

Speaking Anxiety among Different Grades of K12: 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th Grades

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Abstract: The present study aimed to investigate the speaking anxiety among different grades, ages and genders of EFL students in Turkey and their views toward speaking anxiety. It was also investigated if they have any strategy to overcome the speaking anxiety. The participants were 80 students from four different schools. The study included four different grades; 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th. 6th and 8th graders (N=30) were from two different secondary schools. 10th and 12th (N=50) graders were from two different high schools. They were all from different age groups and genders. A questionnaire was used as data collection instrument and the data were collected and analysed in both qualitative and quantitative manners. Results showed that students in Turkey have speaking anxiety due to their negative feelings and fear of making mistake while producing language orally. Also it was revealed that students have some basic suggestions to overcome the anxiety but they do not use them and they require teachers' help and support.

Key words: EFL, Speaking Anxiety, K12, Oral Production

“Nothing in life is to be feared. It is to be understood” - Marie Curie

Introduction

Learning new things bring some concomitant feelings with them and sometimes those feelings may not be good ones (e.g. fear, anxiety, lack of confidence) because of our innate fear of not knowing. Think about a baby who does not know what a cat is, when the baby sees the cat for the first time, s/he would have fear of not knowing what it is. We may use the same explanation for the language as well. If learners are not used to the language, they would have fear of producing the language. Turula (2004) claims that anxiety has a negative effect in language learning. We must overcome those negative feelings to be successful in a language and learn the language in a proper way.

While teaching and learning English, we focus on basic skills of language, but still in some countries, like Turkey, where learners learn English as a foreign language (EFL), skills may not be necessarily required and/or practiced due to the lack of exposure to the target language. Since not knowing language appears in the form of oral production during most of the classroom time, lots of the learners have a fear of producing it orally.

In Turkey, the majority of people learn English as a part of the school curriculum and the learning process takes place only at school for certain hours of a week if a learner does not take any extra course. Outside of the classroom, learners don't have any natural opportunity to use or produce the language. Within the class hours, in most of the public schools, students have courses which do not promote oral communication but language itself mostly without using it in real life.

Additionally, Jones (2004) defines another case of problem in language learning situation as a fear provoked when the learner is asked to speak in the second or the foreign language in public, with the risk of social embarrassment and such negative feelings which cause the reticence of learners. Reticence and anxiety are complex constructs that stem from a range of linguistic, educational and cultural elements as well as personality attributes (Liu and Jackson, 2011).

The present study will attempt to contribute to the field of English language teaching and learning (ELT/L) by examining Turkish K12 EFL learners' speaking fear levels and reasons why they do not want to speak in L2. The present study will try to lighten the differences between the grades according to the fear level and its relations with age and gender if it is so. Since language is an emotional as well as cognitive field, the feelings and reasons should be examined together. The present study should be significant specifically for the Turkish teachers and teacher candidates who must understand Turkish learners' situations, conditions, and needs in order to help them more easily and effectively while producing the language orally.

The main motivation of the present study originates from the situation of the K12 learners' fear of speaking in L2. Suggestions on fear of speaking according to age, gender, and feelings will be proposed to scaffold and assist the following studies and to contribute to the field of ELT/L.

Literature Review

The Causes of Speaking Anxiety

In the field of language learning, numerous studies have found that anxiety has negative effects on the language learners' productive as well as receptive skills, and this anxiety becomes stronger as learners proceed with impromptu oral production in public.

The previous studies claimed that speaking anxiety is caused by many factors such as low perceived self-efficacy and fear of negative evaluation (Gkonou, 2011); personal reasons, negative self-assessment of ability, high personal expectations, self-comparison to other students, and their irrational beliefs about language learning (Aydogan, Akbarova, Dogan, Gonen, Tuncdemir and Kerla, 2013); fear of being in public and shyness, and fear of speaking inaccurately (Zhiping, 2013); and cultural misunderstandings (Cutrone, 2009). Additionally, speaking in front of the class without preparation, being corrected while speaking, inadequate wait time, and not being allowed to use the first language in a second language classes were also identified as important causes of speaking anxiety (Mak, 2011). Moreover learners' teachers' manner towards them and towards their errors, and the teaching procedures in speaking in front of the classroom such as making oral presentations, or the habit of studying individually can be counted as causes of speaking anxiety (Aydogan, Akbarova, Dogan, Gonen, Tuncdemir & Kerla, 2013).

One of the previous studies (Subasi, 2010), which was carried out in Turkey, suggested that the main sources of the students' anxiety in oral practice are personal reasons, teachers' manners, teaching procedures, and previous experiences. The author suggested that teachers should make an effort to respond appropriately to

their students' fear of negative evaluation. In another study, young EFL learners suggested that linguistic difficulties such as not knowing the sufficient words or structures, prohibition of mother tongue use, inhibition, and the fear of making mistakes were the main causes of speaking anxiety which should be treated carefully (Al Hosni, 2014).

Speaking Anxiety Differences among EFL and ESL Students

In fact, exposure means a lot when it comes to oral production. Also, previous studies established that ESL students do not feel anxious in contrast to the EFL learners (Zhiping, 2013). According to a comparison study it was affirmed that ESL students are neutral with their feelings regarding communication comprehension. In comparison to ESL learners, the EFL learners are more certain with their answers; they agree that they are confident when they speak, they disagree that they are shy or that they get nervous. On the side of the classmates, it seems that these EFL learners are confident that their classmates are not in the position to laugh at them since these classmates are fellow Koreans. And, the EFL learners perceive themselves as the ones responsible for the language anxiety that they feel (Mamhot, Martin and Masangya, 2013). Furthermore, speaking in ESL environment is not exclusively the source of the anxiety, but that speaking in front of the class is (Hadziosmanovic, 2012). Truly, this statement is also valid for EFL learners or any kind of learner. Being in front of a class or public makes the producer of the language anxious (Zhiping, 2013).

Ways of Overcoming Speaking Anxiety

As learners feel anxious and not able to speak, they seek for some ways of coping with their anxiety. In some studies it was revealed that ways of coping with anxiety are as follows: keeping silent, avoiding eye contact, being with friends, expressive reactions (Zhiping, 2013).

Studies suggested that much more practice, study on vocabulary, grammar and syntax would be helpful for those students who are anxious about speaking (Kocak,

2010). But of course, this is not the only way to overcome the anxiety of speaking. Previous studies on the field of language teaching suggested that by using some activities and materials this anxiety can be lessen. Audio dialog journals' positive effects on learners who have speaking anxiety are examples for this. Audio dialog journals have a positive influence in overcoming speaking anxiety and serve a number of functions including cognitive, linguistic, pedagogical, and social ones (Siyli and Kafes, 2015). There are various ways that teachers can help to lessen the speaking anxiety in the classroom. First, they can employ activity types that cause lower levels of anxiety such as pair work, and gradually introduce activity types that cause higher levels of anxiety such as speech giving (Cutrone, 2009). Also, Horwitz et al. (1986), contributed to this topic by suggesting techniques such as giving advice on effective language learning strategies, journal keeping, and behavioural contracting (a simple positive-reinforcement tool that is widely used by teachers to change student behaviour).

According to another study which took place in Turkey, it was revealed that the participants' reflection on their own experiences with foreign language anxiety referred to the foreign language teacher's role. Because, creating an intimate, threat-free environment in which learner errors were handled gently, and positive reinforcement was provided could help anxious learners go a long way to reduce their foreign language anxiety levels (Capan and Simsek, 2012). Ultimately, promoting cooperation between learners with similar problems was also suggested as a possible solution to overcome the speaking anxiety.

To sum up, the reality is that learners may have language anxiety because of variety of causes. However, as the anxiety level of the EFL learners is higher during oral production process compared to the ESL learners, there is certain need to find ways to reduce or decrease this to a reasonable level. Therefore, it would be useful to research if it is possible to lessen EFL learners' anxiety level.

In the present study, firstly four different schools were chosen; two of them were elementary stage and the other two were high school stage. The study involved the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades to understand the effects of age on fear of speaking. Secondly, a prepared questionnaire was given to the chosen students. Students were chosen according to their answers to a warm-up session which included basic questions (e.g. How are you?, Do you like English? etc.). After collecting questionnaires, all questions' answers were calculated individually. In the questionnaire there were groups of questions which were related to some specific topics (e.g. general, fluency level, mistake and feel). Then data was collected, calculated and divided into groups and examined. After examining the collected data, we had research questions' answers and a study which could create suggestions on the fear of speaking issue.

The present study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

1. Do learners have speaking anxiety and does it change according to their grade? Does grade matter with regard to speaking anxiety?
2. Are learners afraid of speaking because of the fear of making mistake and/or their negative feelings while producing language orally?
3. Are learners aware of their speaking anxiety and do they have any suggestions to solve this problem?
4. How does the speaking interlocutor affect learners' oral production and/or anxiety level?

Methodology

Participants

80 participants (49 female and 31 male) were chosen for this study from 4 different grades and schools. 15 were 6th graders, 15 were 8th graders, 25 were 10th graders, and 25 were 12th graders.

Firstly, 2 different secondary schools and 2 high schools were chosen randomly from Istanbul's different districts to collect all-purpose data. 7 females (four 6th grade and

three 8th grade) and 8 males (four 6th grade and four 8th grade) participants were chosen from the 1st secondary school. 7 females (three 6th grade and four 8th grade) and 8 males (four 6th grade and four 8th grade) participants were chosen from the 2nd secondary school (see Table 1).

Table 1. The secondary school participants.

Number of Part. ▾	1st Secondary Sc. ▾	2nd Secondary Sc. ▾
Female 6th Graders	4	3
Male 6th Graders	4	4
Female 8th Graders	3	4
Male 8th Graders	4	4
Total Number	15	15

20 females (eight 10th grade and twelve 12th) and 8 males (five 10th grade and three 12th grade) participants were chosen from the 1st high school. 15 females (seven 10th grade and eight 12th grade) and 7 males (five 10th grade and two 12th grade) were chosen from the 2nd high school (see Table 2).

Table 2. The high school participants.

Number of Part. ▾	1st High School ▾	2nd High School ▾
Female 10th Graders	8	7
Male 10th Graders	5	5
Female 12th Graders	12	8
Male 12th Graders	3	2
Total Number	28	22

All schools were state schools and had English lessons in the school curriculum. There weren't any extra English courses. Participants were randomly chosen after a spontaneous short talk to detect the participants who were not willing to speak and who were. All the participants were EFL learners and their age ranged between 11

and 19 (the mean age was 15). The demographic backgrounds of the participants were similar, but their linguistic backgrounds portrayed differences with regard to their academic scores, language proficiency levels, and school records.

Instruments

The data were collected by the help of a questionnaire which was prepared by the researcher. The questionnaire included mainly 2 sections which were Section A, a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), and from 5 (perfect) to 1 (poor); and Section B, open-ended questions. More specifically, Section A included 4 parts, each of them were different from one another according to the topic that was examined (see Appendix 1).

The first part of Section A was created to examine participants' general views towards English; the second part was created to examine participants' mistake-making rates according to specific mistake topics (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, etc.); the third part was created to examine participants' feelings while speaking English; and the fourth part was created to examine participants' fluency and anxiety level in different circumstances, and this part included an option- addable question to collect various data from the participants. Section B was created to understand if participants were aware of their speaking anxiety (if they had any), and if they had any suggestions to overcome it by themselves or with their teachers. Section A was designed to collect quantitative data, and Section B was designed to collect qualitative data.

Procedure

The present study used a 5-point Likert scale to get more detailed and full data from the participants. Additionally, 2 open-ended questions were added in order to collect the opinions which could not be expressed through the quantitative part of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated in the native language of the participants to ensure that they really understand the questions, so that the most valid data could be collected. The questionnaire was administered during the

participants' English classes to make them feel like they were taking an English class, and doing it so, they could better assess themselves related to whether they have speaking anxiety or not. The study was implemented in one session, and collected both quantitative and qualitative data.

Data collection

Prior to collecting the ultimate data, the data collection tool was applied on 15 volunteer participants in order to pilot it and to see whether it was proper or not. These 15 participants were from different ages, grades and cities. The sample questionnaire was sent them via mail, and their responses were collected in the same way. 10 participants were English teacher candidates from Istanbul, Tekirdag, Samsun, Eskisehir and Bursa; 1 participant was a 6th grade student; 1 participant was an 8th grader; 1 participant was a 10th grader, and the remaining 2 participants were 12th graders from Istanbul.

The English teacher candidates were chosen on purpose to enlighten the researcher about the data collection instrument's utility, and to give feedback to the researcher about the instrument's design and questions. The rest of the participants were chosen to see whether they had any difficulty in taking the questionnaire, and if so what these were, and to calculate an average time for the application of the questionnaire.

According to the feedback and difficulties that the participants indicated during taking the sample questionnaire, the language of the questionnaire was changed to participant's L1, which was Turkish. Statements were written again clearly and the mean time for completing the questionnaire was specified as 15 minutes.

The study was conducted on the 3rd week of April, the 2nd term of the school(s). All questionnaires were performed under supervisorship of the researcher. Before giving the questionnaire a short talk in English was performed in all classes to examine students who do not want to talk and who want. The short talk included basic questions like "How are you?" "Do you like English?" "What do you want to be in

the future?" etc. The short talk was spontaneous. After detecting two groups of students who were not willing to speak and who were, the participants were randomly chosen from both of the groups.

The questionnaires were given to the participants and they were told to feel comfortable and relaxed, and that the responds would be anonymous and they should not hesitate to express their true opinions and to write anything while filling the questionnaire. It was tried to lessen the feelings that would affect them directly in a negative way. This speech was made because the anxiety might affect the results of the present study.

The questionnaire took between 10 and 15 minutes as it was predicted. The process was repeated in all 4 schools and 8 classes without any exception.

Data analyses

The responses of each student to the 5-point Likert scales, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), and from 5 (perfect) to 1 (poor), were entered on a Microsoft Excel 2010 program and the total scores as well as mean scores were calculated regarding the participants' gender and grade.

After that participants were divided into groups according to their genders and grades. For each grade and each gender calculations were done to identify total scores and mean scores. Open-ended questions' responses were listed and grouped. In other words, content analyses were carried out.

The criteria of evaluation of the results were determined for the 5-point Likert scales as in Table 3 for Section A's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd parts; and as in Table 4 for Section A's 4th part. Additionally, as the SPSS program was not used in the present study, 0.5 point difference between the mean scores would be interpreted as significant.

Table 3. The criteria of evaluation of the results for Section A's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd parts.

Mean	Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Strongly Agree (5)
3.40 - 4.19	Agree (4)
2.60 - 3.39	Not Decided (3)
1.80 - 2.59	Disagree (2)
1.00 - 1.79	Strongly Disagree (1)

Table 4. The criteria of evaluation of the results for Section A's 4th part.

Mean	Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Perfect (5)
3.40 - 4.19	Very Fluently (4)
2.60 - 3.39	Fluently (3)
1.80 - 2.59	Not Fluently (2)
1.00 - 1.79	Poor (1)

The evaluation criteria for each statement in the Likert scales were determined according to the interpretations of the mean results as follows:

In Section A- Part 1, for the 1st statement, 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (not decided) were counted as negative results that mean they might have speaking anxiety; 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) were positive results that mean they might not have speaking anxiety. In Section A- Part 1, for the 2nd and 3rd statements 3, 4 and 5 were counted as negative results; while 2 and 1 were counted as positive results.

In Section A- Part 2, for all statements 3, 4 and 5 were counted as negative results; while 2 and 1 were counted as positive results. In Section A- Part 3, for the 1st statement 1, 2 and 3 were counted as negative results; while 4 and 5 were counted as positive results. In Section A- Part 3, for the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th statements 4 and 5 were counted as negative results; while 1, 2 and 3 were counted as positive results. In Section A- Part 4, for all statements 1 (poor), 2 (not fluently) were counted as negative results; while 3 (fluently), 4 (very fluently), and 5 (perfect) were counted as positive results.

The evaluation criteria for open-ended questions were determined either as positive or negative (i.e. the positive statement group and the negative statement group) according to their positive or negative responses which they gave to the open-ended questions. The positive group told us about how participants may overcome the speaking anxiety, and the negative group told us about why we could not overcome the anxiety of speaking. Moreover, it was understood if the participants had positive feelings towards this study's topic or not.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the quantitative and qualitative data were explained in detail. Additionally, it was tried to reveal the answers of the research questions in review and comparison of the field of ELT/L.

Quantitative Data Results

Table 5. The total mean scores of the participants' speaking anxiety and fluency levels in different circumstances.

Section A's 5-Point Likert-Scale Mean Results																		
Anxiety and Fluency Scale																		
Quest. parts	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	C	C	C	C	D	D	D	D
Total (n=80)	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
Female	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	2
(n=49)	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	2
Male (n=31)	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	2

A: Part 1 B: Part 2 C: Part 3 D: Part 4

Bold ones are positive answers as *Italic* ones are negative answers.

Mean scores were written according to the mean scores' interpretations (see Appendix 2 for the details).

*There is no C4 statement because the results of that statement were examined in the qualitative data section.

Table 5 showed the participants' thoughts and/or feelings towards English speaking anxiety and their fluency level in different circumstances. The numbers in the table clearly showed that the students had speaking anxiety. In general, it could be seen that besides participants' general views towards speaking English, their views towards making mistake were out of bounds. Therefore, it could be postulated that in Turkey the English language learners are afraid of speaking and making mistakes.

Interpretations on part A

For the Part A; I can say that...

Statement #1: "English is an easy language to speak." got the mean score of 3.16, which means *not decided* and the statistical inference says that the students have no idea about whether English is an easy language to speak or not. Moreover, they cannot examine even the foreign language which they study at least for 2 years, because they do not use it. And this view does not change according to the gender of the participants ($m=3.00$ for females and $m=3.33$ for males).

Statement #2: "I have fear of speaking in public."

Statement #3: "I have fear of speaking English."

When we focused on these two statements' mean scores, we could clearly understand that the participants were also not comfortable about speaking, but being in public condition was much more threatening than speaking English. So, the participants would be mostly and highly anxious in such a circumstance where they would need to speak English in public.

Interpretations on part B

For the Part B; While speaking English...

Statement #1: "I have fear of making mistake."

Statement #2: "I have fear of making pronunciation mistake."

Statement #3: "I have fear of making grammar mistake."

Statement #4: "I have fear of making vocabulary mistake."

Statement #5: "I have fear of making discourse mistake."

In this part it was revealed that participants had a fear of making mistakes, but more than others, they were afraid of making pronunciation and vocabulary mistakes. When we compared these results according to gender we observed that male participants' scores ($m=3.8$) were higher than female participants' scores ($m=3.2$), which suggested that male students' anxiety level was higher than the female students' (mean difference 0.6).

Interpretations on part C

For the Part C; While speaking English...

Statement #1: "I feel confident."

Statement #2: "I feel shy."

Statement #3: "I feel excited."

Statement #5: "I am afraid of being mocked/ashamed."

Statement #6: "I am afraid of giving wrong answer."

Statement #7: "I am afraid of not being able to understand what is said."

Statement #1, #2, and #3's mean scores ($m=3.00$, $m=4.00$, and $m=4.00$ respectively) were inefficient, which suggested that while speaking in English participants did not feel confident and excitement made them more anxious while producing the language orally. Meanwhile, the rest of the statements' scores were efficient for the present study. Additionally, the male participants' feelings towards English were more inefficient compared to the female participants' results (see Appendix 2 for details).

Interpretations on part D

For the Part D (fluency scale); I can speak English fluently...

Statement #1: on my own.

Statement #2: in public.

Statement #3: with my friends.

Statement #4: with my teacher.

Statement #5: with a foreign/native person.

It was clearly revealed that the participants believed that they were fluent when there were not any threatening factors around as it might be derived from Statements #1 and #3. The mean scores of these ($m=3.00$) were higher than the mean scores of other three statements ($m=2.00$). In addition, no gender related effect was observed in this sense, that is, the female and male students thought in the same way. Table 6 provides more detailed information related to the results presented in Table 5.

Table 6. The detailed mean scores of the participants' speaking anxiety and fluency levels according to grades.

Section A's Mean Results: Anxiety and Fluency Scale																			
Grades 6																			
Questionnaire parts	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C5	C6	C7	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Total (n=15)	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	1
Female (n=7)	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2
Male (n=8)	3	4	3	4	3	3	5	4	3	5	5	5	4	5	2	2	3	3	1
Grade 8																			
Total (n=15)	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	5	4	5	4	3	1	2	2	1
Female (n=7)	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	5	4	3	1	2	2	1
Male (n=8)	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	5	5	5	5	3	1	3	2	1
Section A's Mean Results																			
Grade 10																			
Questionnaire parts	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C5	C6	C7	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Total (n=25)	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	2	2
Female (n=15)	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2
Male (n=10)	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	2	3	2	3
Grade 12																			
Total (n=25)	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2
Female (n=20)	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	1
Male (n=5)	5	4	3	3	5	2	4	3	4	2	2	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	4

When these statements were examined according to grades, it could be seen that generally high school level participants gave more efficient answers than secondary school participants. That is why, it could be suggested that by age and exposure, anxiety level can be lessened, but yet, anxiety had a great effect on the participants.

It could be listed from less to more with regard to which graders have more speaking anxiety as 8th, 6th, 10th, and 12th graders. Of course it should be mentioned that the

differences between 6th and 8th graders were really slight. All graders had fear of any kind of mistake making while producing language orally, and 6th and 8th graders' feelings as speaking English were negative feelings which teachers and/or teacher candidates must lessen. On the other hand, 10th and 12th graders still had negative feelings but their situation might be lessened more easily compared to the 6th and 8th graders. Fluency level's findings were basically the same as the general findings.

The fluctuation seen on the table is on the part C, which is the part that examines participants' feelings while producing the language orally. This part provided evidence for the grade effects related to the students' feelings rather than their general views towards English or making mistakes.

Qualitative Data Results

The qualitative data results were listed as positive and negative results. In the section A's 4th part's 4th statement participants were asked to write their own feelings while producing language orally and there were 21 usable data. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these results just provided variety on the present study. 10 of 21 were positive statements while 11 of 21 were negative ones.

Table 7. The general positive and negative results.

GENERAL (F)		GENERAL (M)	
(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
Well	Terrible	Well	Sad
Good	Like a Schizoid	Like a Foreign Person	Timid
Different		Cool	Bad
Good		Relieved	Weird
Different			Terrible
Perfect			Silent
			Bad
			Needless
			Pessimist

It was revealed that students' negative feelings should be taken into account while asking them to produce language orally. Because, in the present study it was proven that the negative feelings of the students are one of the causes of speaking anxiety.

Table 8. The positive and negative results according to grades.

6th GRADE (F)		6th GRADE (M)		8th GRADE (F)		8th GRADE (M)	
(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
Well	Terrible	Good	Sad	Good			Timid
		Like a Foreign P.		Different			Bad
							Weird
10th GRADE (F)		10th GRADE (M)		12th GRADE (F)		12th GRADE (M)	
(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
Good		Cool	Terrible	Different	Like a Schizoid	Relieved	
			Silent	Perfect			
			Bad				
			Needless				
			Pessimist				

Also it could be seen on the table that male participants had more negative feelings towards English. As section B's first question examined, which was "Do you have any suggestions to overcome the fear of speaking?", 65% of the participants gave no answer (N=52) or answered as "I have no suggestion.". This was taken as they really do not have any suggestions. On the other side of the coin, 35% of the participants suggested some solutions. These were as in the following:

Female (positive statements)

We should try to speak even we make a mistake.

We can try to speak with our teacher.

We must learn vocabulary. We must visit foreign countries.

We should push ourselves to talk and we should make friends by being a member of a project.

I should learn new vocabulary more.

We should be speaking everywhere. I speak at home but I don't want to speak in the class.

Studying vocabulary. Reading English books.

To make practice and talk away.

I can go to private English course, make practice and participate more.

We should listen to English texts and translate them, make ourselves speak better and that makes us overcome the speaking anxiety.

Giving more English courses at schools and online chat rooms for having conversation.

We should go out in public and improve ourselves.

We should make practice and read more.

We should speak in English more and participate more.

We can speak with our friends or on our own.

To make social works makes one confident and this helps us to overcome the speaking anxiety. For example, making new friends.

Speaking on your own.

It can be made by more practice. While having grammar courses, speaking courses can be given. English competitions may be organised.

Practice.

Female (negative statements)

We don't talk.

Not to say anything.

Male (positive statements)

We should make speaking activities with our friends.

We should try to speak.

We should speak with our teacher.

We should read book.

Speak with tourists.

We can contact by computer games with foreign friends.

To make foreign friends.

As the given suggestions were examined it was revealed that the participants have some strategies to overcome the fear of speaking some which were positive ones, and two of them were negative. Nevertheless, this was only the 35% of the total participants, and this proved that most of the students knew that they had anxiety of speaking, but did not know how to overcome it or they knew what they could do, but they did not try to do it. Moreover, female students tended to give more answers to the questions than the male students. This might be due to their feeling of responsibility as the open-ended questions were not required or mandatory on the questionnaire.

For the second question of section B, which was “How can your teacher help you to overcome the fear of speaking?”, 50% of the participants gave no or imponderable answers and 50% gave answers (n=40) as listed in the following:

Female (positive statements)

S/He must be patient and wait until we correct our mistake.

S/He can help by being calm and understanding person.

Teacher should speak English more and try to give more classes/courses.

S/He can make us speak one by one and when we make a mistake s/he can correct it calmly.

S/He can bring someone foreign for us to talk.

S/He must be patient.

S/He can let us speak more.

S/He can help us by saying unknown words by us as we speak.

To have a mutual well-built communication.

To me, our teacher should teach more vocabulary.

I believe that s/he can help by speaking English and also Turkish.

S/He shouldn't force me to speak and should speak Turkish when I don't understand.

To me, our teacher makes us speak with a native speaker once a month.

S/He should speak slowly and give more chance us to speak.

S/He can help me while breaks, should support me.

S/He shouldn't be angry when we make a mistake, otherwise we always unwilling to speak.

S/He can take us to USA. I can overcome my anxiety just like this.

S/He can take us to abroad.

To have a funny lesson and having a lesson with full of games and activities.

By speaking English.

S/He make us study and practice.

S/He can help by telling our mistakes clearly and calmly.

S/He can make us to give the lesson.

S/He can give me homework to present in front of the class.

S/He can give us speaking lessons as Turkish rather than grammar lessons. We can learn automatically the rules and we can overcome the anxiety of speaking.

Always being in a dialogue.

S/He can support us, recognise to us more.

Practice.

Female (negative statements)

S/He can't help.

Male (positive statements)

S/He can make us to practice speaking.

S/He can teach new vocabulary.

We can have speaking lessons.

S/He should speak in English with us.

S/He can help us to have foreign friends.

S/He can speak Turkish for us to determine the differences.

We can speak English individually and s/he can help us.

S/He can let us to speak Turkish.

S/He let us to participate one by one.

S/He can make one-to-one speaking activities. There can be more speaking lessons.

When the given answers were analysed, it was revealed that teachers and/or teacher candidates could help students by giving them a chance to speak, letting them to make mistakes, teaching vocabulary, being calm and patient and so on. Half of the

participants decided to give an answer to this question and most of them stated that there was lack of support by the teacher.

For both questions there were only three negative statements, which might mean that there were some students who were not eager to learn and/or speak English. They even did not want to speak or let their teacher to help them.

Overall Discussion and Findings of the Research Questions

All of the research questions were answered considering the results. This section includes only basic and general answers that were revealed by the research questions.

1. Do learners have speaking anxiety and does it change according to their grade? Does grade matter with regard to speaking anxiety?

Yes, students have speaking anxiety and it can increase according to grade, but the present study showed that the effect of grade is not that big or significant.

2. Are learners afraid of speaking because of the fear of making mistake and/or their negative feelings while producing language orally?

Yes, both of these are somehow effective in the speaking anxiety of the participants. However, the present study proved that negative feelings affect students more compared to the fear of making mistake.

3. Are learners aware of their speaking anxiety and do they have any suggestions to solve this problem?

In the present study only 35% of the participants were aware that they had speaking anxiety as they answered the 1st open-ended question, but also 50% of the participants answered the 2nd open-ended question. Therefore, we may infer that at

least half of them were aware of the situation and they had some positive and a couple of negative suggestions as listed in the qualitative data results part.

4. How does the speaking interlocutor affect learners' oral production and/or anxiety level?

As shown in the quantitative data results part, when there were some threatening factors, the anxiety of the students increased and their fluency level decreased. However, when they were on their own or with friends, they were tended to speak more fluently.

To sum up, the previous studies (e.g. Zhiping, 2013) claimed that fear of being in public and shyness, and fear of speaking inaccurately affects students in a negative way, which was confirmed by the present study. In addition, the present study revealed that students have fear of speaking because of their fear of making mistake while producing language orally. Their negative feelings and the circumstances where they have to speak seem to be important factors. Moreover, the present study showed that being in public have a negative effect on students as claimed by Hadziosmanovic (2012).

Additionally, we reached the same inference as Mak (2011). The postulation was that not being allowed to use the first language in a second language class were identified as important causes of speaking anxiety. Also, the ways of overcoming speaking anxiety were similar to the suggestions of the previous studies that proposed that much more practice, study on vocabulary, grammar and syntax would be helpful for the students who are anxious about speaking (Kocak, 2010).

The present study confidently suggests that teachers and/or teacher candidates should focus on the negative feelings and the fear of the students, and should put extra effort to lessen these in a proper way. The present study explained the ways

that teachers could help to lessen the speaking anxiety in the classroom as an addition to the suggestions of Cutrone (2009).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it can be claimed that the speaking anxiety of the EFL students is an ongoing process as the previous studies and the present study revealed, which is an unavoidable problem in teaching and learning processes of English language. It is not only a barrier in learning and producing the L2, but also a barrier in teaching the L2 that teachers must lessen. While language exposure is very important for the L2 learners; the important point of the exposure should not be giving directly the rules and/or structures of the language, but it should be the chance of students to produce the language orally because improving the L2 requires communication. The present study showed that feelings were one of the most important causes of language anxiety for the EFL students, due to the fact that they were not used to use the language in real life. They cannot use it out of class effectively because of the EFL environment. Therefore, they enlarge the capacity of negative feelings that they might have against the language which brings speaking anxiety. Even when speaking about a topic which would not necessitate certain amount of knowledge or special preparation, people might be anxious, and thus, when it comes to learning a new language, students should not be forced to speak without providing them with the positive support of the teacher and classmates that might be needed.

In the present study, speaking anxiety in Turkey was tried to be examined by age, gender and grade from different views of the topic. Negative feelings and fear of making mistake were the main reasons for speaking anxiety and both of them may be lessen with the support of the teacher and some teaching materials. Additionally, the present study proved that students have basic strategies to overcome the anxiety indeed. They just need to take the first step with just some help of the people who know that world, who would be the teachers, since the L2 is an unknown world for them in the beginning phases. It is quite natural for them to be afraid. Nevertheless,

we must never forget the quote at the very beginning of the paper: “Nothing in life is to be feared. It is to be understood.”

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Appendices

Appendix 1

☐ Female ☐ Male Age:

Grade: ☐ 6th, ☐ 8th, ☐ 10th, ☐ 12th

A. Please try to be reflective and do not hesitate to answer freely.

1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Not Decided 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree

I can say that...	1	2	3	4	5
English is an easy language to speak.					
I have fear of speaking in public.					
I have fear of speaking English.					

While speaking English...	1	2	3	4	5
I have fear of making mistake.					
I have fear of making pronunciation mistake.					
I have fear of making grammar mistake.					
I have fear of making vocabulary mistake.					
I have fear of making discourse mistake.					

While speaking English...	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident.					
I feel shy.					
I feel excited.					
I feel _____. (If you're answer is different, please identify it.)					
I am afraid of being mocked/ashamed.					
I am afraid of giving wrong answer.					
I am afraid of not being able to understand what is said.					

Please indicate your fluency level.

1: Poor 2: Not Fluent 3: Fluent 4: Very Fluent 5: Perfect

I can speak English fluently...	1	2	3	4	5
...on my own.					
... in public.					
... with my friends.					
... with my teacher.					
... with a foreign/ native person.					

B. Please answer the open-ended questions below.

1. Do you have any suggestions to overcome the fear of speaking (in English and/or in public)?

2. How can your teacher help you to overcome the fear of speaking?

Appendix 2

Section A's Mean Results

Overall Total Means

Quest. parts	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C5	C6	C7	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Total (n=80)	3,25	3,53	2,72	3,53	3,51	3,25	3,51	3,45	2,96	3,48	3,83	3,25	3,41	3,46	3,11	1,91	2,72	2,38	2,06
Female (n=49)	3,3	3,44	2,51	3,38	3,3	3,24	3,26	3,28	3,18	3,46	3,91	2,97	3,24	3,28	3,02	1,87	2,61	2,26	1,83
Male (n=31)	3,16	3,67	3,06	3,77	3,83	3,25	3,9	3,7	2,61	3,51	3,7	3,67	3,67	3,74	3,25	1,96	2,9	2,58	2,41

Grade 6

Total (n=15)	3,2	3,33	2,53	3,66	3,33	3,4	3,86	3,53	3,33	4	4,8	3,66	3,53	3,6	2,6	2,06	2,86	2,93	1,73
Female (n=7)	3,28	3	2,14	3,28	3,28	3,14	3,42	3,28	3,42	3,57	4,85	3	3	2,85	2,71	2,28	2,85	3	1,85
Male (n=8)	3,12	3,62	2,87	4	3,37	3,62	4,25	3,75	3,25	4,37	4,75	4,25	4	4,25	2,5	1,87	2,87	2,87	1,62

Grade 8

Total (n=15)	2,8	3,93	3,66	4,26	4,33	4,4	4,33	4,4	2,46	3,86	4,6	4,13	4,6	4	3,06	1,6	2,46	2,06	1,46
Female (n=7)	2,85	3,85	3,42	4,14	3,85	4,28	3,71	4	2,71	3,71	5	3,57	4,28	3,71	2,85	1,57	2,14	2	1,57
Male (n=8)	2,75	4	3,87	4,37	4,75	4,5	4,87	4,75	2,25	4	4,25	4,62	4,87	4,25	3,25	1,62	2,75	2,12	1,37

Grade 10

Total (n=25)	3,16	3,48	2,32	3,28	3,08	2,56	3	3,24	2,72	3,4	3,48	2,8	3,12	3,44	3,36	2	2,84	2,28	2,52
Female (n=15)	3,26	3,53	2,13	3,13	2,93	2,66	2,93	3,13	3,2	3,46	3,66	2,26	2,86	3,26	3,13	2	2,66	2,13	2,06
Male (n=10)	3	3,4	2,6	3,5	3,3	2,4	3,1	3,4	2	3,3	3,2	3,6	3,5	3,7	3,7	2	3,1	2,5	3,2

Grade 12

Total (n=25)	3,64	3,48	2,68	3,28	3,56	3,16	3,32	3,04	3,28	3,04	3,16	2,92	2,92	3,08	3,2	1,92	2,68	2,36	2,16
Female (n=20)	3,5	3,4	2,6	3,35	3,4	3,35	3,3	3,15	3,25	3,35	3,4	3,3	3,25	3,3	3,1	1,75	2,65	2,2	1,75
Male (n=5)	4,2	3,8	3	3	4,2	2,4	3,4	2,6	3,4	1,8	2,2	1,4	1,6	2,2	3,6	2,6	2,8	3	3,8