were held within a scheduled time to explore the perceptions and attitudes of the instructors towards their students' foreign language speaking anxiety by asking open-ended opinion questions. As per ethical requirements, all participants were informed verbally so as to explain the conditions and purposes of the study along with the data collection procedure and general research agenda. Then all participants were asked to fill a consent form before the interview. All interviews took place at the library of the School of Foreign Languages except for two Zoom meetings due to health problems of related instructors. These two instructors submitted their consent forms by email.

3.4 Data Collection

In this section, data collection tools and procedures are explained which outlines the systematic approach to gathering information, ensuring reliable and valid data for insightful analyses and conclusions.

3.4.1 Data collection tools

In this study, the objective is to investigate the attitudes of EFL teachers toward speaking anxiety, the impacts of FLSA on classroom performance, and the degree of their awareness of FLSA. To achieve these goals, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed and employed as the data collection tool for the study. The questionnaire aimed

to gain insight into the teachers' experiences and observations related to their students' speaking anxiety.

All 20 participants were individually interviewed, and their responses were recorded with their consent. The interviews were later transcribed and subjected to detailed analysis. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, follow-up questions and additional inquiries were incorporated during the interviews whenever necessary.

Strauss & Corbin (1990) propose that conducting 5 or 6-hour interviews would yield sufficient information to reach data saturation, meaning that no new significant insights or themes emerge. While each interview in this study lasted an average of 25 minutes, the cumulative duration of almost 8 hours of recorded interviews adequately fulfills the requirement for data saturation. This comprehensive approach allows for a thorough exploration of the teachers' attitudes towards students' speaking anxiety, providing valuable insights and contributing to the understanding of this important phenomenon in EFL contexts.

3.4.2 Data collection procedure

The semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of 2021-2022 academic year, specifically during the summer break when the participants had available time to allocate for the study. To create a safe and comfortable environment for the participants, the interviews were held in an isolated location. During this process, the researcher reassured the participants about the confidentiality of their responses and personal information.

To protect the privacy and anonymity of the participants, the researcher implemented various measures. Instead of using real names, codes starting with T and a number (T1; T5, etc.) were assigned to each participant. This ensured that their identities remained undisclosed in the data analysis and reporting. Additionally, the researcher securely stored and handled the collected data, taking precautions to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive information (Antony et al., 2021). By adhering to these ethical considerations, the study upholds the principles of research integrity and respects the rights and well-being of the participating EFL teachers.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The interviews were conducted in English with all participants. Every word used by the participants holds significant value, as it reflects their consciousness. Their thoughts, beliefs, and values are conveyed through the words they choose. Substituting or paraphrasing their words could inadvertently alter or replace their unique perspectives, leading to a potential misrepresentation of their views (Seidman, 2006, p.114). Data analysis, in accordance with Creswell's guidelines (2013), involves a systematic and rigorous process of examining the collected information to draw meaningful conclusions and uncover valuable insights. Creswell emphasizes the importance of organizing and managing the data efficiently to facilitate a comprehensive analysis. He suggests that qualitative data analysis is a sequential process involving multiple levels of analysis. The first step involves organizing and preparing the data, which includes transcribing interviews, scanning material, and cataloging visual material. The second step is to read the data to understand its meaning and general ideas. The third step involves coding the data, which involves organizing it by bracketing chunks and writing a word representing a category in the margins. Themes or categories, which appear as major findings in qualitative studies, can be generated using the coding process. These themes should display multiple perspectives from individuals and be supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence. The fourth step is to represent the description and themes in the qualitative narrative.

Consequently, the data analysis was carried out by following these four-step procedures as outlined above. Each question has been grouped separately. The data has been collected and organized based on the patterns or similarities in their answers. The codes, categories and themes have been generated from the answers of the participants in order to draw meaningful conclusions. Figures, tables and quotes from the interviews have been used as adjuncts to discussions.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS and DISCUSSIONS

The results of the findings are laid out in this chapter. The collected data is analyzed and interpreted so as to address the research questions. First of all, demographic information of the participants is presented and then findings from open-ended questions are reported. The close-ended questions are extended in detail with their reasons.

4.1 Results of Demographic Questions

The demographic information of the participants plays an important role to have an understanding of their profile and competence in answering the related questions.

As shown above in Table 2, out of 20 teachers, 6 teachers have job experience of 3 to 10 years, 8 of them have job experience of 11 to 21 years and 6 of them have experience of more than 20 years. The majority of the group consisted of well-experienced instructors of English. While the least experienced one has an experience of 3 years, the most experienced one has an experience of 35 years.

Table 2. Work Experience of Participant Teachers

Years of experience	**3-10**	**11-21**	**22+**
Number of teachers	**6** (T4-T10-T12-T14-T17-T19)	**8** (T1-T2-T5-T6-T7-T8-T11-T15)	**6** T3-T9-T13-T16-T18-T20)

As shown in Table 3, 11 teachers out of 20 were graduated from faculty of literature and 9 of them graduated from faculty of education.

Table 3. Graduated Faculty and Departments of Participant Teachers

Literature	English Language and Literature	**9** (T1-T2-T3-T6-T8-T9- T10-T15-T20)
	American Culture and Literature	**1** (T14)
	Comparative Literature	**1** (T19)
Education	English Language Teaching	**9** (T4-T5-T7-T11-T12- T13-T16-T17-T18)

As presented in Table 4, 5 teachers have completed their bachelor's degree, 14 teachers have graduated from a master's program and 1 from a doctorate degree.

Table 4. Highest Level of Education of Participant Teachers

BA	**5**	T1-T3-T7-T8-T17
MA	**14**	T2-T4-T5-T6-T9-T10-T12-T13- T14-T15-T16-T18-T19-T20
PhD	**1**	T16

4.2 Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Awareness of EFL Teachers

In order to gain a better understanding of the level of awareness among teachers regarding foreign language anxiety (FLA) and its impact on their students, a series of questions were posed to determine their observations and knowledge on the subject matter.

4.2.1 Level of anxiety on each skill

Since the language based on four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, 16 teachers out of 20 stated that speaking is the skill which students feel the most anxious about. The remaining four teachers also indicated that as productive skills, both speaking and writing are the ones that students feel anxious about. None of the teachers mentioned about the anxiety of receptive skills.

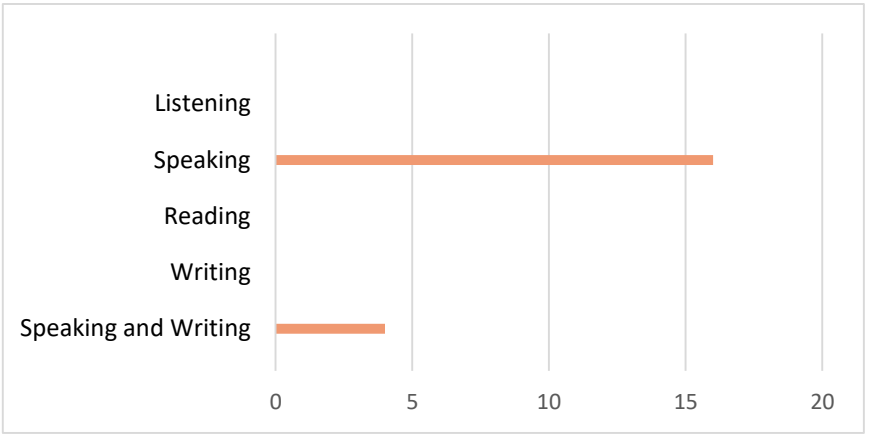


Figure 1a. Students' Anxiety Levels Based on Skill

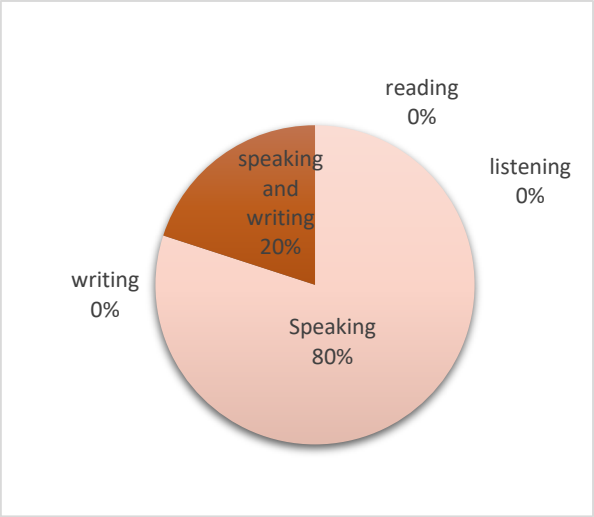


Figure 1b. Students' Anxiety Levels Based on Skills

As it is shown in Figures 1a and 1b, listening and reading were not identified as skills that cause anxiety, as indicated by zero percentages for both. This information suggests that speaking is the skill that generates the highest level of anxiety among students, followed by writing and receptive skills (listening and reading) seem to be less anxiety-provoking for students according to the teachers' perspectives.

> Because speaking is about production and there is no way that you can just take it back. So if there is a mistake that they make, they cannot take it back and it just makes them feel embarrassed, anxious, so it can cause lots of problems... Even though writing is also production there's always a way to correct it but in speaking it's not possible for most of the students. (T4)

> They feel anxious because they always try to... you know... make the correct sentences try to make grammatically correct sentences and also they worry about their pronunciation and so when I take all these into account, yes, speaking is the one which is the most problematic for them. (T8)

"(...)I think that the important factor is low self-esteem and low self-confidence" (T15).

> (...) we really need to be able to construct sentences in writing, they have time to think about what they're going to write but in speaking, it should be much more on the spot. That's why as a production skill speaking makes them more anxious. (T17)

> I think a way to speak your language fluently requires a random process because the brain works this way, when you put more effort to speak, it becomes more difficult because we learn our mother tongue instinctually that's why we're so sure and we never think about the grammatical rules or a phrases we need to use and we know how to speak with a friend in daily life, how to speak in a meeting. First, we learn the language instinctually and in the upcoming years, we use it, we know where to use the language in different occasions but especially for a beginner or if you're an intermediate level, it's not that easy, because there are lots of things you have to keep up with the speech at the same time so it makes them anxious. (T20)

"I think speaking and writing both of them, because they are productive skills students need to produce something so that's why it always makes them more anxious and nervous while doing so" (T12).

4.2.2 Defining FLSA from EFL teachers' perspectives

All participating instructors were able to provide distinct views and perspectives on the FLSA by relying on their individual experiences and in-class observations. Their definitions were likely influenced by the specific situations and challenges they encountered in their teaching roles and their professional experiences. This suggests that the teachers' definitions of the FLSA were not merely abstract or theoretical, but rather grounded in the practical realities of their daily work as educators.

"(...) Anxiety is a major issue in classrooms and a lot of students struggle with that" (T1).

> Learners are in a social context and they have to use this language that they're trying to learn is not a very easy thing, considering it is also very hard to speak in your own native language in front of an audience. So there are a lot of physiological language wise, a lot of problems. (T2)

"(...) whenever we speak, even in Turkish, expressing our ideas, we may feel the same kind of anxiety so it is related with speaking to public" (T3).

"(...)if a student... if a kid let's say... if they are very perfectionist, they always hesitate to speak because they know that they will be judged" (T4).

> (...)From my own my personal observations and in class I can say that students find it difficult to find they find the I find ideas actually talk about difficult. That's major. That's one of the major things that make their job difficult in speaking that's at least what they tell me. At lower levels, they find it most of the time is difficult to piece together different language chunks and build up full sentences. So it's most of the time just basic sentence structures. So I think that's another thing that makes them anxious because they are actually trying to translate or they are trying to, you know, come up with something grammatically correct. So they it makes it makes them anxious. (T5)

"I just heard it and in some books was I don't know any detailed description of it. If it is something that the anxiety the kinds of anxiety that causes an obstacle to speak"T6.

> Basically, it's the fear of making mistakes. Especially for our students, as they're young adults. Their main fear is to be laughed at when they make a mistake. It can be spelling or pronunciation mistakes or grammar mistake, doesn't matter. Their main fear is to be laughed at. They think their peers will laugh at them if they make a mistake. So they prefer to listen to their friends and keep silence generally. (T7)

"Not being fluent enough... Not being fluent and not being confident. That' all I think" (T8).

> If you're asking from literature, I don't know much about it. I can guess what it means what it refers to... if they are afraid of finding the correct words, or if they're not sure how to make proper sentences or you know, phrases. This is called I think, speaking anxiety... you should have speaking anxiety I suppose. (T9)

> It depends on the disposition of the person. Certain people might have it. I can't remember now the exact term but have such a phobia, phobia... speaking phobia, and they may not like even talk to me from in front of the people or talking to

> people. So, that affects their anxiety and especially in let's say public when they are talking in front of the audience, that speaking anxiety will definitely hinder their ability to speak. So that's a great issue, especially for teenagers. they would not be able to speak so well, or they would not, let's say take just speak maybe because they are afraid that they will make certain mistakes in grammar and also pronunciation of the words. So they prefer not to speak at all them so that's the problem. (T15)

"(...) I always hear this from students as well, that they feel anxious and they say that "they generally forget what they know, once they need to speak" T17.

> (...) Especially in the prep program, the students have problem and struggle with speaking classes and the main concern is the speaking anxiety level and the factor that they have so that's why as a result, during the years what I've seen is we should build off student's affective domain while working on the speaking lessons so that they get rid of the anxiety because it hinders the second language learning or the foreign language learning in our classes. (T18)

> I think they are afraid of making mistakes when they speak. They are worried about sometimes their accent or they're worried about their grammar. Maybe they can read and understand maybe right but when speaking, they sometimes they go blank and they can't talk. Maybe they're afraid of being judged by the other person. (T19)

In addition, %95 of the participating teachers, specifically 19 out of 20, reported that foreign language anxiety is indeed prevalent among their students. However, one teacher expressed a contrasting view and stated that she had been teaching students with a higher level of English, which might be the possible reason behind this low anxiety level.

4.2.3 FLSA raising factors

In this part of the study, the codes and categories were generated from the answers of the participants to related interview questions. Within FLSA raising factors theme, a total of 21 codes and 3 categories were classified and these findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Codes and Categories of the Teachers' Perspectives About Factors that Raise FLSA

Theme	Categories	Codes
FLSA Factors	Educational	Oral exams
		Teachers
		Educational background
		Error correction
		Lack of practice
		Direct feedback
		Peer pressure
	Individual	Lack of self confidence
		Shyness
		Perfectionism
		Fear of making mistakes
		Fear of embarrassment
		Fear of being judged by other people
		Being introvert
		Health problems
		Age (being younger or older)
	Environmental	Cultural background
		Classmates
		Classroom atmosphere
		Lack of exposure to language
		Number of people around

I remember having older students feel more confident and have more knowledge about topics and they would... they will talk a lot more but on the other hand, I had all the students who, because of being older than the classmates, would just hide in the corner and they wouldn't draw attention to themselves. So age can be a factor as well, definitely. (T1)

If the student is a perfectionist, it's kind of a characteristics so it's an individual cause. However, if your teacher doesn't want you to make any mistakes, and if he teases you and if your class too, it makes it educational and environmental because you see a lot of people are talking about mistakes and stuff and you might feel embarrassed while just trying to produce your language. So I think all of them are possible to have. (T4)

Sometimes students come from different educational backgrounds and some of them have you know, a higher level even if they are, you know, streamed in the same line, you know, I mean, perhaps given, you know, registered in stream one or two or three, that the abilities vary in speaking classes, so there may be that educational background factor figuring in their speaking classes. The second would be I think, again, individual. Yeah, individual because speaking as a skill speaking requires a little bit of you know, traits, like being outgoing or talkative, not shying away from, you know, everyday conversations. Students with those skills are definitely better speakers in class. So I think that personality trait comes into play, you know, or those kinds of personality traits come into play, and speaking classes, and environmental factor is definitely very significant, and I'd rank it in the third place. And when I think, correct me if I'm wrong, maybe I'm taking it in the wrong way, but environmental means as far as I see it, it's about the context. The student disjointed in which means being surrounded by people or having someone having a peer for instance, as a as a as an interlocutor. You know, as the person between there talking, or having a teacher, perhaps as an interlocutor, so those things, you know, maybe having a heavy gun, a friendly environment in class, you know, those factors definitely have an impact on the students speaking. (T5)

First of all, their cultural background has an important role on their anxiety level. When they shouldn't make mistakes, they should I mean, make perfect sentences in front of others. This is something environmental does something cultural, then they have may have some individual fears, their personality, as you know, we have different learners in our classroom. So some of them are introverts, some of them are extroverts. So it may affect their anxiety level. (T7)

Self Confidence, their disposition, whether they have in their previous studies tried to speak the language or not, I mean, some of them from the very beginning, even though given chances would not want speak in English so that might affect also the stress or other kinds of stressors like peer pressure sometimes, because some people some of their friends, if they don't speak

> English, they wouldn't want their friends to speak English to give a try so that peer pressure may also affect their ability to speak. (T13)
>
> I think correcting them all the time or so often makes them more anxious and maybe making them speak in front of a public or their friends... and if the group is big, that also makes them more anxious. In a small group, they feel a little more comfortable speaking, or if it's only with one teacher, for instance, they are much more comfortable. So I think it depends on the number of people around them and the way that they are corrected or how much they're corrected. I think these two factors are the things that come to my mind, you know, that raise their anxiety a lot. (T14)
>
> Interrupting the students is one of the factors for example, the student is speaking or giving a lecture in front of all of the students are in front of the teacher, but you know, interrupting most of the time, for example, for correcting something error correction, I mean, even correcting the pronunciation and correcting the grammatical I mean, grammatically correcting them, it makes them feel more anxious, you know, so, there should be less interaction. Again, it really it depends, for example, on the level of the students, I mean, the age of the students all of them are related. (T15)

The participants were also requested to assign rankings to the categories based on their perceived level of importance. As shown in Table 6, the results revealed that environmental factors were regarded as the most significant, followed by individual factors in the second position, while educational factors were considered *the least significant* among the identified elements that induce anxiety.

Table 6. Ranking of FLSA Categories

Participants	#1 Factor	#2 Factor	#3 Factor
T1	individual	environmental	educational
T2	environmental	individual	educational
T3	individual	environmental	educational
T4	educational	individual	environmental
T5	educational	individual	environmental
T6	environmental	individual	educational
T7	environmental	individual	educational
T8	environmental	educational	individual
T9	individual	educational	environmental
T10	educational	individual	environmental
T11	environmental	educational	individual
T12	educational	individual	environmental
T13	individual	environmental	educational
T14	environmental	educational	individual
T15	individual	educational	environmental
T16	individual	environmental	educational
T17	individual	educational	individual
T18	educational	environmental	educational
T19	environmental	individual	educational
T20	environmental	individual	educational

Sometimes students come from different educational backgrounds and some of them have you know, a higher level even if they are streamed in the same line, you know, I mean, perhaps given... you know, registered in stream one or two or three, that the abilities vary in speaking classes, so there may be that educational background factor figuring in their speaking classes. The second would be I think, again, individual. Yeah, individual because speaking as a skill speaking requires a little bit of you know, traits, like being outgoing or talkative, not shying away from, you know..., everyday conversations. Students with those skills are definitely better speakers in class. So I think that personality trait comes into play, you know, or those kinds of personality traits come into play in speaking classes, and environmental factor is definitely very significant, and I'd rank it in the third place. And when I think, correct me if I'm wrong, maybe I'm taking it in the wrong way, but environmental means as far as I see it eeee...,

it's about the context the student situated in which means being surrounded by people or having someone having a peer for instance, as an interlocutor. You know, as the person between there talking, or having a teacher, perhaps as an interlocutor, so those things, you know, maybe having friendly environment in class, you know, those factors definitely have an impact on the students speaking. (T5)

I think when they're in a classroom, they have their peers with them. I think they get nervous around their friends so the classroom environment. Also maybe the teacher could also be a factor. Maybe a more friendly teacher would make it easier, but maybe a more serious or strict looking teacher could make them more anxious but also I know that I think about it, maybe it could be individual as well. There could be individual factors too. Maybe the student could have general anxiety so that could affect their academic speaking. (T19)

Well, as I said before, it's a production skill and it is on the spot. So it, it just requires quick thinking and quick answering. So maybe lack of practice actually raises anxiety in students. Also, maybe because of the feedback they receive, they're feeling anxious as well because sometimes they remember teachers or maybe peers that actually pick on their mistakes and that's why when they're speaking they feel anxious also pronunciation of words also make them makes them very anxious and making mistakes in general, while speaking makes them very anxious as well. (T17)

4.3 Impacts of Speaking Anxiety on Classroom Performance

This part of the study summarizes the focus of the investigation on how speaking anxiety affects students' classroom performance based on the observations of teachers.

4.3.1 Manifestations of anxiety on EFL students

The participants were asked for their insights to inquire into the physical and emotional manifestations of anxiety among their students. The replies were subjected to a thorough examination, which resulted in the identification of a total of 16 unique codes. These codes were then used to place the manifestations under the scope of these two categories;

physical and emotional. The participants' statements collectively indicated that the experience of anxiety functioned as a comprehensive descriptor encompassing a range of negative emotions, such as sadness, embarrassment, and stress. Moreover, it was observed that the physical manifestations reported by the participants were attributable to these adverse emotional states.

Table 7. Codes and Categories of Manifestations of Anxiety on EFL Students

Theme	Categories	Codes
Manifestations of Anxiety on EFL Students	Physical	Stuttering Sweating Blushing Faltering voice Shaking Avoiding eye contact Looking at floors, ceilings... Use of hands Playing with pens, jewelries Freezing Coughing like sounds
	Emotional	Embarrassment Being sad Being stressed Feeling humiliated by others Discomfort

"(...) if your face blushes, this is something okay, physical, but the beginning point is your feelings" (T3).

"They feel sad... Yes, they feel sad because they can't talk... They usually try to like shut down themselves. They try to shut down themselves and make it look normal" (T14).

> They skip their eyes. First of all, they don't like looking into your eyes while they're speaking. Because they're not fluent. Because they're all always they're hesitating. They're always shaking their hands like this. And they're looking at the ceiling while they're thinking about the word or it's also the same when you're talking in your own native language. People just don't like looking into your eyes while they're speaking because they're shy. (T6)

> Most of the time. They're so anxious they're chewing their fingers or the pen, the top of their pen. Or, I don't know, they're tapping with their fingers on desks. They're shaking their legs, I mean, shaking their hands and that hands up sweating. (T15)

"I think anxiety comes up with different forms for all different students, some of them can laugh, to hide their anxiety, some of them can be angry, some of them can be anxious so, it is in different forms" (T16).

> They experience fear when they're speaking so, fear of making mistakes, fear of getting mocked, or laughed at so, they kind of eeee... sometimes even I have seen students that kind of eee... have a phobia in speaking, you know, they just try to escape speaking as much as they can, because they feel very uncomfortable when they're speaking in English. (T17)

> Mostly they are emotional rather than the physical. They play with their hands, they might stutter physically, but the back side is actually behind the doors it's actually emotional and that's why they might be really embarrassed... they might sometimes stop and don't do the activity instead of crying or getting out of the class, you know, because of the high emotion... Also it might turn sometimes into a problem of jealousy with peer pressure because some of the students are fluent. (T18)

"...but I can understand their emotional state by the physical manifestation mostly" (T20).

4.3.2 Analyzing students' anxiety levels in English speaking contexts

In this part of the interview, the participants were posed six sub-questions related to question number 10, which inquired about the extent of anxiety experienced by their students when engaging in spoken English. The participants were prompted to indicate the level of anxiety on a scale consisting of the descriptors "very high," "high," "average," or "poor". Furthermore, the participants were further prompted to provide elaboration and reasoning behind their chosen anxiety level for a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors contributing to their students' anxiety levels. Understanding these

anxiety patterns can help provide strategies to better support students in managing different situations.

The following figures 2a and 2b demonstrate the observations of the participant teachers when their students cannot find the relevant words while speaking.

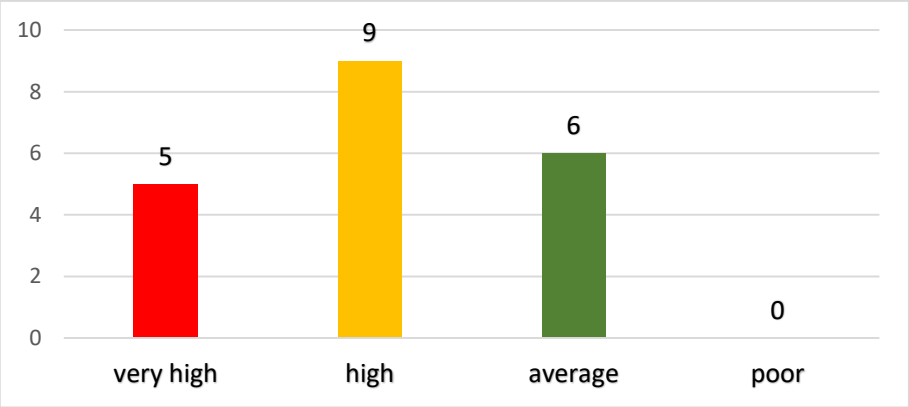


Figure 2a. Students' Anxiety Levels About Word Recalling Difficulties

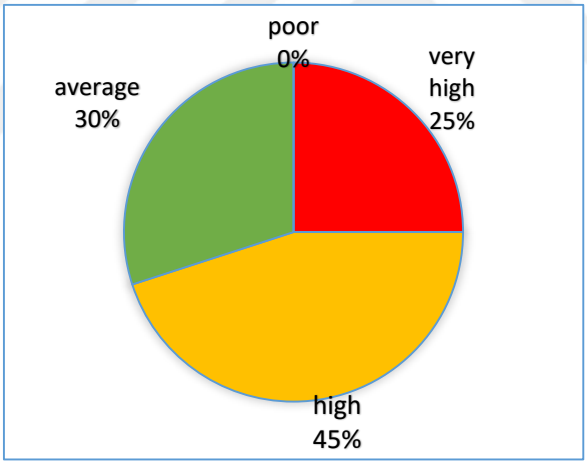


Figure 2b. Students' Anxiety Levels About Word Recalling Difficulties

In Figures 2a and 2b, it is evident that among the participant teachers, 25% perceived their students' anxiety level as very high, 45% as high, and 30% considered it average when students struggled to remember relevant words during speaking activities. Notably, 70% of the participating teachers indicated that their students' anxiety level was either very high or high, with none of the teachers classifying it as poor.

> When they can't remember the word I think it's high. I think in Turkey, Turkish students they get very anxious when they can't remember the word and they show

it with their body language, they show their facial expressions, and they even start speaking Turkish immediately they switch to Turkish you know, so they really try very hard to look for that specific word. (T1)

I think it's very high. Because then they start and I think it happened to me too. If they cannot find the word there, then they started thinking in Turkish and then they completely lose the language in their minds. So it is really hard to change it from Turkish to English again, and then they got confused and they have a very high anxiety level then. (T4)

It's the same for us too. Sometimes even during this interview, I couldn't remember that, you know, specific word that I want to use so I think it depends on how long it takes to remember it. If you can't really remember, of course, very high. (T7)

I will say not high actually average something normal, you know, vocabulary is okay. I mean, in terms of anxiety, it is not something to be ashamed of. Yeah, I would say average in their perspective. They don't feel too much ashamed, they are okay. (T10)

Average because if it's just one word that they can't remember, and if they are given a clue, they might remember it or they might be taught that specific word directly as well so when they are stuck with one word, for instance, they are not so anxious. (T14)

Figures 3a and 3b illustrate the participants' remarks regarding the anxiety levels experienced by their students when they cannot pronounce the words correctly.

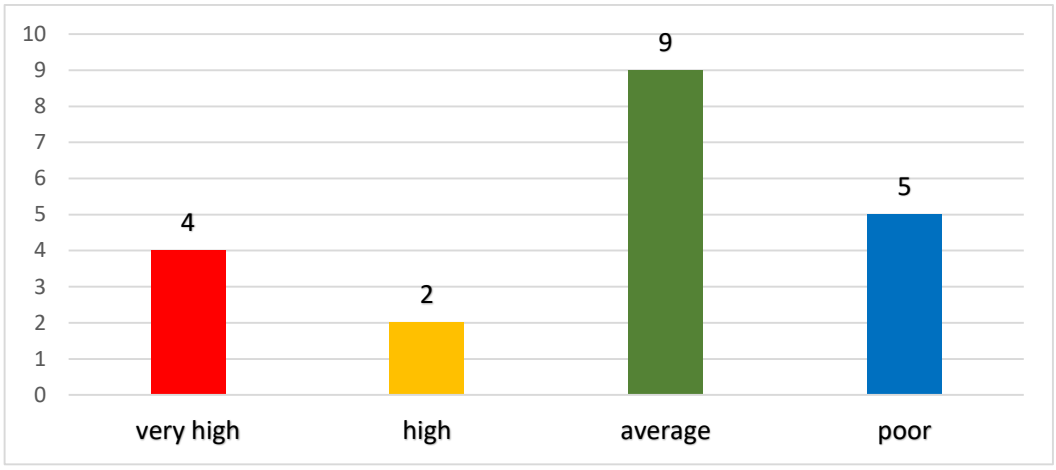


Figure 3a. Students' Anxiety Levels About Pronunciation Proficiency

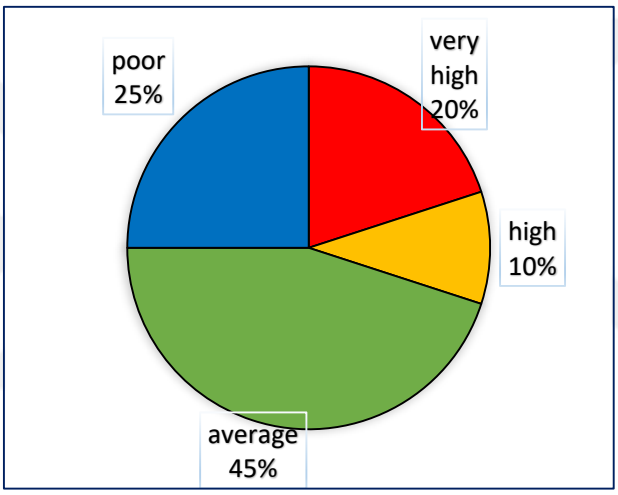


Figure 3b. Students' Anxiety Levels About Pronunciation

According to the responses provided by the participant teachers, 45% of them perceived their students' anxiety levels to be at an average level when facing difficulties in pronouncing words correctly. Meanwhile, 10% of the teachers reported the anxiety levels to be high, and 20% characterized it as very high under similar circumstances. Additionally, 25% of the teachers expressed the belief that their students' anxiety levels were poor when encountering pronunciation challenges.

"Poor... They don't even know if they don't know what the correct pronunciation is. They don't even notice that they make a mistake" (T2).

"If they're aware of it, their anxiety level is very high actually because they worry about other people making fun of them" (T8).

I will say very high... I think it's special to Turkish people. We are so obsessed with the correct pronunciation. I don't know why. It should have some explanation I suppose. I don't know why we are so obsessed with it. (T10)

I think it's average because sometimes they think it's the correct pronunciation so they're not aware of it. But if they're in with their peers, and if they laugh, or if they make it if he or she realizes maybe higher but I think average. (T19)

Figures 4a and 4b present the charts derived from the participants' responses, reflecting their observations of situations in which their students encounter challenges in constructing proper sentences.

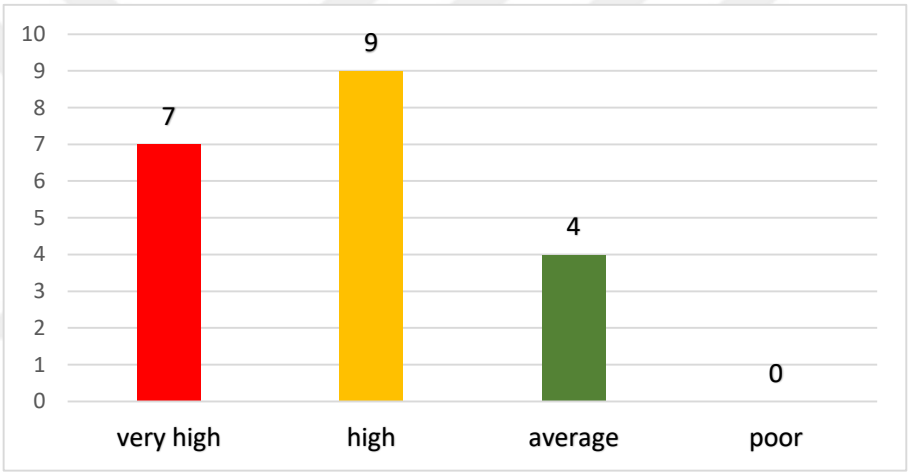


Figure 4a. Students' Anxiety Levels About Sentence Construction Proficiency

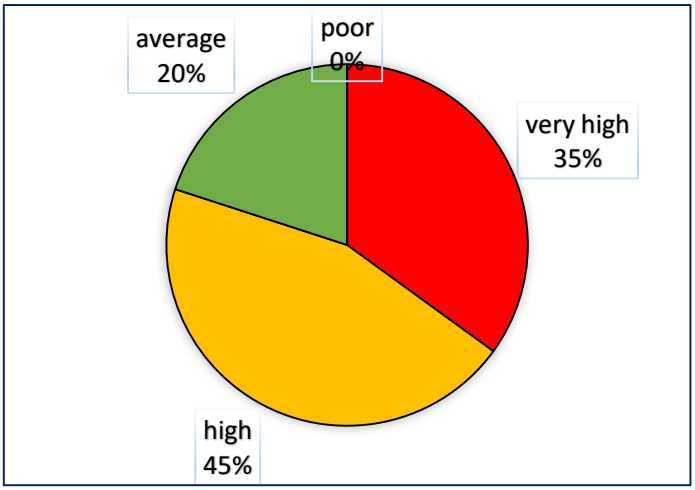


Figure 4b. Students' Anxiety Levels About Sentence Construction Proficiency

Based on the participants' perspectives, the inability to construct accurate sentences exerts significant stress on students. Among the participant teachers, 80% reported that their students experienced high and very high levels of anxiety, while 20% perceived an average level of anxiety. None of the participants indicated that their students' anxiety levels were categorized as poor.

> Very high and it is definitely because of the structure of the language, the Turkish language and English language, they differ in so many ways and they try to copy that so much that actually gives them a problem, you know, so I would say definitely very high. When it is compared to their languages and they don't realize that there is no connection between them, you need to get away from Turkish now and try to make up your own English sentences as I've been trying to teach that but it's very difficult for them to accept therefore it is absolutely very high. (T1)

> I think they really care about grammar. Grammatically correct sentences too much instead of being fluent, you know, making grammatically correct sentences so that's why when they cannot make such proper sentences, they feel very, very anxious. Their anxiety level is very high. (T8)

"High I'd say but you know depends on the student and how much the teachers value grammar in that in that class..." (T13).

"I think this one is might be high because they try to make sentences instead of telling what they want to say with just words. So when they can't make full sentences they feel more anxious" (T14).

Figures 5a and 5b present the participants' observations of their students' anxiety levels when they speak in front of their classmates. The findings distinctly indicate that speaking among classmates significantly induces anxiety in learners. According to the indicated results, 45% of participants reported very high anxiety levels, 45% reported high anxiety levels, 10% reported average anxiety levels, while none reported poor anxiety levels in such a situation.

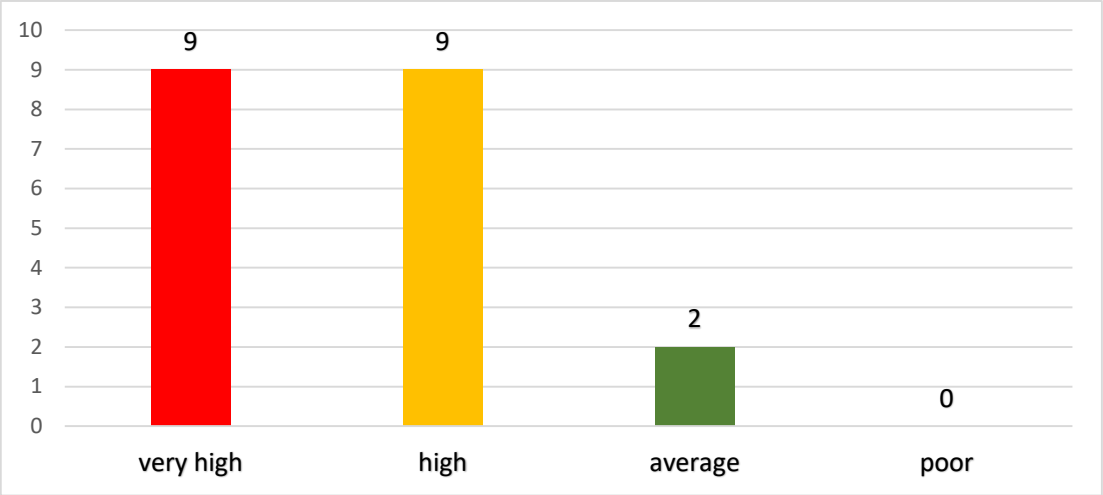


Figure 5a. Students' Anxiety Levels When Speaking in Front of Their Classmates

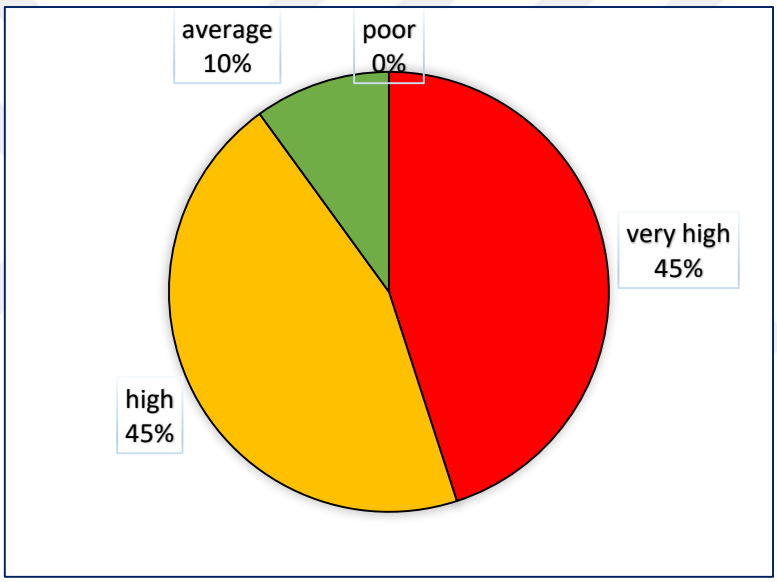


Figure 5b1. Students' Anxiety Levels When Speaking in Front of Their Classmate

It is social pressure. Let me say not necessarily peer pressure but it is the environment itself what the environment makes these people feel. It could be even the teacher, not necessarily that fear... So the fear of being judged the fear of being punished, maybe things like that. (T2)

I think very high because the most important the most difficult thing for them is speaking in front of the classmates...eee... while speaking one to one by teacher, they don't. I think they feel more safe or I don't know what they feel in front of their classmates because they are their peers, I don't know or maybe because of

> their age or their emotions, they don't want to feel ashamed so that's why it is very high, I think. (T12)

"They're afraid of feeling ashamed and embarrassed in front of people and they are not aware of the fact that you know, they are going to learn by making mistakes. It's a normal part of learning a language" (T15).

"Normally high because it's difficult to speak in front of their mates. Because they don't want to make mistakes and they don't want to... they don't want to see other people make fun of them" (T16).

"There are some effective barriers in their brain but when you just make the same students stand up and turn their faces... facing the class then everything changes completely. They just raise anxiety level" (T18).

> (...) if they are very integrated with the class because when they get to know each other, we know that for example, Student A is not good at pronunciation or Student B is not an attentive student and everybody knows it. So they become not to feel that anxiety in general, I can say average. (T20)

Figures 6a and 6b 12 show the participants' focus on anxiety levels experienced by students when delivering prepared speeches.

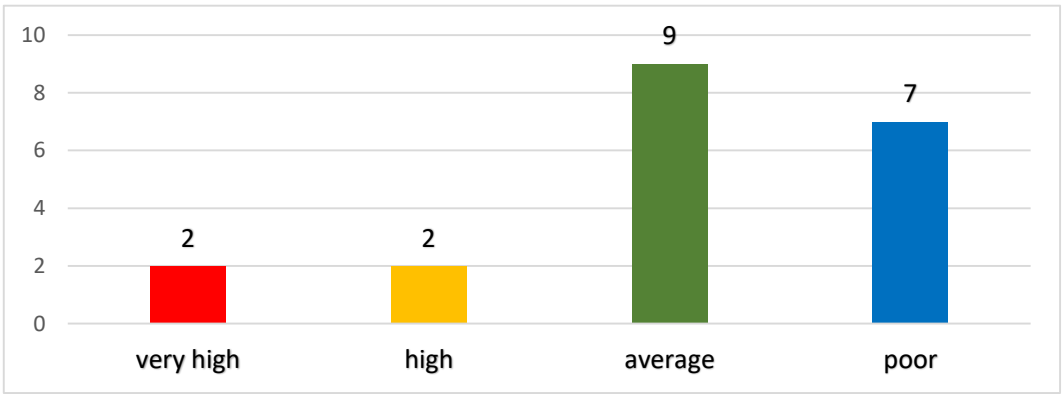


Figure 6a. Students' Anxiety Levels During Prepared Speech Delivery

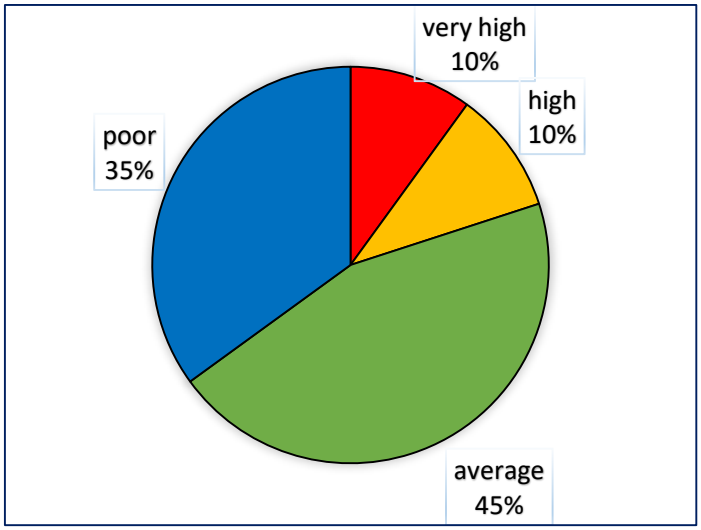


Figure 6b. Students' Anxiety Levels During Prepared Speech Delivery

Significantly, providing students with some preparation time appears to result in reduced anxiety levels. Among the participants, 10% reported that their students experienced very high anxiety levels, while another 10% stated high anxiety levels. Furthermore, 45% of the participants indicated that their students' anxiety levels were at an average level, whereas 35% perceived poor anxiety levels in the given situation.

"I think it decreases when you give them time because they try to make a brainstorm or try to look for the ways to convey that message. So I mean, less than very high again, just say high, still high" (T6).

> This is something we do very often actually as when we prepare the students for IELTS exam for example, this is one of the sections they are given one minute and then they have to speak for two minutes. Of course, they feel more confident. So their anxiety level is average. (T9)

"I think it can be poor, because when they have time, they think beforehand, they may take notes they prepared themselves. They may find the relevant words for example, and then they are ready while speaking" (T12).

"I think poor. Because we're living in a very advanced technology times, so when you're given time, they search they serve the net, so they can find at least one or two good sentences so they don't feel anxious" (T20).

The final figures 7a and 7b highlight the investigation of anxiety levels experienced by students when faced with spontaneous questions. The study examines how students' anxiety levels may vary when asked questions without prior preparation. Categorizing anxiety levels as "very high," "high," "average," or "poor" in this context can provide insights into the impact of spontaneity on students' ability to handle unexpected situations and their overall comfort in responding to unanticipated inquiries.

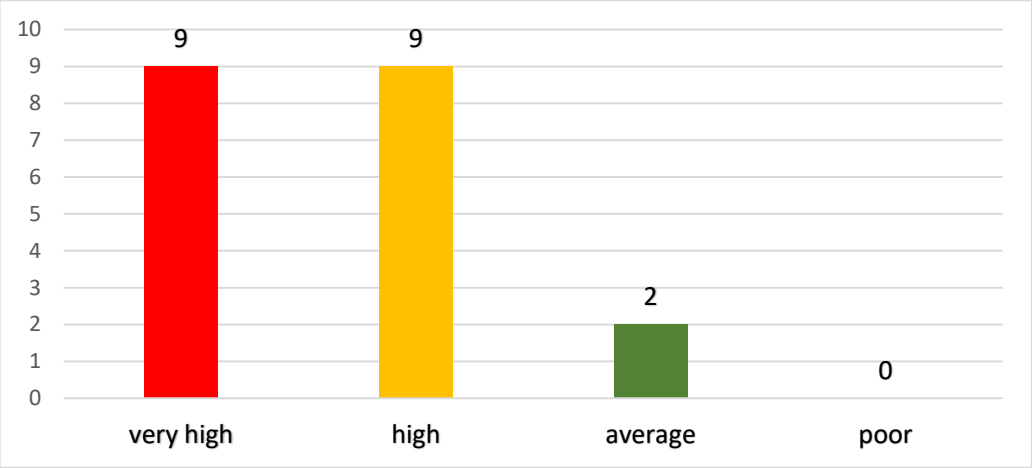


Figure 7a. Students' Anxiety Levels in Response to Spontaneous Questions

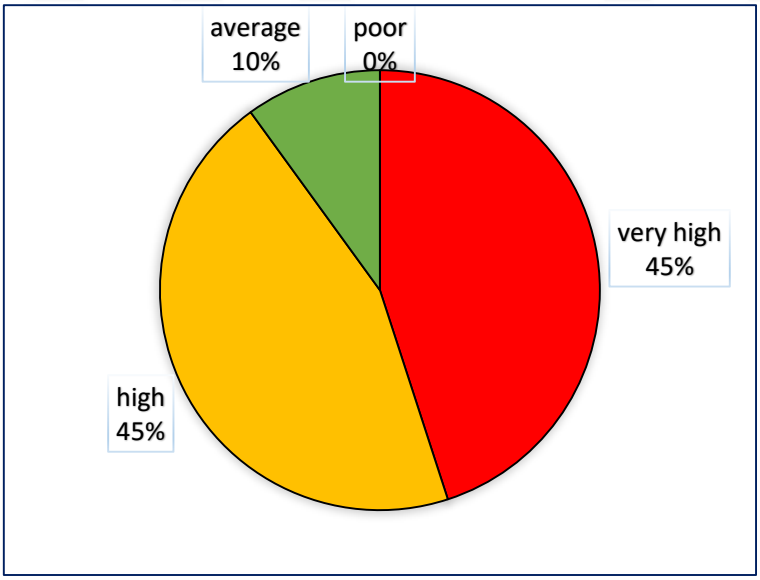


Figure 7b. Students' Anxiety Levels in Response to Spontaneous Questions

When queried about their students' anxiety levels, 45% of the participants reported very high anxiety, while an equal proportion of 45% indicated high anxiety. In total, the majority of participants concurred that their students experienced notably elevated

anxiety levels when faced with spontaneous questions. Conversely, 10% of the respondents reported average anxiety levels, and none attributed poor anxiety levels to this situation.

> This time, it depends on the question if the question actually is something which they can directly relate to their personal, daily life, let me say then they don't have any anxiety but if we ask them something about more abstract situation, something that they haven't experienced in their lives, then this becomes high and very high. (T6)

> It is very high. Because during the lessons when we ask even if it's a basic question, like "Which page are we on?" These are some basic questions but when students hear the question, spontaneous question during the lesson for example, they really feel anxiety that's and it causes speaking gigs it so it's very high. (T12)

"It's very high. It's very high definitely because they don't expect it something unexpected. And they immediately need to find the words and can make sentences and that's why they get so anxious" (T14).

"High because you are not prepared. So they're trying to build up sentences spontaneously, and it is the most difficult activity for them" (T20).

4.4 Teachers' Attitudes Towards Students' Speaking Anxiety and Coping Strategies

This section examines the perspectives of teachers regarding their students' speaking anxiety and the strategies they employ to help students cope with it. The aim is to gain insights into how teachers address speaking anxiety in the classroom.

When asked whether they have ever had open or private conversations with their students about anxiety and its effects on the body in general and school performance in particular, 17 of 20 participant teachers responded affirmatively, with positive outcomes. Among the teachers, 5 expressed a preference for holding private conversations with their students, while 6 preferred open discussions. Additionally, 6 teachers indicated that they

employed both private and open approaches, while 3 teachers stated that they had never chosen to address their students' foreign language speaking anxiety.

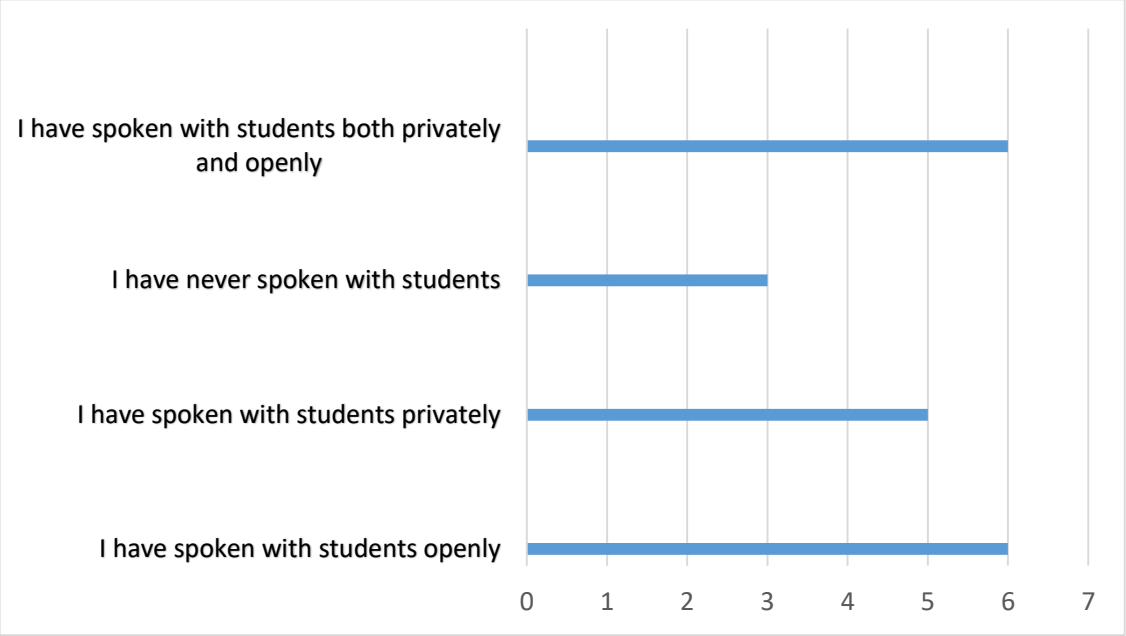


Figure 8a. Participant Teachers' Approaches to In-Class Communication About Anxiety

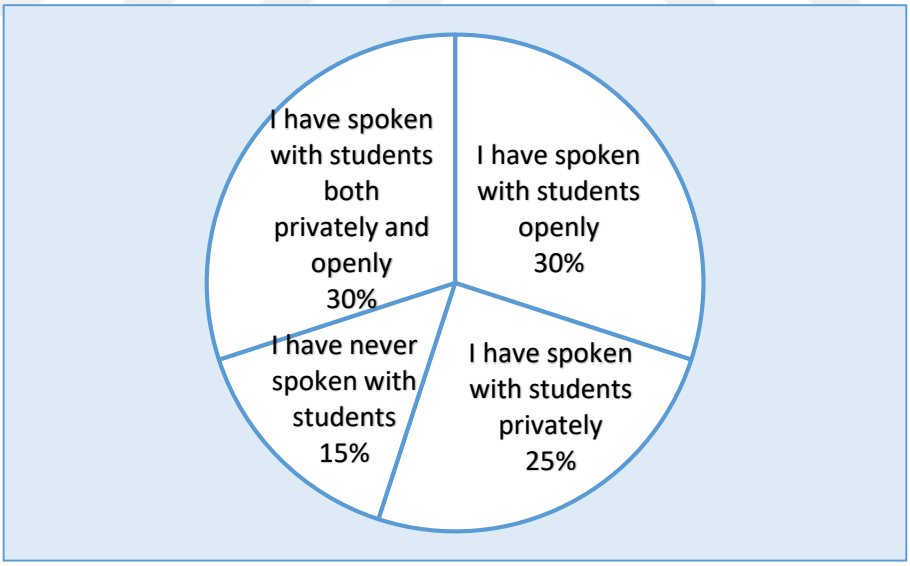


Figure 8b. Participant Teachers' Approaches to In-Class Communication About Anxiety

"(...) Openly, it is very rare, I would say privately to students do come to me and or I do go to them you know when they need it" (T1).

Yes, from time to time. I have done that. I mean, but I don't remember any specific example of success on that. I mean, I couldn't observe it if there was because anyway, it is related with the character of the person I think in a way, it's not easy to change your character, your traits. So I Yeah, I have talked openly or privately, I mean to all students, or if there is a specific one in class who has got much more than other ones of private they, of course, but I can't remember and maybe I didn't monitor it. (T3)

Yes. Some of the students came to me to talk and they said "Hocam, I'm trying to speak but I hesitate. I make a lot of mistakes, blah, blah..." And the first thing I say since we're working in a prep school, I say this is a year that you can do tons of making tons of mistakes and no one will say anything this is a chance and you won't have the chance again probably. I'm just saying it don't try to be professional and giving them a pat talk, actually, and this is the way that I'm trying to keep them on track. (T4)

I've done this many times, but not particularly its effects on the body, but on their performance, most of the time I tell them to, you know, I tell them that it's good to have a little bit of anxiety. It's good because it motivates you to perform better so just, you know, in a way you like, feel free to have anxiety a little bit, you know, feel free to be anxious. But you also have to find a way to calm calm yourself down, because then it may have an adverse effect on your performance, I say so, you know, I elaborate on that idea a lot. (T5)

Not individually but openly in class. We always have every year, every year with every class, we always have such a you know, topic to discuss and they always express their opinions about why they are so shy, why they cannot perform well. Why when it comes to speaking, and yeah, openly we always discuss it. (T8)

"I haven't talked neither openly nor privately you know... any students about their anxiety. Now, when I see their anxiety, I would never talk about it. I mean, I would try to change it in the class" (T10).

"(...) If I observe some specific students who have very high speaking use it then I prefer talking them privately but first, with a group, as a group then private, individually" (T12).

"Definitely, especially when a student cannot speak or doesn't want to speak in English or you know, I just try to find some time to talk to him individually" (T13).

When asked about the strategies their students utilize to effectively cope with anxiety during classroom speaking activities, 8 participant teachers out of 20 revealed that the students have not employed any specific coping strategies. This finding suggests that a notable portion of the students may not have employed any techniques to manage their speaking anxiety in the classroom setting as per the participant teachers' observations.

"Well, generally I haven't seen I haven't observed any strategies" T14.

> (...) If I'm asking them one by one, I see all the others are using a pen and paper at the right at that moment they try to make a kind of brainstorming or trying to make some notes. So that's what I've just observed, or they try to take something from a dictionary or do something I always let them do it. So whatever works for them, it's okay for me. Because I'm not testing anything so I never forbid the things like this so they don't have to be they're not in the military here so they should be relaxed, and I let them to talk with his friends to ask. That's why mostly I prefer peer talking first and then one by one. (T6)

> Trying and trying again can be a strategy I guess, I mean, they should do something. And generally, I give this example; just by watching the TV show about you know, cooking, they can't feel full. They're still hungry, just watching it doesn't make them feel full. So just by listening, they can't learn how to speak. They should do something; they should speak so they should change their strategy from listening to speaking from being passive to being active. (T7)

"I haven't observed any actually, I haven't observed" (T8).

> Practicing, they always tell me that practicing really helps and outlining, brainstorming what they will talk, outlining, writing, take notes, and using vocabulary, notebooks for example. They improve their vocabulary and then it

helps them while producing a speech. Also practicing, actually practicing I think really helps. (T12)

They don't have that much. I mean, exact a strategy for applying. I usually encourage my students to read a lot in this case. And they come and tell me that for example, teacher I have read for example, one hour or two hour extra books, I mean, not just their main course books, extra for example, novels or storybooks related to their grades. Because I encouraged them to read them. So while reading and and and I asked them to talk aloud, stand in front, stand in front of the mirror and just speak to yourself, whatever comes to your mind, and even you can record it. Some of the students have done these kinds of activities and they have improved in speaking. (T15)

Whenever it is speaking lesson, and whenever we give time to students to get ready for speaking in minutes, they try to find the best vocabulary to attract the teachers or their friends to get plus. So these are the things that motivate them and increase their consideration maybe. So students try to list the ideas that they will speak and they want to see their grammar mistakes, that that's why they want to write a full paragraph without reading it. And then when it's their time, instead of speaking, they prefer reading. Why? Because they don't want to make mistakes, then they want to feel more confident maybe. (T16)

When they make mistakes, they laugh at themselves. I think it's I think it's their way of coping with it because if they gave a strong reaction, emotional reaction, maybe it would make it worse, but when they also laugh with the others, it doesn't seem like they are that hurt by that mistake. So I sometimes see them do that but I'm not sure if it's effective, but maybe they do other things that I can't observe from outside... maybe breathing. Sometimes I see them take breaths. That could be I think effective. (T19)

According to the observations drawn from the responses of participants, it appears that EFL learners lack distinct coping strategies to manage their anxiety. Nevertheless, the peculiar behaviors they exhibit, such as staring at the ceiling or biting their fingers, seem to be the coping mechanisms to deal with the anxiety.

When participant teachers were queried about the techniques/strategies they employ to manage their students' foreign language speaking anxiety, their responses were analyzed to generate codes and categories. These codes and categories serve as a means of organizing and understanding the various strategies utilized by the teachers in addressing their students' anxiety-related challenges during language learning.

Table 8. Codes and Categories of FLSA Coping Strategies of EFL Teachers

Theme	Categories	Codes
FLSA Coping Strategies	In practice	Preparation time
		Mind map
		Rehearsal
		Warm-up/Ice-breakers
		Teaching related vocabulary
		Giving background information
		No interrupting
		Encouraging auto-correction
		Paraphrasing
	In general	No error correction on the spot
		Normalizing mistakes
		Creating a friendly atmosphere
		Motivating
		Sharing personal memories of anxiety

As demonstrated in Table 8, concerning the Theme of Coping Strategies for Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA), two distinct categories have been identified, namely "in-practice" and "in general." These categories encompass a total of 13 individual codes, which are lined under each respective category.

> The less they pay attention, or the less they get stuck with looking for words, and how to pronounce them and look for the perfect word to say, they should just say whatever they want to say... don't get stuck on your ideas. Don't get stuck on building up perfect sentences just try to speak, whether it's correct or not, just try to speak and that's why I don't prefer to correct them on the spot. For example, I guess, I let them speak. Sometimes I had a couple of students who wanted me to correct them, but only so far, I never disturbed and by correcting them on the spot, because I feel that totally discouraged them and give them more anxiety even... So that is one of the things that I do actively in the classroom. (T1)

(...) I normalize it... Yeah, I think it's something normal, really. I mean, I'm a human that I can make tons of mistakes. There is no perfection in anywhere. So I'm just trying to give it to them. And also if they are speaking, I don't do error correction. Immediately, never ever so yes, they have to know their mistakes. But I if let's say with an absolute work, he or she makes a mistake, then I after one two sentences, I try to use it again in a correct way so that he can hear the correct version of his mistake, but I don't do ever error correction immediately in front of everyone. (T4)

I share personal experiences at times. For instance, I tell them about the exams and my personal performance in those exams, you know, how I felt, just to... you know, calm them down a little bit, you know, so it's something human to feel pressurized or feel anxious in speaking. Practice, just to give them that idea. I do that or if I had a bunch of very anxious students, for instance, I just... this is actually something that I do most of the time in, you know, regardless of the skill. I tell them just to drop the pen, just put away your notebook and just listen to me. Take deep breath... breaths, and, you know, just stop for a while, I say, and they actually do that, but like they follow me when I say that and it helps I think... you know, if I have a really, you know, if I have a bunch of really anxious students, that's what I do, just stop, you know, thinking just breathe for a while. These are the things that I can think of now. (T5)

The first thing that I do in the speaking lessons is to create a very friendly atmosphere. I try to make them feel not in a classroom and try to decrease this stage stress. So this is a friend atmosphere. We're all friends here and I'm your teacher. Do not compare yourself with my speaking pace. Everyone here is in the same level. That's why you're in the same classroom. There is no need to be shy. You all know what the others know and don't know what the others don't know. So first of all know this and then I'm not going to ask you something about your world's knowledge. So then feel less stressed, please, I'll just ask you about the things that you can know like about your hobbies. First, like the things that happen in Turkey or around the world the basic things so if not, like I am checking something about their knowledge, I'm just checking. I'm not taking

what they know. I'm not I'm just taking I'm trying to teach, not checking the way you speak about anything so that's atmosphere the first thing that I'm trying to say. (T6)

As I said before, error correction is an important part of teaching. Especially in speaking. Before or after, or at the end of the activity or task or at the end of the lesson, or even the next day. I sometimes ask vocabulary questions; I just wrote it on the board. I write it on the board. and ask them to pronounce it beforehand, before I say it's or so, as a general in class, error correction is a good way also, I teach some, you know, there are some words that are I mean, their spelling and their pronouncing is totally different. ... they should work on some pronunciation what else are sometimes I also make Error Corrections in an enjoyable or find a way that I sometimes I said, Sorry, I can't hear you. Sorry, I can't hear so they correct themselves. So, I mean, we all laugh together. So I do this to different students so they don't feel bad, you know, because it happens to anyone and everyone, you just make them understand that there's something wrong there so they correct themselves. (T7)

Any strategies in teaching actually, I try to make the students feel eeeee.... comfortable as much as I can, okay. I don't correct every mistake when the activity is over. And if there are some basic, very obvious mistakes, then I take notes and correct them. And if I'm taking notes, actually, I try not not to show that to the students. The student generally is not... the student doesn't see that I'm taking notes actually. So I just try to... I just listen to him and I note and I try to encourage actually, I just say yes, okay, go on... Things like this... (T9)

Of course there are so many, for example, the most important thing I tell my students is practice on their own. For example, most of them, I tell them do it even during the day, you don't need to speak a lot...for example, from life for example, getting on the bus, getting off the bus if they're on your way home, talk, think and talk in your head. You can describe there, you can describe the nature, talking in front of the mirror or recording yourself and then listen and give feedback to you. And what else practicing is to find people find a special

native people or practice with your friends with your peers. And what else can I say? I advise them to follow some to watch some movies and series with English subtitles because while watching them or while listening music for example, in the target language, so they can improve their vocabulary and sentence structures. The variety of sentencestructures so they may help them to use them while speaking. This one also helps and that's why it came to my mind. (T12)

Generally in my speaking classes, I write to topic on the board. I usually give some general background according to the topic for example, myself... I start talking about that topic or that theme myself. I write some vocabulary on the board related to that topic that the students, the weak students, and especially the anxious students, they can use those, for example, vocabulary or words, why they want to speak about that topic... and it remains on the board, the whole session, I mean, even I try to, for example, write some sentences on the board. Using some I mean, structures that the students are supposed to use in that case, I mean, on that session so giving general background, asking other students for example, while we're speaking that student stops, cannot speak, for example, cannot talk or give the necessary input, you know, so I just moved to his or her friends. In this case, we continue again, and then I come back to that student again. Usually when I want to start my, for example, a question and answer sessions, I usually start with top students, and then move on one by one to the weakest ones. These are the strategies that we can use to help those anxious students. (T15)

I mostly use icebreakers before speaking. And I try to help them get ready by asking some related questions by drawing mind maps on the board and let them give just word by word answers. And I prepared them to get ready for speaking, of course, to make proper sentences. So we are the ones who help them be who help them focus in speaking. (T16)

In my classes, I'm not afraid of making mistakes as teachers we shouldn't be make afraid of making mistakes. I always show my examples**.** Sometimes I do it on purpose. And when I make a mistake, I laugh to myself and sometimes I

> ask them to correct my mistake or to correct my pronunciation and this really helps to show that there is a balance in the class and that we are all the same. And we're all foreign language learners. of the language itself, me myself. (T18)

> Usually I gave them a few minutes to think about sorry, I gave them a time limit. I said speak for one minute. When I do that, I realized they couldn't speak but then I said, there is no time limit, say whatever you can and when I did that, they spoke better than they did before. That's one thing. I also tell them, past-present-future. I write on the board and I say, if they ask you a question, you can think about how you did that thing in the past how you do it now and how are you planning on doing in the future? It will give you something to say. I tell them when you run out of things to say, I think that can help them. I realized they say in the past I did this and when they say they're when they're stuck, they used it... Also one more thing. I told them if you can't think of a word, find different ways to say that word. You don't remember it. Let's say; apple and then you say round, red, or green, find other ways of explaining that I tell them. (T19)

In addition to the previously mentioned codes, two exceptional techniques were suggested: one teacher mentioned mindfulness and breathing techniques, and another one recommended a technique known as 3-2-1.

> (...) at some point, we used the 4-3-1 technique. There's one question or, let's say one subject to talk about. At first, a student explains in four minutes, and then re-explains the same subject in three minutes and then in one minute, that is one of the ways you know, let's say strategies that I use before. And then also, I make it very clear in the class that it is pretty normal to make mistakes and actually, it's kind of encouraging mistakes so that they can learn from them actually. It's not something to be criticized about. It is very normal and natural. (T17)

Also some specific practices are recommended to provide learners with valuable opportunities to enhance their speaking skills and build confidence in their language abilities. These are encouraging students to engage in extensive practice at home, independently describing their daily activities, practicing speaking in front of a mirror, recording their voices, and watching TV series with English subtitles.

4.5 Discussions on Study Findings

In this section of the study, the interview-derived findings are analyzed in the context of the research questions. The findings are based on the responses of participant teachers, the majority of whom have extensive academic experience in language teaching over a decade. They all hold degrees in the study of literature or education in English and vast proportion possess master's degrees. These qualifications substantiate the participants' competence and reliability as seasoned professionals within the field of EFL teaching.

4.5.1 Discussion of findings in terms of research question 1

In accordance with the first research question, the physical and emotional manifestations of anxiety were asked to the participants to identify the impacts of FLSA on classroom performance. The participants' statements revealed that anxiety was a complex experience involving various negative emotions that affect speaking skills and hinder the language accusation process. Additionally, it became clear that these negative emotional states had resulted in the physical symptoms that the participants reported. As previously stated in the literature review chapter, according to scholarly sources, students experiencing anxiety may display both physical and emotional symptoms, leading to peculiar behaviors (Scovel, 1978; Brown, 1994; Ehrman, 1996; Horwitz et al., 1991; Zhanibek, 2001). The emotional aspects of anxiety, such as worry, unease, and restlessness, can contribute to feelings of pressure and tension, as suggested by Köknel, Özuğurlu & Bahadır (1993). In alignment with these definitions, a total of 16 distinct codes are identified after analyzing the insights gathered from the participants. These codes are stuttering, sweating, blushing, faltering voice, shaking, avoiding eye contact, looking at floors or ceilings, using hands unintentionally, playing with pens/jewelry, freezing, coughing, embarrassment, sadness, being stressed, fear of being humiliated by others, and discomfort, which are used to categorize the manifestations into two main categories: physical and emotional. The World Health Organization (2009) also asserts that anxious individuals may exhibit various similar physical symptoms, including headaches, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, sweaty palms, and fatigue.

Investigating the students' anxiety levels in various situations was thought to shed light on the impacts of anxiety on classroom performance. Therefore, six different situations were asked to participant teachers to indicate the level of their students' anxiety.

First of all, students' anxiety levels about word recalling difficulties were found to be high, and participant teachers reported significant anxiety when their students could not remember relevant words while speaking. The pressure to remember and use unfamiliar vocabulary increased their anxiety. Baran-Lucarz (2013) also stated that students' anxiety levels about word recalling difficulties are also reported to be high, similar to the finding of this study.

Secondly, regarding students' anxiety levels concerning their pronunciation proficiency were found to be average. Baran-Lucarz & Lee (2021) claims that accurate pronunciation holds significant importance in the oral proficiency of learners. EFL learners often face challenges in attaining precise pronunciation, leading to increased anxiety levels. However, a noteworthy aspect emerged from the study: approximately one in four teachers indicated that students who struggled particularly with pronunciation were often unaware of their errors in pronunciation. Consequently, these students either did not experience anxiety associated with pronunciation errors or their anxiety levels tended to be moderate.

Furthermore, when students cannot make grammatically accurate sentences, their anxiety level were indicated as high. As per teachers' statements, students experience high levels of anxiety when they cannot make proper sentences in the target language. Similarly, Amoah & Yeboah (2021) asserted that the fear of making grammatical errors and forming coherent sentences seemed to be the primary reasons for their heightened anxiety as sentence construction involves the mechanics of language elements such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

Peer pressure is another factor which has a huge impact on students' oral performances. When teachers were asked about students' anxiety levels when speaking in front of their classmates, the outcome was very high. Speaking in front of their classmates was a major source of anxiety for many students. For some, the fear of being judged or making mistakes in front of peers led to very high levels of anxiety. As Zhanibek (2001)

suggested, when self-comparison leads to a negative competitiveness or interfered with learning, it produces severe anxiety.

While Students' anxiety levels during prepared speech delivery were reported to be average, they were reported equally very high and high in response to spontaneous questions. Prepared speech delivery involves planning and production of sentences, which can be less demanding than spontaneous speech (Hwang et al., 2020) whereas responding to spontaneous questions triggers very high and high levels of anxiety in many students. The main contributing factor to this excessive anxiety seems to be the pressure to think quickly and provide accurate responses.

To conclude, anxiety and its associated factors create a cyclical and interconnected relationship, where each influences the other like a vicious circle. The impacts of anxiety can provoke the factors contributing to it, while these factors, in turn, can intensify the experience of anxiety. This cycle can lead to a self-reinforcing loop, making it challenging for individuals to break free from anxiety. Addressing both the impacts and underlying factors of anxiety becomes crucial to effectively manage and alleviate its effects on students' well-being.

4.5.2 Discussion of findings in terms of research question 2

The second research question aimed to investigate teachers' attitude towards FLSA of their students and their degree of awareness.

Firstly, among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—16 teachers out of 20 acknowledged that students display the highest levels of anxiety when it comes to speaking. The remaining four teachers recognized that both speaking and writing were the skills in which students experience anxiety. In addition, none of the teachers mentioned anxiety related to receptive skills such as listening and reading. These findings strongly align with Nunan's (2003) perspective on differentiating speaking as a distinct productive skill from writing and other related skills as speaking stands apart from writing due to its interactive nature, as it involves the production of systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning.

Secondly, the vast majority of the teachers who took part in the study, specifically 19 out of 20, indicated that FLSA is widespread among their students. Similarly, speaking anxiety has been found to have the highest mean score among all skill-specific anxieties (Cheng et al., 1999; Luo, 2011; Pae, 2013; Talion, 2006). The results suggest that speaking anxiety is of particular significance, as EFL teachers have noted its involvement in both productive and interactive dimensions, necessitating proficiency in language skills and effective communicative strategies. The teachers' acknowledgment of speaking anxiety is justified by the existing literature in the field.

Finally, the teachers were asked to explain the factors which raise anxiety when speaking a foreign language. These factors were then used to create codes and categories under the theme of '*foreign language anxiety-raising factors*'.

Educational factors included codes such as exams, educational background, error correction, teachers, lack of practice, direct feedback, and peer pressure. As previously mentioned in literature review part, scholarly sources discuss peer pressure as an environmental contributor to anxiety when speaking a foreign language, the outcomes of the interviews expose that most participants perceive peer pressure as more of an educational component. *Individual factors* consisted of lack of self-confidence, shyness, perfectionism, fear of making mistakes, fear of embarrassment, fear of being judged by others, introversion, health problems, and age. *Environmental factors* encompassed codes related to cultural background, classmates, classroom atmosphere, exposure to the language, and the number of people present. Here, there were parallels with Albore's (2019) study which investigated the primary causes of ninth-grade students' anxiety when speaking a foreign language. Major causes identified include communication anxiety, low self-confidence, lack of preparation, and problems at the input stage. Students were afraid of making errors because they perceived continually testing and receiving corrections as failures. In addition to competition among peers and failing oral exams a poor background in language acquisition, a negative attitude toward speaking, a lack of concentration, forgetfulness, mispronunciation, and a limited vocabulary were the other factors that contributed to speaking anxiety. While exploring emotional factors such as shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis is a relevant framework for comprehending anxiety. According to Krashen's (1982)

Affective Filter Hypothesis, emotional factors substantially impact language learning. When learners have high affective filters, it hinders their language acquisition, while low filters promote openness, relaxation, and receptiveness, making the learning process more effective. To facilitate language acquisition, a supportive learning environment is crucial as it lowers the affective filter, allowing learners to engage with the language, take risks, and acquire language skills more efficiently. Anxiety poses a significant barrier in foreign language learning and is negatively correlated with academic achievement and speaking skills. To address this, teachers play a pivotal role in creating supportive environments that encourage speaking practice and group activities, which, in turn, enhance proficiency and boost learners' self-confidence. Therefore, it is crucial for EFL teachers to be aware of these factors and to identify them clearly that raise speaking anxiety.

To expand the investigation further, the participants were also requested to rank the three categories as mentioned earlier based on their perceived level of importance. The findings indicated that *environmental factors* were considered the most important, followed by *individual factors* in second place. *Educational* factors were regarded as the least significant among the identified elements that contribute to foreign language speaking anxiety.

During the interviews, when participant teachers were asked whether they had ever engaged in open or private discussions with their students regarding anxiety and its impact on the body and academic performance, they responded affirmatively. They reported observing positive outcomes among students after having these conversations. This highlights the pivotal role of teachers' attitudes in addressing foreign language speaking anxiety. Creating a friendly and supportive classroom atmosphere was found to be instrumental in reducing anxiety levels. Similar to Tsui's (1996) study, fostering a supportive atmosphere in the classroom holds equal significance to teacher support when it comes to cultivating an anxiety-free learning environment. Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) further emphasize that reducing speaking anxiety can be achieved by establishing an inclusive and encouraging classroom setting, encouraging positive interactions between teachers and students, as well as fostering constructive peer relationships. Addressing students' anxiety towards negative evaluation is also crucial in alleviating speaking anxiety.

In regards to the strategies employed by students to effectively manage anxiety during speaking activities in the classroom, the majority of teachers reported that their students had not utilized any specific coping techniques. This finding suggests that a significant number of students may not have adopted particular practices to handle their speaking anxiety in the classroom setting. Consequently, it is highly recommended that teachers introduce students to various techniques to cope with their anxieties. The use of mindfulness and breathing techniques is suggested to be taught, along with other methods such as encouraging students to engage in extensive practice at home, independently describing their daily activities, practicing speaking in front of a mirror, and watching TV series with English subtitles. These activities can provide learners with valuable opportunities to enhance their speaking skills and build confidence in their language abilities.

The interviews demonstrate that teachers employ various strategies to alleviate speaking anxiety among students within the classroom setting. These practices include providing adequate time for preparation, allowing students to rehearse in advance and utilizing tools like brainstorming or mind maps to facilitate cognitive organization. Furthermore, incorporating warm-up questions and icebreakers fosters a more helpful environment for expression. As per the participant teachers' statements, they also teach related vocabulary and furnish background information on the subject matter to boost students' confidence during speaking activities. To further cultivate a supportive atmosphere, teachers employ specific techniques that include instructing paraphrasing skills, trying to endorse a mindset of accepting and normalizing mistakes, and motivating for self-correction. They adopt a non-intrusive approach by avoiding interrupting students' speech and not correcting mistakes on the spot, which allows learners to express themselves freely. Additionally, teachers recommended to engage in the practice of sharing personal experiences related to language acquisition, thereby establishing a closer bond between class members, including the teacher. These initiatives considerably contribute to the establishment of a harmonious and nurturing learning environment, fostering a sense of belonging and trust in the student-teacher relationship.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Learning a new language is a journey that opens doors to new cultures, opportunities, and connections. However, this endeavor involves challenges, and one significant hurdle that many language learners face is speaking anxiety. Speaking anxiety refers to the fear and discomfort experienced when attempting to communicate in a foreign language. While this fear is common and understandable, it can have a profound impact on language acquisition. This study was set to explore how speaking anxiety can hinder the process of acquiring a foreign language and the its implications on learners from the teachers' perspectives.

The basis of this study's hypothesis lies in the belief that teachers possess an in-depth comprehension of their students' speaking anxiety and hold specific observations regarding its impact on their performance in language learning classrooms. Additionally, the study aims to gather substantial and well-founded information concerning teachers' attitudes towards their students' speaking anxiety, as well as the strategies they utilize in their daily classroom practices to alleviate and diminish foreign language speaking anxiety.

With this purpose, the study has been carefully set as qualitative research, adopting a phenomenological approach, with twenty semi-structured interview questions in order to collect data. The information obtained from the participant teachers' responses was analyzed carefully, and the results were shown through tables and figures. Based on the results derived from the qualitative analyses, findings are discussed in accordance with the research questions.

The interview-derived findings are analyzed in the context of the research questions. The findings are based on the responses of participant teachers, the majority of whom have extensive academic experience in language teaching over a decade. They all hold degrees in the study of literature or education in English and vast proportion possess master's degrees. These qualifications substantiate the participants' competence and reliability as seasoned professionals within the field of EFL teaching.

Findings reveal that speaking stands out as the most anxiety-inducing skill compared to others. Moreover, FLSA raising factors can be grouped in three categories respectively as; environmental, individual and educational with numerous codes. It is also evident that during a speech, forgetting the relevant words, facing a classroom audience, and dealing with spontaneously asked questions lead to significantly high levels of anxiety. However, mispronouncing words does not generate as much anxiety as making grammatical errors. Finally, giving time before delivering the speech is an anxiety-reducing method particularly for anxious students.

It can also be inferred that engaging in either open or private discussions with students concerning anxiety and its effects on the body and academic performance has significant positive impacts, and teachers note improvements among students after these discussions.

On the other hand, when it comes to the methods students employed to handle speaking anxiety during classroom activities, the majority of teachers mentioned that their students did not employ any specific coping strategies. This finding indicates that a significant portion of students do not have particular techniques or practices to address their speaking anxiety in class.

In contrast, teachers utilize various strategies to alleviate speaking anxiety in the classroom. These strategies include providing adequate preparation time, encouraging students to rehearse and use techniques like brainstorming and mind maps. Additionally, teachers use warm-up questions and icebreakers to foster expression, while teaching vocabulary and background information to boost students' confidence. To further assist students, teachers employ techniques such as paraphrasing, accepting mistakes, and encouraging self-correction. They also create a non-intrusive environment and share personal experiences to foster a harmonious learning atmosphere, which in turn promotes a sense of belonging and trust in the student-teacher relationship.

The participants' awareness of speaking anxiety appeared to be shaped by the particular situations and difficulties they encountered in their teaching roles and professional journeys. This implies that the teachers' conceptualizations of speaking anxiety were not purely theoretical or abstract but instead rooted in the pragmatic realities of their daily

experiences as educators. Nonetheless, their perception and awareness of anxiety are sufficient as valuable insights.

Implications for ELT: Based on the findings drawn from the study, several implications can be suggested for English Language Teaching (ELT) practices.

ELT teachers should be aware of the prevalence and impact of speaking anxiety on language learners. Understanding this anxiety and its potential hindrance to language acquisition can help teachers devise appropriate strategies to support students in overcoming their fears. In this respect, the study emphasizes that teachers have an essential role in identifying and understanding students' speaking anxiety. Providing a supportive and empathetic learning environment can help students feel more at ease when communicating in the target language.

Since many students reported not using specific coping techniques for managing speaking anxiety, ELT teachers can integrate various coping strategies into their classroom activities. Techniques such as warm-up questions, icebreakers, and providing sufficient preparation time, rehearsing the speech can help reduce anxiety and promote language fluency. They can also encourage self-expression through open discussions, allowing students to talk about their anxieties and concerns related to language learning. This kind of dialogue fosters a sense of trust and belonging, creating a more positive learning environment. It is advised for teachers to promote a culture of accepting mistakes and self-correction during language practice. Creating a non-judgmental atmosphere enables learners to take risks without fear of embarrassment, which can alleviate speaking anxiety.

The study also underlined that discussing anxiety's effects on the body and academic performance can have positive impacts on learners. Thus, teachers should initiate open dialogues with students to better understand their struggles and provide appropriate support. To ensure this, ELT educators are highly recommended to receive ongoing professional development to enhance their understanding of anxiety-related issues and to acquire effective teaching strategies to support anxious language learners.

Overall, the study's findings underscore the importance of considering speaking anxiety as a crucial factor in language learning. By adopting appropriate strategies and creating a supportive classroom environment, ELT teachers can help language learners overcome their anxieties and progress more effectively in acquiring a new language.

Suggestions for Further Studies: The study's results lead to several recommendations for future research. Firstly, it would be advantageous to conduct a study that investigates both teachers' and learners' perspectives on foreign language speaking anxiety. Employing a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods would enable a thorough comparison of the findings.

Secondly, replicating this study with a larger and more diverse group of teachers could yield a more comprehensive understanding of the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety.

Lastly, it would be beneficial to analyze foreign language speaking anxiety in relation to students' different proficiency levels. This examination could shed light on the potential interconnections between anxiety levels and language proficiency, and how they influence each other.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Etik Kurulu Kararı

Bu belge, Yükseköğretim Kurulu tarafından 19.01.2021 tarihli "Lisansüstü Tezlerin Elektronik Ortamda Toplanması, Düzenlenmesi ve Erişime Açılmasına İlişkin Yönerge" ile bildirilen 6689 Sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanunu kapsamında gizlenmiştir.

Appendix 2. Interview Questions

1) How long have you been teaching English?
2) What major did you graduate from?
3) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
4) Since the language learning is based on four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, which one do you think your students feel the most anxious about?
5) What do you know about foreign language speaking anxiety?
6) Is FLSA* common among your students?
7) In your opinion, what factors can raise students' anxiety while speaking in English? Are these factors educational, individual or environmental?
8) What kind of physical manifestations of anxiety have you observed in your students so far?
9) What kind of emotional manifestations of anxiety have you observed in your students so far?
10) Could you indicate the level of your students' anxiety towards speaking the English language considering the situations mentioned below?
    a) When students cannot remember relevant words, is their anxiety level "very high", "high", "average" or "poor"? Why?
    b) When students cannot pronounce the words correctly, is their anxiety level "very high", "high", "average" or "poor"? Why?
    c) When students cannot make proper sentences, is their anxiety level "very high", "high", "average" or "poor"? Why?
    d) When students speak in front of their classmates, is their anxiety level "very high", "high", "average" or "poor"? Why?
    e) When students are given time to prepare for their speech, is their anxiety level "very high", "high", "average" or "poor"? Why?
    f) When students are exposed to spontaneous questions, is their anxiety level "very high", "high", "average" or "poor"? Why?
11) Are there any additional factors that raise FLSA*? If yes, please explain.
12) Are there any strategies in teaching that you usually use to help reduce the speaking anxiety? If yes, can you explain?
13) Have you ever talked openly or privately with students about anxiety and its effects on the body in general, and on school performance in particular? If yes, have you observed any improvements?
14) What strategies do students adopt to cope with their anxiety effectively when it comes to speaking in class?
15) Is there anything that you would like to add in terms of foreign language speaking anxiety which was not mentioned during this interview?

*Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

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