

Factors determining foreign language speaking anxiety: A study on high school students

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Abstract: Numerous factors are known to significantly impact the process of learning a foreign language. These factors can influence learners' attitudes toward language learning, whether positively or negatively. It is essential for educators and trainers to take into account students' emotions and consider various factors in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Recognizing the crucial role emotions play in language acquisition, this study aims to assess the level of foreign language speaking anxiety among 228 high school students, selected using purposive sampling, and to identify the factors influencing their anxiety. Data was gathered through the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale and demographic questions. The findings indicate that the participants experienced moderate levels of anxiety. Both descriptive and inferential statistics demonstrated that students' interest for English, prior experience abroad, and interest in English outside of academic requirements had a statistically significant impact on their foreign language speaking anxiety. The study also identified specific in and out-class activities that influenced anxiety levels. The most popular in-class activities included games, watching movies/short videos, songs, and pair/group work. Outside the classroom, students stated that they mostly engaged in listening to songs, watching movies with subtitles, and playing games in English. In conclusion, the research emphasizes the significance of personal factors together with in and out-of-class dynamics influencing students' anxiety while speaking a foreign language.

Keywords: Foreign language anxiety, communication apprehension, fear of being negatively evaluated, test anxiety.

Yabancı dil konuşma kaygısını belirleyen etmenler: Lise öğrencileri üzerinde bir çalışma

Öz: Çok sayıda faktörün yabancı dil öğrenme sürecini önemli ölçüde etkilediği bilinmektedir. Bu faktörler, öğrencilerin dil öğrenimine yönelik tutumlarını olumlu ya da olumsuz yönde etkileyebilir. Öğreticilerin ve öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin duygularını dikkate almaları ve yabancı dil öğretimi ve öğreniminde çeşitli faktörleri göz önünde bulundurmaları önemlidir. Duyguların dil ediniminde oynadığı önemli rolün bilincinde olan bu çalışma, amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilen 228 lise öğrencisinin yabancı dilde konuşma kaygısı düzeyini değerlendirmeyi ve kaygılarını etkileyen faktörleri belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yabancı Dilde Konuşma Kaygısı Ölçeği ve demografik sorular aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların orta düzeyde kaygı yaşadıklarını göstermektedir. Hem tanımlayıcı hem de çıkarımsal istatistikler, öğrencilerin İngilizceye olan ilgilerinin, daha önceki yurt dışı deneyimlerinin ve akademik gereklilikler dışında İngilizceye olan ilgilerinin yabancı dilde konuşma kaygıları üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmada ayrıca kaygı düzeylerini etkileyen belirli sınıf içi ve dışı etkinlikler de belirlenmiştir. En popüler sınıf içi aktiviteler arasında oyunlar, film/kısa video izleme, şarkılar ve ikili/grup çalışmaları yer aldı. Sınıf dışında ise öğrenciler en çok şarkı dinleme, altyazılı film izleme ve İngilizce oyun oynama etkinliklerine katıldıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, araştırma, öğrencilerin yabancı dil konuşurken yaşadıkları kaygıyı etkileyen sınıf içi ve dışı dinamiklerle birlikte kişisel faktörlerin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı dil kaygısı, iletişim kaygısı, olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusu, sınav kaygısı.



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Introduction

Knowing a foreign language is often an important prerequisite in many areas, such as a good job, a successful career, a good status in society and even international recognition. However, students' level of success in using English effectively in their lives does not meet expectations. This is because this process involves acquiring new linguistic features, a new culture and even a new way of thinking, which may not be an easy task for all language learners. Therefore, while some students may be seen as successful learners, others may see it as a necessity and have great difficulty in reaching the desired level. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) found that speaking English is a difficult skill for students to develop in a foreign language context. According to the authors, this is because students need to pay attention to several elements at the same time to successfully communicate their ideas, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency, which can affect students' speaking performance.

Language-related anxiety is a special form of anxiety because it involves “different complex self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning that arise from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986:128). To point out the pervasive impact of foreign language anxiety, Horwitz (2001) suggested that one third of foreign language learners suffer from at least moderate levels of foreign language anxiety. Since L2 anxiety mostly occurs in learning environments, it has different effects on various aspects of learning. Although learners experience foreign language anxiety at different levels depending on the situation, speaking has been found to be the most anxiety-provoking skill and challenging part of second or foreign language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

While speaking is often considered the most challenging of the four language skills, it is also seen as the most essential building block for effectively using a language. In language classrooms, both students and teachers work to develop this productive skill in various ways. According to Woodrow (2006), second language speaking anxiety is a significant predictor of success, with a notable negative relationship between speaking anxiety and oral performance (p. 308). Speaking anxiety, a key affective factor in foreign language learning, frequently has a detrimental impact on students' oral performance in English (Melough, 2013). As a result, it can be concluded that many students are apprehensive about using a foreign language orally.

Numerous studies in the relevant literature have delved into the topic of foreign language speaking anxiety among students (Tekir, 2021; Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015; Takkaç Tulgar, 2018; Tanrıöver, 2012). These studies have revealed several key factors that contribute to heightened anxiety in speaking skills. To illustrate, Aydın (2001) identified four main causes of speaking anxiety: personal reasons, teacher's attitude in the classroom, students' beliefs, along with the exam and teaching procedures. One significant factor is students' self-perceived level of speaking skills, as anxious students tend to underestimate their competence compared to their less anxious peers (MacIntyre, 1998). Additionally, Riasati (2012) suggests that dissatisfaction with one's speaking abilities can lead to a reduced willingness to participate in class discussions, ultimately leading to increased anxiety when speaking in front of others. This finding highlights the importance of perceived competence in mitigating speaking anxiety among learners.

Ohata (2005) and Ay (2010) also mention the effect of “being unprepared” on students' speaking anxiety. In this case, the student states that he/she feels nervous, prefers to remain silent during the whole class and does not want to be asked any questions (Ohata, 2005). In Horwitz et al.'s study, students stated that they were more comfortable when they were making “prepared” speeches in foreign language classes, but they “froze” in role-playing activities (p.126). According to Ay (2010), students reported that they were most anxious when they were asked to speak without prior preparation.

The teaching method and the teacher's attitude are two other important factors affecting students' levels of speaking anxiety. In her study, Subaşı (2010) found that students had difficulty in paying attention due to boring or uninteresting teaching processes, which led to anxiety. According to the results of the study conducted by Riasati (2012), classroom atmosphere is a factor that contributes significantly to the degree to which students are willing to speak. She also adds that it is important to see the teacher's role in “facilitating or inhibiting student participation” (p. 1293).

Finally, past learning experiences have an impact on learners' levels of speaking anxiety. In his study, Gültekin Çakar (2009) concluded that students' previous experience of visiting other countries, having a native English-speaking teacher and having studied a language other than English were related to predicting foreign language anxiety. To clarify better, traveling to different countries often offers practical experience with the language being studied and complete absorption in the culture. This may enhance confidence and alleviate anxiety by introducing students with authentic language use and cultural traditions (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Having a teacher who speaks English as their first language can decrease anxiety by offering correct language examples and creating a supportive atmosphere for learning (Young, 1991). Previous experience in language learning can provide students with effective strategies and resilience, possibly decreasing anxiety. However, it can also emphasize the

difficulties and intricacies of acquiring a new language, thereby increasing anxiety (Horwitz, 2001). These collective experiences have a significant impact on students' views and attitudes towards language acquisition, which in turn affect their levels of anxiety in many ways.

In short, there are many reasons why EFL learners experience speaking anxiety, such as fear of public speaking, oral communication, self-assessed language proficiency, fear of making mistakes, limited knowledge of the language, lack of preparation, fear of being evaluated negatively by others, the teacher's approach. At this point, what teachers need to do is to create an atmosphere where the level of anxiety is low or non-existent or to look for some useful strategies to help students reduce their anxiety level because “the variables that trigger anxiety may differ from context to context” (Subaşı, 2010:17).

Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate foreign language speaking anxiety levels of high school students in a public school and to reveal the relationship between anxiety levels and different variables such as gender, attitude towards English, family members, teacher's teaching style, in-class activities, English use outside the classroom, and out-of-class activities. For this reason, this study answers the following research questions:

1. What are the foreign language speaking anxiety levels of students in a public high school?
2. Which factors affect students' foreign language speaking anxiety levels?
3. What are the students' most preferred activities in and outside the classroom for using English?

Method

Research Design

In this research, data was collected via a survey, which is a quantitative data collecting approach. The survey included Likert-scale questions to assess students' foreign language anxiety levels and associated experiences. This strategy is useful for collecting a huge quantity of data from a varied sample, allowing researchers to do statistical analysis to uncover trends and associations (Creswell, 2014). The research used a survey to assess the association between certain characteristics of students and their anxiety levels, and it provided actual data to back up its conclusions. This technique is backed by previous research, which shows that surveys are a reliable instrument for evaluating psychological dimensions such as anxiety (Dörnyei, 2007).

Quantitative data were collected with the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale with a five-point Likert scale and a section including demographic questions. This questionnaire was adapted by Saltan (2003) from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety questionnaire developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). It can be said that it is the most widely used data collection tool to determine the scope and level of foreign language anxiety. According to Cronbach's alpha result, it has a high internal consistency of 0.93 and is quite satisfactory in terms of reliability (Öztürk, 2012).

After collecting the data, a thorough analysis was performed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to identify any statistically significant differences between the variables. Quantitative data was analyzed using an analysis of variance and an independent sample T-test, with the comparison of mean values presented in tables generated in SPSS 25.0.

Research Sample

The data were collected from 228 students, selected through purposive sampling method, studying at a public high school in Sarıçam district of Adana province in the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. Purposive sampling, as opposed to random sample, allows for a more concentrated and in-depth knowledge of the phenomena under investigation by incorporating people who are most likely to contribute rich, relevant, and varied data (Patton, 2002). This method is especially beneficial in educational research, where the purpose is to investigate individual characteristics in depth rather than generalize results to a larger group (Palinkas et al., 2015). Descriptive data about the participants are shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Descriptive Data about Participants

Grade	N	%	Gender			
			Female	%	Male	%
9. grade	54	23,7				
10. grade	20	8,8				
11. grade	64	28,1	143	62,7	85	37,3
12. grade	90	39,5				
TOTAL	228	100,0				

In the study, a total of 228 high school students took part. The majority of participants were 12th-grade students, totaling 90 students, while the fewest participants were in the 10th grade. Additionally, 62.7% of the participants were female, and 37.3% were male, with 85 male students participating in the study.

Findings

The results of the survey, along with the accompanying research questions, were analyzed to measure the general speaking anxiety levels of students and to illustrate the anxiety findings in relation to different variables. To achieve this, descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were employed to understand the relationships between these variables. The findings are presented below together with the research questions.

1. What are the foreign language speaking anxiety levels of students in a public high school?

This section aims to see the foreign language-speaking anxiety levels of all students and, secondly, to examine their anxiety levels in detail in terms of specific sub-categories of the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale, such as communication anxiety, fear of being negatively evaluated, test anxiety, and general classroom anxiety. Table 2 shows an overview of students' overall foreign language speaking anxiety levels:

Table 2
Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Levels of Participants

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	228	1	5	3,05	1,237
2. I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	228	1	5	3,13	1,336
3. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	228	1	5	3,34	1,394
4. I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	228	1	5	2,89	1,320
5. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	228	1	5	3,46	1,322
6. I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	228	1	5	2,78	1,312
7. I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	228	1	5	3,20	1,136
8. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	228	1	5	2,93	1,122
9. I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	228	1	5	2,90	1,252
10. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	228	1	5	2,37	1,077
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	228	1	5	3,19	1,289
12. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	228	1	5	2,74	1,283
13. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	228	1	5	3,03	1,363
14. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	228	1	5	3,14	1,265
15. I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	228	1	5	2,84	1,169
16. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	228	1	5	3,11	1,141
17. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	228	1	5	2,83	1,320
18. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance	228	1	5	3,11	1,275
TOPLAM	228				

In Table 2, it is evident that 228 students have completed the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale, providing their responses on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. Upon analyzing the mean of each questionnaire item, it becomes apparent that the statement with the highest mean score is 'I panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes' ($m = 3.46$). This underscores the necessity for a preparation process in foreign language speaking activities. Conversely, the statement with the lowest mean score is 'I feel scared when my English teacher tries to correct every mistake I make' ($m = 2.37$). Table 3 demonstrates the mean foreign language speaking anxiety scores of the students for the subcategories of the scale.

Table 3

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Level According to Scale Sub-Categories

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
English Classroom Anxiety	228	1,00	5,00	3,04	1,003
Communication Apprehension	228	1,00	5,00	3,08	,976
Fear of Negative Evaluation	228	1,00	5,00	2,99	1,000
Test Anxiety	228	1,00	5,00	2,75	1,047
TOPLAM	228	1,00	5,00	2,96	

Table 3 presents the mean scores for the four sub-categories of the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale. The findings reveal that communication anxiety has the highest mean score ($m = 3.08$), while test anxiety has the lowest mean score ($m = 2.75$). Given that the overall mean score exceeds 2.5 ($m = 2.96$), it can be concluded that the participants generally experience a moderate level of anxiety. In line with Horwitz's (2008) assertion that students with a mean score around 3 should be considered moderately anxious. The collective results in Table 3 suggest that the participants were moderately anxious with regards to speaking a foreign language.

2. Which factors affect students' foreign language speaking anxiety levels?

The second research question in this study seeks to explore the variables that significantly influence students' levels of anxiety when speaking a foreign language. The findings indicate that students' affinity for the English language, prior experiences abroad, and extracurricular interest in English have a statistically significant impact on their foreign language speaking anxiety. Conversely, factors such as class level, gender, presence of English-speaking family members, teacher's instructional style, and participation in an English course did not yield significant effects. The statistically significant results are detailed in the accompanying tables.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVA Results for the Effect of Students' Love for English Lesson on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
	Between Groups	19,295	2	9,648	12,153	,000
Love for English Lesson	Within Groups	178,620	225	,794		
	TOTAL	197,916	227			

Based on the findings in Table 4, a one-way analysis of variance was undertaken to investigate the impact of students' attitudes toward their English language class on their levels of anxiety when speaking a foreign language. The questionnaire asked students whether they enjoyed their "English classes or not", and their responses were categorized as "yes," "no," or "sometimes yes, sometimes no." The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between the groups at the $p < .05$ level for all three response categories concerning foreign language anxiety levels. This suggests that a positive attitude toward English lessons plays a role in lowering students' foreign language speaking anxiety. Essentially, greater enjoyment of English classes corresponds to lower levels of anxiety when speaking a foreign language. Table 5 below provides the results of the independent sample T-Test on the effect of being abroad on foreign language speaking anxiety.

Based on the data presented in Table 5, out of 228 participants, 8 students responded affirmatively and 220 students responded negatively to the question "Have you been abroad before?". An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine the potential impact of prior international experiences on students' foreign language speaking anxiety levels. The findings indicate a statistically significant effect of having been abroad on students' communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation scale subcategories at the $p < .05$ level. There is also a notable effect on English classroom anxiety, albeit slightly above the p-value. However, no significant effect was observed in the exam anxiety category. These results suggest that students' past experiences abroad positively influence their foreign language speaking anxiety.

Table 6

ANOVA Results for the Effect of Engaging in English Outside the Classroom on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Engaging with English outside the classroom	Between groups	11,07	2	5,53	6,64	,002
	Within groups	186,69	224	,83		
TOTAL		197,77	226			

In Table 6, a one-way analysis of variance was performed to investigate the impact of students' interest in English outside the classroom, beyond lessons and homework, on their levels of foreign language speaking anxiety. The responses to this question were grouped into three categories (yes, no, and sometimes). The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between the groups at the $p < .05$ level for all three responses related to foreign language anxiety levels. Consequently, it was determined that students' interest in the English language in their daily lives, excluding homework, had a positive influence on their levels of foreign language speaking anxiety. It can be inferred that the greater the students' interest in English and their incorporation of the foreign language into their lives, the lower their anxiety levels when speaking this language.

Table 5

Sub-categories	Yes	No	F	<i>p</i>
Communication Apprehension			4,084	,044
Test Anxiety			1,610	,206
Being Abroad	8	220		
Fear of Negative Evaluation			4,694	,031
English Classroom Anxiety			3,853	,051
TOTAL			228	

Independent Sample T-Test Results for the Effect of Being Abroad on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

3. What are the students' most preferred activities in and outside the classroom to use English?

Various types of activities both inside and outside the classroom play a crucial role in providing students with meaningful opportunities to utilize the target language. However, certain activities that involve using the target language in front of the entire class have been identified as particularly anxiety-inducing in some studies (Koch & Terrel, 1991; Çelebi, 2009). Furthermore, the question of establishing a connection between school and home is a topic of frequent debate. While some students find satisfaction in the formal education they receive at school, others seek to maximize their learning opportunities. Additionally, considering that each language activity represents a distinct form of language use, it is expected that exposure to language use through extracurricular activities will contribute to students' proficiency in English. Consequently, the third research question in this study aims to determine which activities students prefer for using English both within and beyond the classroom. To begin, Figure 1 illustrates the participants' preferred activities for using English in the classroom.

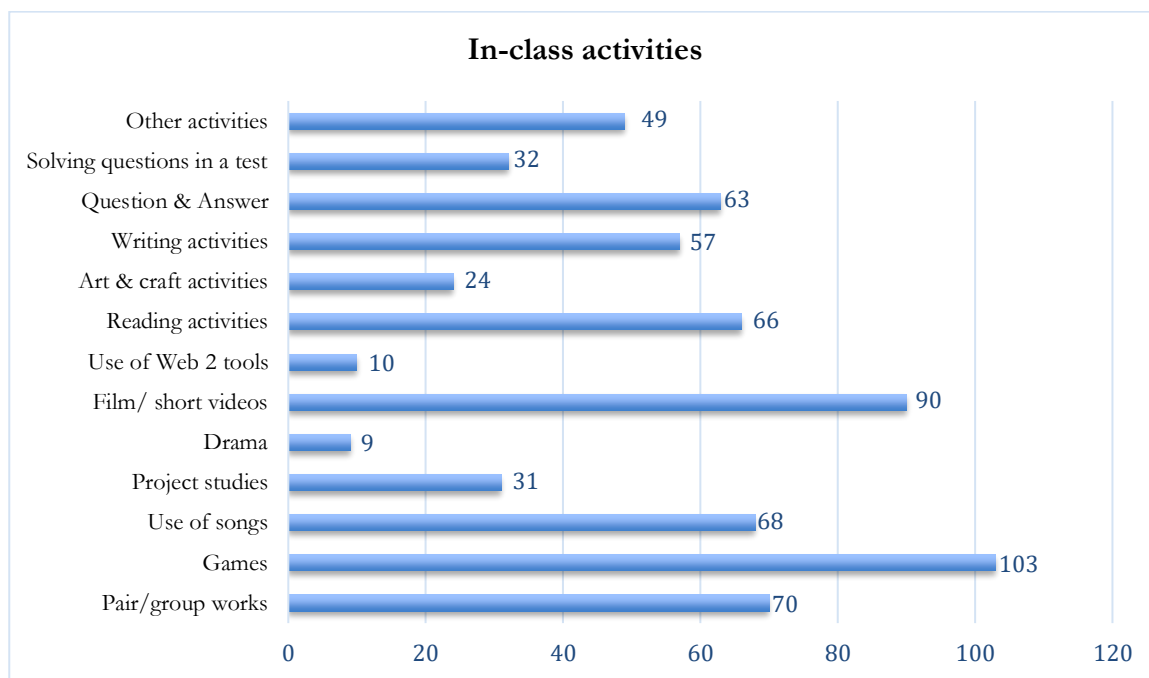


Figure 1

Preferred activities for using English in the classroom

Figure 1 shows the distribution of students' most preferred activities for using English in the classroom. According to the results, games, watching movies/short videos, singing, and pair/group work are the most preferred activities in the classroom. The least preferred activities are drama and using Web-2 tools.

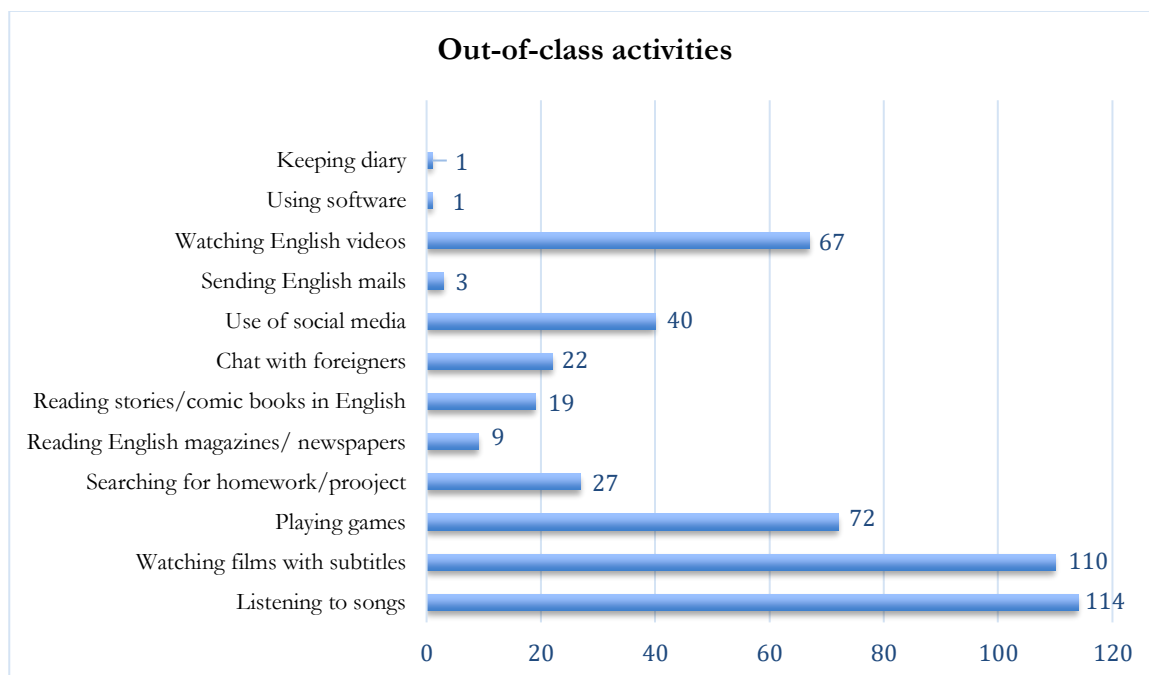


Figure 2

Preferred activities for using English out of the classroom

As illustrated in Figure 2, this section of the questionnaire required students to identify their top three out-of-class activities. The findings indicated that the most favored out-of-class activities were listening to music, watching subtitled movies, and playing English-language games. On the other hand, using software and writing a diary were the least favored activities, each selected by only one student.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the foreign language speaking anxiety levels of students studying in a high school affiliated to the Ministry of National Education, as well as the factors affecting these anxiety levels. The participants of the study were 228 high school students selected by purposive sampling method. Data was gathered using the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale, adapted by Saltan (2003), which was based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Questionnaire developed by Horwitz et al. (1986).

According to the results of the first research question investigating the students' level of foreign language speaking anxiety, the mean scores of the sub-skills of the relevant scale ranged between 2.75 and 3.08 and the overall mean score was above 2.5 ($m = 2.96$), indicating that the participants were moderately anxious in terms of foreign language speaking. Considering the mean scores of the sub-skills of the scale, it is possible to say that communication anxiety has the highest mean score ($m: 3,08$), while the lowest mean score belongs to test anxiety ($m: 2,75$). This study aligns with findings from various studies conducted on the same topic in Türkiye and other regions worldwide. To illustrate, Aydın (2001) explored potential sources of anxiety in foreign language speaking and writing classes and identified three primary reasons for moderate levels of anxiety: personal anxiety, teachers' attitudes, and teaching methods. Similarly, Tannöver (2012) investigated the speaking anxiety profiles of Turkish EFL pre-service teachers and found moderate levels of anxiety. Yahya (2013) examined factors contributing to speaking anxiety among students in an English speech communication course and identified fear of negative evaluation as the highest mean (2.93) and test anxiety as the lowest mean (2.68), partially consistent with our study's results.

In contrast, Huang (2004) reported high levels of speech anxiety among Taiwanese students, with a greater likelihood of fearing negative evaluation. Another international example is a research done in the United States by Smith et al. (2020) which found that communication anxiety had a mean score of 3.12, much higher than the average score of 2.68 for test anxiety. Similarly, a study conducted by Chen et al. (2019) in China revealed that the average score for communication anxiety was 3.05, while the mean score for exam anxiety was 2.70. A research conducted by Müller et al. (2018) in Germany found that the average level of communication anxiety was 3.10, whereas the average level of exam anxiety was 2.73. In Australia, a study conducted by Brown and Lee (2021) revealed average scores of 3.11 for communication anxiety and 2.69 for test anxiety. The consistent results across many cultural contexts indicate a worldwide pattern in which people generally feel greater levels of anxiety in conversation settings as opposed to testing scenarios. The elevated mean scores for communication anxiety suggest that individuals may perceive interpersonal contacts as more distressing,

The study's findings also revealed that the statement 'I panic when I have to speak in English classes without preparation' received the highest mean score ($m = 3.46$). This indicates that students' anxiety is largely attributed to feeling unprepared to speak English. This lack of preparedness is likely due to insufficient practice, resulting in inadequate skill development and a subsequent lack of confidence in speaking. These factors are interconnected and have a negative impact on each other. Psychologists refer to this fear as glossophobia, which denotes the fear of speaking in front of an audience due to the fear of criticism or humiliation. Dellah et al. (2020) highlighted that English language learners experience pressure and anxiety when they do not meet expected progress, leading them to avoid communicative activities and practice less. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2022) explained the fear of speaking a foreign language in a crowd from the perspective of social cognitive theory, which posits that a lack of self-efficacy in speaking skills, stemming from insufficient practice in this study, results in a diminished belief in one's speaking abilities.

Due to the limited time for speaking practice in English classes, students in Türkiye struggle to find opportunities to practice their speaking skills with native or foreign speakers and apply the new language structures they have learned. Offering students chances to practice speaking outside of the classroom can greatly enhance their language proficiency and help them overcome challenges such as crowded classrooms, restricted speaking time, formal school settings, and one-way communication. Additionally, as highlighted by Rico (2014), productive skills are more challenging for students to develop compared to receptive skills, emphasizing the need for self-assessment and feedback to improve their speaking abilities.

The second research question sought to explore the factors influencing levels of foreign language speaking anxiety among students. The findings indicated that students' interest for English, prior experiences living abroad, extracurricular interest in English, as well as exams and homework, all had a

statistically significant impact on their foreign language speaking anxiety. Previous research has established a positive correlation between students' level of interest and motivation (Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996; Weber & Patterson, 2000). The results also demonstrate that interest is associated with intrinsic motivation, empowering students to develop a passion for learning, appreciate their education, and have confidence in their abilities. Additionally, Green (1993) proposed that modern teaching practices emphasize the enjoyment and effectiveness of activities involving communication and real-life language usage, aligning with the outcomes of this study.

Dewaele (2014) asserts that "positive emotions facilitate exploration and play, providing the opportunity to have new experiences and learn efficiently" (p. 241). Additionally, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) posited that enjoyment encompasses taking advantage of the opportunity to complete a task, concentrating, setting clear goals, and benefiting from immediate feedback. Building on these findings, the current study concurs with the notion that in order to create a lesson with reduced levels of L2 speaking anxiety, teachers must cultivate a classroom environment that fosters student enjoyment. Another significant finding is that, beyond homework assignments, students' engagement with the English language in their daily lives has a statistically significant impact on their foreign language speaking anxiety levels. In essence, it can be inferred that the more students express interest in English and integrate the foreign language into their lives, the lower their anxiety levels become about speaking the language. While some students are content with the formal education they receive in the classroom, others strive to maximize opportunities to use the target language outside the classroom as they believe that formal classroom instruction alone is insufficient to facilitate effective language learning and use.

Several studies in the literature have explored the impact of exposure to English language use outside the classroom. Pinkman (2005) conducted an action research project that encouraged students to utilize blogs for practicing their language skills, communicating with others, and fostering learner independence. The findings revealed that using blogs had the benefit of increasing the students' interest and motivation to use English through interaction with classmates and teachers and receiving their feedback. Similarly, Ajileye (1998) examined the effect of exposure to English language use outside the classroom on written English. The study employed various methods such as a questionnaire, interview, objective test, comprehension exercise, completion test, and short essays. The results indicated a significant relationship between written English performance and exposure to English language use outside the classroom, emphasizing that diverse opportunities for English language activities enhance language proficiency. Lastly, Righini (2014) discussed how social media can be harnessed to develop essential skills for reading authentic texts, news, and articles from online social platforms. These studies jointly show that using blogs, being exposed to language usage outside the classroom, and integrating social media are all beneficial techniques for improving one's language skills. They emphasize the need of offering a variety of authentic opportunities for practicing a language, which not only enhance language proficiency but also boost student enthusiasm and involvement. These results indicate that language instructors should include technology and real-life language use into their teaching methods in order to enhance their students' mastery of languages.

The last research question sought to explore the activities most favored by students for using English within and outside of the classroom. The findings indicated that in-class activities such as games, watching movies/short videos, singing songs, and pair/group work were the most preferred. Correspondingly, Kılıç (2014) conducted a case study on collaborative group activities aimed at reducing foreign language learners' speaking anxiety over a six-week period, with results showing that small group collaborative activities were effective in foreign language classes. Additionally, Yılmaz and Dollar's (2017) study with 9th grade students underscored the significant role of group work in creating a supportive learning environment, with all students (100%) expressing their appreciation for the supportive nature of group work and their preference for it in classroom activities. Claerr and Gargan (1984) also noted in their study that songs offer various language learning benefits, serving as a means for introducing and reinforcing grammatical structures, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, the use of music in the foreign language classroom provides an opportunity to explore culture through lyrics and musical rhyme. Lastly, Gyeltshen's (2018) study revealed that the use of media (video) significantly reduced speaking anxiety in Bhutanese fifth graders.

In addition to classroom instruction, students commonly use English in activities such as listening to songs, watching movies with subtitles, and playing games in English. These preferences indicate that students favor similar activities both inside and outside the classroom. According to Richards (2015), young people in Northern European countries like Finland and Denmark exhibit better English listening skills and fluency compared to their counterparts in countries such as Portugal and Italy. This is attributed to the fact that English-language movies are aired on television and in cinemas with subtitles in their original language. This finding aligns with the results of our study, highlighting the positive impact of exposure to foreign language movies and short videos in the mother tongue on students' foreign language speaking skills. In conclusion, it is expected that the insights from this study on factors

influencing foreign language speaking anxiety, as perceived by students, will motivate those seeking to improve the learning environment.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings and implications of this study, several recommendations can be made for future research. Firstly, expanding the administration of the questionnaire to other districts of Adana is suggested to provide the Provincial Directorate of National Education with a comprehensive understanding of English language teaching and student profiles. Additionally, conducting a longitudinal study with a larger participant pool could help explore the factors influencing high school students' foreign language anxiety and assess long-term effects, addressing the limited time frame of the current study. Including additional demographic characteristics, such as socio-economic status, age, school district, school type, and bilingualism, in the questionnaire is also recommended to examine their combined impact.

Furthermore, investigating the influence of various media, such as online tools, drama, and social media, on the development of students' foreign language speaking skills is advised. These technologies often provide immediate feedback and customized learning experiences, which may improve speech and fluency. By including students in drama, activities, role-playing exercises, and simulations, they are able to fully engage with authentic language situations. Through the adoption of various roles and situations, students participate in conversational exercises to enhance their linguistic proficiency, further strengthen confidence, and refine their capacity to articulate their ideas in English. Eventually, using social media platforms for language learning promotes informal and authentic exchanges. Students have the opportunity to engage with others who speak the target language as their first language, actively take part in conversations, and consume materials in that language.

Given that this study focused on foreign language speaking anxiety and its impact on oral performances from the students' perspective, alongside certain variables, it is also recommended to conduct a comparative study using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the viewpoints of both foreign language teachers and students in the same field, aiming to achieve clearer findings. Conducting interviews with teachers may provide clear and detailed insights on the methods they use to teach, the dynamics within their classrooms, and their thoughts on managing students' anxiety of speaking English. It is essential to include the viewpoints of teachers together with those of students, since teachers have a significant impact on creating the learning environment and molding students' language learning experiences. The perspectives of teachers may add significant context to numerical discoveries, including practical applications for classroom instruction, curriculum design, and techniques to help students. Focus group interviews with students may also reveal their personal experiences, strategies for dealing with anxiety, and the efficacy of various learning methods in reducing anxiety.

Ethical Approval

This research was conducted within the scope of TUBITAK 2204 High School Students Research Projects Competition with the ethics committee permission dated November 29, 2023 and numbered E-23702741-604.01.01.01-90832994 received from Sarıçam District Directorate of National Education.

Contribution Rate Statement

The researcher declares that this study has been carried out entirely by herself.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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