

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN ELT**

MASTER'S THESIS

Gamze KIZILTEPE

**Foreign Languages Education Department
English Language Education Program**

AUGUST, 2023

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Thesis Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Eyyüp Yaşar KÜRÜM

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APPROVAL PAGE

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with the respect that the study “The Relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Language Proficiency in ELT”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References.
(10/06/2023)

Gamze KIZILTEPE

FOREWORD

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Eyyüp Yaşar KÜRÜM, for offering valuable feedback and consistent assistance during this challenging yet rewarding phase.

I would like to extend my thanks and express my appreciation to my beloved parents, especially my beloved mother Nagihan Cesur, who has always had a strong belief in me, as well as my beloved father Mustafa Cesur, my sister Nisa Cesur and my lovely late grandfather Mehmet Cesur. I appreciate what a wonderful blessing it is to come from such a kind and encouraging family.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I would like to offer my sincerest gratitude to my husband, Erkan Çağrı Kızıltepe, who has been completely there for me during every step of the process that I have been going through in my life.

August, 2023

Gamze KIZILTEPE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN ELT

ABSTRACT

Foreign language anxiety is a notion that many researchers have conducted studies on and the impact of language anxiety on language acquisition cannot be ignored. The ability to overcome the anxiety for university students is a fundamental skill to be able to learn the language without any barriers. Moreover, understanding the likely causes of language anxiety has also significant effect on language learning. This study investigates the likely relationship between foreign language anxiety and language proficiency in ELT.

The study was carried out at a foundation university, English Preparatory School, in Istanbul, Turkey. The researcher pursued a descriptive and inferential quantitative data collection method and utilized a questionnaire to understand the relationship between foreign language anxiety and language proficiency in ELT. The study was performed with 4 proficiency level of students responding to the questionnaire. The sample size was 162 students, and they were randomly selected among the whole students of English Preparatory Program which has totally 2.000 students. 87 female, 70 male and 5 prefer not to say students took part in. Their language level was diagnosed through the English Proficiency Exam.

The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and language proficiency neither negatively nor positively. This study provides data for both language teachers and students by shedding light on the relationship of the foreign language anxiety and the proficiency level of the students.

Keywords: Anxiety, Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety, Fear of failure, Foreign Language Proficiency, Attitude

YABANCI DİL KAYGISI VE DİL YETKİNLİĞİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

ÖZET

Yabancı dil kaygısı birçok araştırmacının üzerinde çalışma yaptığı bir kavramdır. İlaveten, dil kaygısının dil edinimi üzerindeki etkisi ihmal edilemez bir gerçektir. Üniversite öğrencileri için kaygıyı yenebilme becerisi, dili herhangi bir engelle takılmadan öğrenebilmek için temel bir beceridir. Ayrıca, dil kaygısının olası nedenlerini anlamak da dil öğrenimi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahiptir. Bu çalışma, yabancı dil kaygısı ile İngilizce öğretiminde üniversite öğrencilerinin dil yeterliliği arasındaki olası ilişkiyi araştırmaktadır.

Bu araştırma, İstanbul'da bir vakıf üniversitesinin İngilizce Hazırlık Programları bölümünde yürütülmüştür. Araştırmacı, tanımlayıcı ve çıkarımsal bir nicel veri toplama yöntemi izlemiş ve yabancı dil kaygısı ile İngilizce öğretiminde üniversite öğrencilerinin dil yeterliliği arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamak için bir anket kullanmıştır. Çalışma, anketi uygulayan öğrencilerin 4 yeterlik düzeyinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. 162 öğrenci olup, toplam 2.000 öğrencinin bulunduğu İngilizce Hazırlık Programının tüm öğrencileri arasından seçkisiz olarak seçilmiştir. Araştırmada, 87 kadın, 70 erkek ve 5 söylememeyi tercih eden öğrenci yer almıştır. Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin dil seviyeleri, İngilizce Yeterlik Sınavı ile tespit edildi.

Bulgular, yabancı dil kaygısı ile dil yeterliliği arasında ne olumlu ne de olumsuz bir ilişki olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu araştırma yabancı dil kaygısı ile öğrencilerin yeterlilik düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiye ışık tutarak hem dil öğretmenleri hem de öğrenciler için çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kaygı, Yabancı Dil Konuşma Kaygısı, Başarısızlık Korkusu, Yabancı Dil Yetkinliği, Davranış

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I. INTRODUCTION

This introduction chapter provides a concise overview of the research's beginning which is aimed at learning whether the anxiety level changes according to students' proficiency levels with different kinds of variables. The reasons for this research are explored in detail in the following parts, which also provide ample information for further study and comprehension.

A. Background of the study

Learning foreign languages is a subject that has a lot in common with human psychology. Psychology has had a significant impact on it, and several research have been conducted to determine the link between language learning and emotional factors (Swain, 2013). All of these studies have one thing in common: they all demonstrate the striking impact that emotional elements have on the process of learning a language. Moreover, according to Brown (1994), who studied the connection between anxiety and learning a foreign language, people worry when confronted with complicated activities because they subconsciously believe they are incapable of completing them. There is no question that the majority of learners view acquiring a second or foreign language as one of those challenging activities. Certain personality characteristics or attributes, like self-esteem, empathy, and introversion, are among the affective variables that are linked to human emotions and moods.

Self-esteem, risk-taking, extroversion, motivation, and anxiety are some of the personality traits that are typically the subject of research on the link between learning a foreign language and affective variables. In language learning journey, these items may be whether pros or cons. Anxiety is one of such traits and is a crucial aspect of the emotional realm. An essential emotional factor in the process of learning a foreign language has been identified as language anxiety. According to Krashen (1982), anxiety may get in the way of learning and mastering a language as part of the learner's emotional filter. As a consequence, the learners may show frightened and uncommitted behaviors while they are in the process of learning.

Anxiety is characterized by Spielberger (1983) as "feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry" (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Wilson, 2006: 41). Scovel (1991) defines anxiety as "a state of apprehension, and a vague fear that regarding the link between anxiety and learning a foreign language" Brown (1994) asserts that individuals respond nervously to items involving complicated tasks, believing that they lack the essential abilities to complete them. There is no argument that the majority of people regard learning a second or foreign language to be a tough and demanding process. As a result, people may exhibit anxious tendencies when learning a language.

Questionnaires are the most common tools employed in quantitative studies. Horwitz et al. (1986) created the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale questionnaire (FLCAS). The scale measures the three components of anxiety in the foreign language classroom: communication anxiety, exam anxiety, and fear of poor assessment (Aydın, 2001).

Together with quantitative methods, qualitative methods, like diaries or interviews, were used to provide more in-depth data on the emergence of anxiety when acquiring a foreign language (Aydın, 2001). Foreign language anxiety is usually related with speaking since many language learners exhibit anxious tendencies when communicating (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1991). In this regard, it is reasonable to assume that most learners of language have a degree of foreign language speaking anxiety. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS), modified on Young's (1990) Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, was developed by Huang (2004) to quantify speaking anxiety.

When language learners have unreasonable expectations, they may experience anxiety. For instance, some students may feel that effective speaking requires excellent pronunciation abilities (Wilson, 2006). Their attempts to attain such an unattainable objective may cause them frustration and anxiety (Aydın, 2001; Cheng, 2005; Ohata, 2005a; Wang, 1998).

Oral exams have always been identified as the most anxiety provoking aspect of testing and teaching procedures (Aydın, 2001; Huang, 2004). Meantime some activities in the classroom, as pair work and group work, have been demonstrated to be less anxiety-inducing, speaking in front of the class and verbal presentations have been reported to be among the most anxiety-provoking scenarios. For instance,

according to research done by Worde (2003), students experience anxiety during public speaking activities because they believe their classmates are evaluating their performance. Cheng (2005) also explored the association between language anxiety and in-class activities, as well as the teacher's conduct and features. The research revealed that giving a speech in front of the class was the most stressful activity.

Batumlu and Erden (2007), Dalkılıç (2001), and Huang (2004) examined variables like gender, learners' motivation, and time of initiation of English language study in attempt to identify additional variables that may influence language learners' anxiety. Nonetheless, with the exception of Huang's (2004) study, all studies explored the topic in terms of general foreign language anxiety. Huang (2004) performed a study in Taiwan to evaluate the association between foreign language speaking anxiety and learning motivation, gender, and when the students started to learn English. The findings revealed that female participants were much more nervous about speaking than male participants, and that learners who began learning English earlier were less concerned about speaking. The research also demonstrated that students with greater enthusiasm had less nervousness when speaking.

Furthermore, certain scholars have examined the correlation between anxiety related to foreign language acquisition and the level of proficiency, accomplishment, or performance (Batumlu & Erden, 2007; Dalkılıç, 2001; Liu, 2006; Woodrow, 2006). Batumlu and Erden (2007), Dalkılıç (2001), and Liu (2006) have observed that individuals with lower proficiency in a foreign language tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety during the learning process. Woodrow (2006) investigated the connection between ESL learners' oral performances and their speaking anxiety. The results demonstrated that second language learners with greater anxiety while speaking seemed to be less effective in oral communication, indicating a trend similar to that was seen in the three research cited above, in which greater language anxiety was related with lower levels of success.

However, limited research has been conducted on the correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and overall language proficiency. This would yield insights into the development of speaking anxiety across various levels of general language proficiency. Saito and Samimy (1996) examined foreign language speaking anxiety among Japanese college students of varying competency levels. The study revealed that advanced Japanese learners were more concerned about

speaking the language than starting and intermediary learners, while intermediary learners were the least anxious. The conclusions of this study cannot, however, be extended to Turkish EFL circumstances, as the study was done with college-level Japanese learners with significantly different learner characteristics.

B. Statement of the problem

The idea that anxiety related factors are major elements in the language acquisition process and that analyzing these crucial phenomena in a Turkish university setting would make a significant contribution to the literature prompted the researcher to investigate this problem. The objective of the research is to determine the sources of foreign language anxiety and to what extent it affects proficiency among Turkish EFL university students.

C. Research Questions

As was mentioned before, the major objective of this survey is to assess foreign language anxiety level of preparatory students and discover provoking elements of anxiety. Following this line of reasoning, the researchers prepared specific questions in order to fill the literature gap on this issue. Investigating solutions to these problems will be the major objective of this project. The questions that would be discussed in this study are as the following:

1. Do the foreign language anxiety levels of students differ significantly according to their proficiency level?
2. What is the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and language proficiency?
3. What is the relationship between students' communication apprehension and language proficiency?
4. What is the relationship between students test anxiety and their language proficiency?

D. Significance of the study

The results of this study suggest that educational institutions providing language education to students for professional success could develop approaches to reduce the impact of stress and create an appropriate atmosphere for effective learning, thereby addressing this concern. Their entire professional career will be tied to English as it is lingua franca in current world. This study will add to the body of relevant literature by demonstrating the extent of English-speaking anxiety among preparation school students. It details the degree to which these students suffer speaking anxiety, as well as the connection between preparation, approach to English, background in pre-English classes, and the initial stages of learning English. This study will demonstrate how anxiety levels among English speakers affect language acquisition. It will inspire educators to come up with some options for their learners. Additionally, by providing the required information regarding the origins of speaking anxiety, this study will stimulate several research issues for further studies.

Moreover, the study aimed to add to the existing literature by examining the correlation between the language anxiety of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and their proficiency level. The objective was to provide additional insights into how the overall proficiency level of EFL learners may impact their foreign language anxiety. In other words, the potential influence of learners' proficiency level on their level of language anxiety could provide insight into the progression of foreign language anxiety.

E. Definitions of key terms

Anxiety is: "a state of apprehension, a hazy worry that is only tangentially related with an object." **Scovel (1978:132)**

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety: In EFL classroom settings, foreign language speaking anxiety is related to the emotional responses one has while speaking a foreign language in uncomfortable, frightening, apprehensive, or worried situations (Huang, 2011)

Fear of failure: ‘‘ Kind of phobia that affects a person’s ability to function in daily life. The person may avoid or postpone tasks because they are afraid of not achieving them. It is a specific phobia, a type of anxiety disorder’’ (Boland, 2022)

Fear of not understanding: In ELT literature, it is a feeling that not being able to comprehend any foreign language you are working on, trying to learn.

Foreign Language Proficiency: Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs. Able to read all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs.

Attitude: Allport (1935, p.810) defined it "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" Allport (1935: 810)

The present section covers the background of the research, the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study, and the definition of the key terms. The subsequent section will conduct an extensive review of the literature associated with the research objective. Chapter three will provide an in-depth account of the methodology employed in the study, encompassing the setting of the research, participants, instruments, and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. Chapter four will outline the procedures utilized for data analysis and present the resulting findings. The forthcoming chapter, chapter five, will provide a comprehensive analysis of the research findings, identify the limitations of the study, and propose suggestions for future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between foreign language anxiety and proficiency level among learners. This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature on foreign language anxiety, which is presented in three separate parts. The first part of the discourse involves a comprehensive examination of various definitions and classifications of anxiety. The following part is related to the phenomenon of anxiety experienced in the context of learning a foreign language. The third part of the study examines the phenomenon of foreign language speaking anxiety, investigates its historical background, and conducts a literature review on the topic.

A. Anxiety

This research aimed to examine the relationship between the level of anxiety experienced by learners and their proficiency level. The present chapter provides an overview of the existing literature on the topic of foreign language anxiety, which is presented in three distinct sections. The initial segment of the discourse will include an examination of diverse interpretations of anxiety and its various categorizations. The subsequent segment pertains to the phenomenon of anxiety in relation to the acquisition and use of a foreign language. The third segment of the paper examines the phenomenon of foreign language speaking anxiety, looks into its historical background, and conducts a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the subject matter.

1. What is anxiety?

Due to the complexity of anxiety, researchers weren't able to concur on a concise definition (Zhanibek, 2001). Anxiety is described as "an emotional response to a threat to a personal value that is essential to the individual's existence" (Bekleyen, 1977: 50). The subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, anxiety, and concern associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger,

1983, cited in Horwitz et al.: 27). Several scholars' definitions of anxiety share certain characteristics: apprehension, worry, tension, and discomfort (Brown, 1994; Horwitz et al. 1991; Scovel, 1991). According to Ehrman (1996), these characteristics are linked to negative evaluations of an individual's actions.

They become failure-focused, feel inhibited, and avoid performing tasks such as completing assignments, taking tests, and participating in class. In some instances, individuals may experience apprehension in particular situations or throughout the whole process of learning.

2. Types of Anxiety

Although there are many different kinds of anxiety, which is a general phrase, Mac Intyre (1999) stated that there is a close connection between linguistic anxiety and anxiety. As a result, it is impossible to completely isolate linguistic anxiety from the whole of the anxiety field. Making a categorization can help us better understand the differences between the many forms of it. Trait anxiety is the first category, according to Cattell (1957).

This anxiety type is defined as "an individual's tendency of getting nervous in any scenario" (Speilberger, 2016:30). It is character-related, can result from a variety of situations, and anxiety has no temporal limit. Ergün (2011) refers to a person's tendency for feeling worried in a situation as having a characteristic anxiety. Philips (1992) argued that it is a persistent tendency to experience anxiety in every circumstance.

Due to a personality trait, some people experience anxiety often in ordinary routine. When this degree of unease rises over time, it may be deduced from a person's acts; if not, it is not immediately apparent (Zhanibek, 2001). According to the information provided, trait anxiety is about each character's personality and private, thus it is difficult to take a risk on it. Trait anxiety is a component of character; as a result, it becomes a feature of one. This kind of stress is natural in everyone and is present in all circumstances. According to Eysenck (1979), trait anxiety negatively affects mental functions and impairs a person's performance by making them avoid situations.

It is crucial to reduce its intensity since, if not, it might act as a long-lasting mental barrier (Riasati, 2011). In his research, Riasati (2011) demonstrates how trait

anxiety interferes with students' ability to learn a foreign language when it is present in the learning environment. It may manifest itself without any specific purpose. State anxiety is a transient condition as opposed to enduring trait anxiety. While trait anxiety is connected to a person's overall propensity to feel worried, SA manifests when unfavorable condition occurs in a learning environment.

Philips (1992) stated that it is unique for a certain circumstance that one encounters; as a result, it cannot be long-lasting. Karabıyık and Özkan (2017) stated that state anxiety timelessly develops as a consequence of a language class environment that is always changing. Due to state anxiety's temporary resistance to cessation, it might not be as hazardous as previously thought. Riasati (2011) explains this condition's positive side and claims that this type of anxiety may be reduced if a person is aware of the particular situation.

It is nevertheless challenging to categorize anxiety as a mood or attribute in reality, despite all these provided distinctions among trait anxiety and state anxiety. Spielberger (1971) demonstrates that individuals with high levels of trait anxiety are more likely to have state anxiety. For example, even when there is no reason to be worried, speculative persons are more likely to do so in a variety of situations.

The literature identifies trait anxiety as one form of anxiety that stems from personal characteristics. It is a personality trait that some individuals tend to be apprehensive in every situation (Brown, 1994). Trait anxiety is the propensity of an individual to experience anxiety in almost all the circumstances. (Philips, 1992). Study indicates that trait anxiety negatively impacts memory and other cognitive functions (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). State anxiety is a form of anxiety caused by the circumstances of a particular situation. Young (1991) underlines that it is not an enduring trait, but rather a reaction to the circumstances of a specific situation. According to Brown (1994), it is a form of anxiety that is temporarily enhanced by a stimulus.

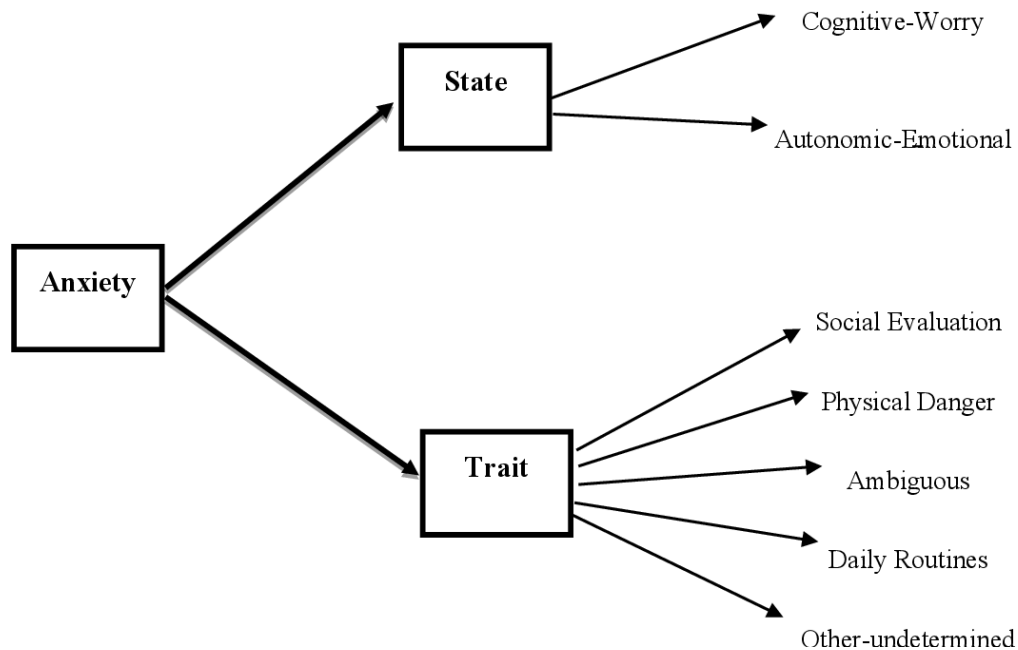


Figure 1 Types of anxiety (Kocovski, 2001, taken from

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0887618501000603>)

In Figure 1, sub-headings of the anxiety shows that when the state anxiety and trait anxiety are triggered. To give an example, if somebody processes “*cognitive worry*” it can be described as “*state anxiety*”.

If someone goes through anxiety in their daily routines, it can be described as “*trait anxiety*”.

Aydın (2001) notes a clear association between trait and state anxiety, adding that trait anxiety individuals are more likely to experience state anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claim that although individuals may have identical trait anxiety scores, their responses to various situations may vary. For instance, in research published by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), two subjects with identical trait anxiety scores were examined according to how they responded to the social situations presented on the subscales of the hypothetical trait anxiety scale. The circumstances included written assessments or evaluations, novel and risky situations. It was discovered that the first subject did not experience anxiety during written tests but did experience anxiety in social situations. The second subject, in contrast, experienced anxiety during written examinations but not in social situations. The same score was given for novel and dangerous situations.

Another form of anxiety, known as situation-specific anxiety, has been

identified in the literature (Woodrow, 2006). Situation-specific anxiety is anxiety brought on by the circumstances of a specific situation (Wang, 1998). In the context of language acquisition, situation-specific anxiety alludes to concern brought on by learners' poor linguistic competence (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Foreign language anxiety is categorized as situational anxiety because, during the process of language acquisition, situational anxiety reoccurs each time the learner starts to use the language. Instances of situation-specific anxiety include oral presentations, engagement in classroom activities, and written assessments (Zhanibek, 2001).

A different classification of anxiety was made in light of how fear affected learning. Facilitating anxiety (FA) and debilitating anxiety (DA) are included in this categorization (DA). The aforesaid difference was initially demonstrated by Albert and Haber (1960). Different perspectives were used to describe these anxiety subtypes. In contrast to the first anxiety, which served as a motivating force and helped the student accomplish tasks and succeed in the process of language learning, the second anxiety, or DA, resulted in a drop in eagerness and resulted avoidance of language learning obligations as a typical behavior, according to Scovel (1978). The learners with DA are prepared to mentally back away.

Brown (1994) states that facilitative anxiety has a beneficial impact on a learner's task completion. Moreover, he asserts that a little anxiety encourages an individual to keep performing the activity. Scovel (1991) concurs with the description of facilitative anxiety in that it serves an encouraging function. Ehrman exemplifies the encouraging function of facilitative anxiety by stating, "When I have a writing assignment, I induce a little anxiety to overcome my natural tendency to procrastinate. Just the right amount of anxiety, but no more" (Ehrman, 1996: 148). This function is partially connected with being a motivated language learner, as reflected in the learners' diaries (Bailey, 1983, cited in Zhanibek, 2001).

In Bailey's (1983) study, a detailed study of learners' diaries showed that learners' self-comparison to others induced a facilitative anxiety, and they worked more when they discovered that their classmates performed much better. This is known as positive competition. Nevertheless, when the self-comparison conflicted with learning or led to an unfavorable competitiveness, it induced debilitating anxiety (Zhanibek, 2001). In fact, debilitating anxiety is characterized by

negative emotions that prevent a student from completing a task (Wilson, 2006). In other words, students become aggravated by uncomfortable feelings, and this aggravation leads to failure (Zhanibek, 2001).

The concept of facilitative anxiety has divided certain researchers against other researchers. A few say anxiety seems to have no role in motivation (Ehrman, 1996), claiming that anxiety only has a role in debilitating. For instance, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) acknowledge that anxiety facilitation plays a minor role in simpler tasks but do not embrace its contribution to language learning.

3. Debates over The Effects of Anxiety

Despite of the fact that many research have identified the negative effects of anxiety, certain studies have also identified its positive effects. According to Oxford (1999), anxiety may be either beneficial (facilitating) or detrimental (debilitating). First, in terms of how our minds function, anxiety can be advantageous when it activates our nervous system sufficiently to generate attention, which is essential to learning (Sousa, 2006; Wolfe, 2001). This indicates proof for the existence of facilitating anxiety. The Kleinmann (1977) study, a seminal work on the concept of facilitating anxiety, discovered that learners with facilitating anxiety have even less avoidance behavior and more risk-taking confidence. In reality, some instructors in Trang and Moni's (2015) study claimed that generating a certain level of apprehension is necessary to increase students' learning attempt.

In spite of the results from these research, Horwitz (1990) stated that although anxiety can be advantageous for basic tasks, it wouldn't be advantageous for a task as complex as language acquisition. In agreement with, Ortega (2009) and Oxford (1999) state that, despite the assertions of some scholars that there is a positive aspect of anxiety, debilitating anxiety might be more frequent in language acquisition. Numerous studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2016; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Phillips, 1992) have found negative correlations between FLA and performance, lending credence to this notion. Oxford (1999) continued by pointing out that this type of anxiety could negatively impact the performance of students by implicitly establishing self-doubt and explicitly minimizing their participation. Additionally, anxious students are typically reluctant to commit language errors (Oxford, 1999). As a result, they typically refrain from taking part in class

conversations. Therefore, their long-term learning process may be negatively impacted (Oxford, 1999).

Additionally, Gardner and MacIntyre (1994) appear to concur that, depending on its intensity, anxiety may be both beneficial and detrimental. According to MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994) research, a certain level of anxiety can enhance language ability. A little farther, they argued that anxiety only becomes incapacitating when anxious students start to have negative emotions and are overly critical of themselves, to the point where it interferes with their attention and mental exertion in their education. For instance, students who already connect language courses with anxiety could find that many aspects of the classroom are anxiety-inducing, despite the instructors' efforts and the presence of numerous other factors that help encourage learning.

In addition to this and in accordance with Bigdeli's (2010) statement regarding the "right" degree of anxiousness to have facilitative consequences, (Gass and Selinker, 2008: 400) asserted that anxiety seems to have "a curvilinear effect on performance", in which a small amount will be advantageous, and a high amount will be detrimental. Regarding this perspective, Hewitt and Stephenson (2012) asserted that further empirical research is required to discover when anxiety loses its ability to be facilitating and becomes debilitating.

Suleimenova (2013) argued, notwithstanding this, that it is the learners who must question themselves, when they feel anxious, if their anxiety, which, as she stated, at the appropriate level can keep learners engaged during the process of learning, has become overwhelming and thus debilitating.

In Figure 2 below, the impacts of language anxiety are given.

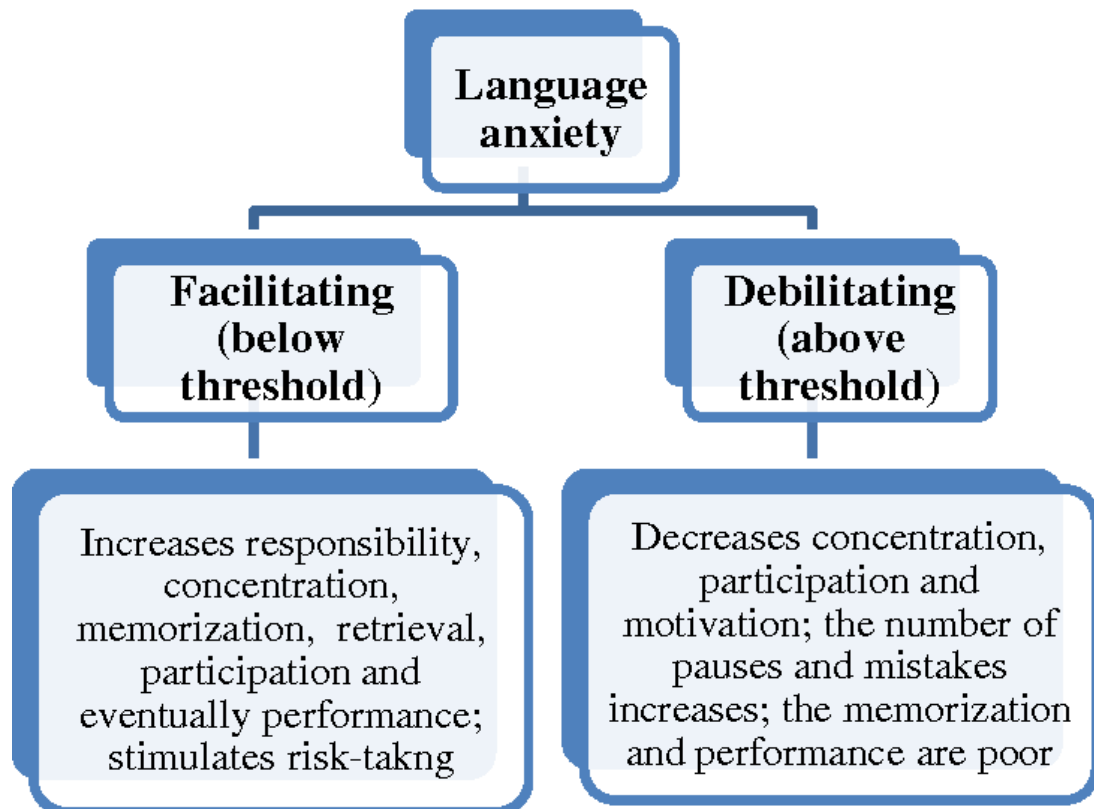


Figure 2 The impacts of language anxiety (Demir, 2016, taken from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Anxiety-Factors-in-Learning-English-as-a-Foreign-%3A-Demir/6e91317977cbd37ba986f37412c08dd2e83a9137>)

As it can be seen in Figure 2, facilitating anxiety can increase responsibility, concentration, memorization, retrieval, participation and eventually performance; and it stimulates risk taking. Debilitating anxiety plays opposite role, and it can decrease concentration, participation and motivation; it increases the number of pauses and mistakes; and it causes poor memorization and performance.

B. Foreign Language Anxiety

In this part of the research, possible sources of foreign language anxiety and causes of anxiety will be discussed.

1. Previous Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety

In the situation of language acquisition, it has been discovered that despite being effective in other learning situations, many individuals fail to acquire the language. It is accepted that some individuals have an anxiety reaction to language acquisition (Horwitz et al.,1991). It can be presumed that this anxiety response

develops progressively as students strive to advance. When they realize they are not making progress, they may develop a negative attitude toward language acquisition. In fact, the question of whether or not foreign language apprehension is a consequence of inadequate language acquisition has been the subject of debate.

While some researchers assert that a lack of language proficiency is the root of anxiety, others assert that anxiety is the cause of poor language acquisition. For instance, Horwitz (2001) concluded that anxiety is the consequence of inadequate language acquisition. She asserts that the essence of foreign language or second language acquisition necessitates a number of instances of risk-taking, which can have a negative impact on a person's personal image. Thus, once they commit a mistake, they may be concerned about their social position. Consequently, learners with inadequate language ability may display anxious behaviors. Horwitz et al. (1986) characterized foreign language anxiety as a syndrome distinct from three other anxieties: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety.

Communication anxiety refers to anxiety regarding verbal language (Horwitz et al., 1991). It's connected to both L1 and L2. Several character traits, such as timidity, quietness, and reticence, are the primary factors of communication anxiety. Furthermore, according to what Brown (2000) says, this anxiety may be caused, for instance, by a difficulty of expressing their complex ideas. Daly (1991) provides a more exhaustive analysis of the causes of communication anxiety. Peoples' hereditary origin may play a role in the manifestation of communication anxiety. Furthermore, the importance of praise and encouragement of communication behaviors in preventing communication anxiety cannot be overstated. When communication behaviors are rewarded, individuals are more likely to be open to speaking (Aydın, 2001). In contrast, past negative interactions in early years result in communication anxiety. If children consistently experience negative responses when attempting to use the language, they may display anxious behaviors.

According to research, children who were prevented from communicating tend to be more anxious (Daly, 1991). Regarding language acquisition, Tanveer (2007) analyzes this from a behaviorist perspective. When teachers respond negatively to students' errors, their anxiety of making them will increase, according to him. Consequently, any try to speak will be hindered, whilst individuals who were

exposed to intensive verbal input in young infants become less scared of speaking (Daly, 1991).

The control that instructors and classmates exert on students' output in circumstances where they are learning a second or foreign language worsens their anxiety about communicating (Horwitz et al. 1991). Tanveer (2007) performed significant qualitative research to explore the possible causes of spoken language anxiety. The findings revealed that participants experienced anxiety when there was a competitive environment in the classroom or when the teacher reinforced this competitive environment.

According to Horwitz et al. (1991), the concept of "*fear of negative evaluation*" relates to people's anxieties regarding what other people are thinking about them and their belief that these opinions are often unfavorable. Some English learners see using the language as an evaluation. They worry about projecting a negative social image of oneself when they feel they lack the language skills to properly convey themselves (Aydın, 2001). As a result, participation is minimal or interaction is avoided.

In a study by Ohata (2005) to explore the possible causes of anxiety among Japanese English learners, it was discovered that every participant had fear of receiving a negative evaluation in class. Interviews were conducted with three Japanese undergraduates studying in Computer Science, Journalism, and art as well as two postgraduates focusing on Adult Communication and English. The findings indicated that most of their evaluations of the classroom environment were unfavorable. In addition to experiencing significant stress throughout oral presentations, two of the participants indicated that their hearts were pounding and they were sweating profusely while responding to several questions. Parallel to this, Kitano (2001) conducted research to investigate the impact of fear of negative evaluation on Japanese students speaking anxiety. The results demonstrated that higher speaking anxiety was caused by a belief of stronger fear of negative evaluation.

The term "*test anxiety*" describes students' unfavorable expectations about how they will do on a forthcoming test (Horwitz et al. 1991). According to Covington (1985, cited in Aydın, 2001), test anxiety includes four distinct phases: test anticipation, test preparation, the test taking stage, and test reaction. In the initial

phase, students evaluate their own preparedness, background knowledge, and the test's degree of difficulty, and forecast their chances of achieving success or failure. When they realize that failure is probable, they begin to feel apprehensive (Aydın, 2001). In the second stage, they begin test preparation and evaluate the efficacy of their preparedness. "Anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure" (Covington, 1985, cited in Aydın, 2001: 23) is what they believe because they connect achievement with attaining their unrealistic expectations. In during test-taking phase, they feel restricted and aggravated due to anxiety, and their negative assumptions are typically realized in the final phase (Aydın, 2001).

Horwitz et al. defined FLA even more as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al, 1986: 128). This suggests that while FLA is related to other specific anxieties, it is distinct from them. It also emphasizes the complexity of FLA as an intertwined connection in between subjective perspectives of learners and various external factors existing during the process of learning. It emphasizes the anxiety encountered by EFL students who have limited interaction with native English speakers or who use English infrequently apart from the classroom.

Adding to the model proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986), Tobias (1986), who examined the impact that anxiety has on the three phases of learning (input, processing, and output), proposed another model. In the input stage, students are exposed to new content (external stimuli) and process it by assigning meaning to what they observe or perceive. Learners' apprehension in the input stage interferes with the other phases due to having to initially comprehend so much information (processing and output). They may overlook some details, and yet they make every effort to make up for missing input. (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) point out that learners could have difficulty encoding information in situations such as rapid speech or written texts with complex structures. When they struggle to encode new information, they experience anxiety. This is linked to input anxiety, which relates to a receiver's fear of processing input from auditory or visual sources (Tanveer, 2007).

2. Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety

There are bunch of factors that cause language anxiety in classroom area. To start with, the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety, including the fear of negative evaluation. This particular aspect of anxiety is characterized by a sense of deficiency in terms of social performance, leading to anxiety regarding the assessments of others and a tendency to avoid evaluative situations. According to Chan and Wu's (2004) citation of Watson and Friend's (1969) work, the concept of fear of negative evaluation is characterized by an individual's concern regarding the evaluations of others, their emotional discomfort in response to negative evaluations, and their anticipation of negative evaluations from others. The fear of negative evaluation, unlike test anxiety, encompasses a wider range of situations as it is not limited exclusively to the context of taking tests. Apart from instances of assessments, it can occur in any societal or evaluative circumstance, like job interviews or participating in foreign language classes. According to MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991d) suggestion, there exists a close association between anxiety about communicating and the fear of negative evaluation. Uncertainty in one's speech can lead to anxiety regarding negative evaluation, potentially resulting in self-doubt regarding the ability to make a favorable impression.

In Figure 3 below, likely causes of foreign language anxiety is given.

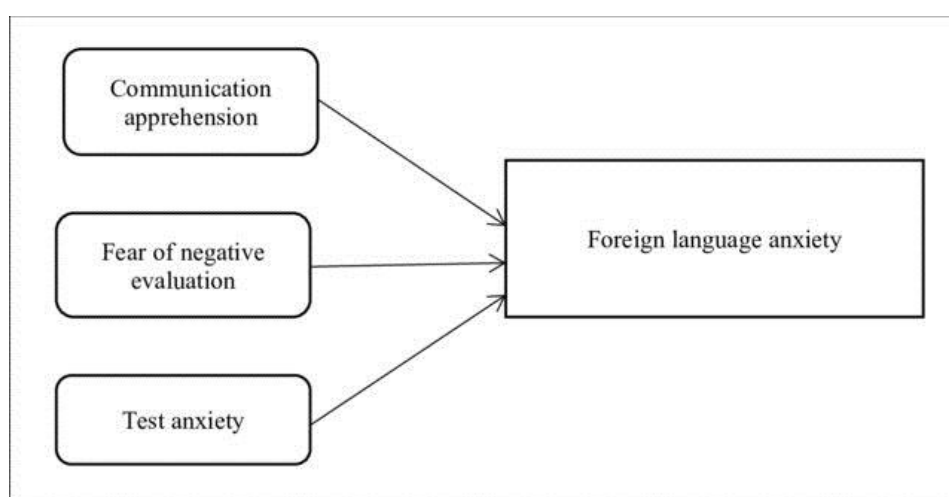


Figure 3 Likely Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986).
(taken from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348153012_English_Language_Learning_Anxiety_and_its_Relationship_with_Language_Achievement_A_Study_on_Learners_in_a_Technical_University/figures?lo=1)

As it can be seen in Figure 3, Horwitz (1986) claimed some of the causes of foreign language anxiety as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and text anxiety.

The theory proposed by Horwitz and colleagues (1986) provides a framework to evaluating foreign language anxiety among learners in classroom settings. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. consists of three distinct domains, including communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

In the context of learning a foreign language, negative evaluation primarily originates from instructors and classmates. This is due to the fact that foreign language acquisition demands ongoing assessment by the instructor, and anxious learners may be particularly vulnerable to peer evaluations. Students who experience anxiety related to the possibility of receiving unfavorable feedback may exhibit avoidance behaviors. As a result, the academic performance of students in language classroom settings is lacking. Even though anxiety can have both facilitating and debilitating effects, its negative impact on performance in the foreign language classroom is more significant than its positive impact.

To continue, the immediate correction of errors by teachers may induce anxiety in language learners regarding language production and usage. According to Gregersen (2003), the implementation of strict error correction measures may result in heightened levels of anxiety among foreign language learners. In instances where learners commit errors based on accuracy, instructors have the ability to quickly correct them.

Certain students may have apprehensions regarding public speaking in the presence of their peers. The acquisition of public speaking skills is a crucial aspect of the learning process for students. Nonetheless, it may induce a sense of unease among learners when it comes to discussing their emotions. In the event that an individual experiences anxiety when delivering presentations or discussing current topics, their ability to perform these tasks proficiently may be affected. According to Cohen and Forst's (1989) research, self-presentation can be a notable source of anxiety for learners. The presence of anxiety may have an adverse impact on an individual's ability to deliver a presentation effectively. The limited proficiency in a foreign language constrains learners' ability to express themselves fully.

Furthermore, certain young students self-identify as individuals who strive for perfection. Consequently, the desire to attain academic objectives serves as a driving force for individuals to accomplish their goals. The presence of perfectionism can induce anxiety in learners as they strive for success, due to the weighty responsibility placed upon them. This can induce anxiety in individuals regarding their ability to generate language. Dewaele and Shan (2013) posit a strong correlation between anxiety and perfectionism.

Moreover, foreign language classroom anxiety may arise as a result of negative learning experiences encountered by learners. An illustrative instance of this phenomenon is the situation where certain students encounter difficulty in advancing their proficiency in English, necessitating repeated enrollment in the same level. This produces feelings of anxiety and pessimism regarding the prospects of acquiring a new language. Consequently, students may develop an unfavorable attitude towards the topic.

Foreign language anxiety can also manifest in situations where there is a lack of positive connection between the teacher and students. If the instructor is unable to establish a positive relationship with their students, it is likely that the students will not place their confidence in the instructor. This phenomenon is likely to have a negative impact on their rate of learning. The establishment of an enjoyable connection between the educator and students can lead to increased self-assurance and effective communication through language. Hence, the teacher's ability to effectively communicate and interact with students will significantly impact the educational setting. Provided that the instructor regards each student as a unique entity, the students will exhibit a greater willingness to engage in foreign language communication.

Sparks and Ganschow (1991) claim that foreign language anxiety can stem from the learner's inadequate language proficiency or limited language command. They perceive foreign language anxiety as an associated outcome of the challenges and poor performance in acquiring a foreign language. In other words, learners experiencing difficulties in comprehending and utilizing a foreign language tend to experience apprehension in utilizing or generating language due to their incapacity to proficiently use the language.

The exposure or input of the target language that learners receive can be a significant factor in the occurrence of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). A significant number of language learners encounter heightened levels of anxiety as a result of their limited exposure to the English language, particularly in countries where English is not the primary language, such as Turkey (Sabuncuoğlu, 2021:322). Individuals who are acquiring a new language encounter significant challenges in the advancement of their ability to communicate effectively, particularly when it comes to verbal expression. The ability to comprehend language is a vital component of language production. (Sabuncuoğlu, 2021:322).

Learners may encounter external challenges when using a language in a social context, which may lead to foreign language anxiety due to factors such as extrinsic or integrative motivation, as noted by Scovel (1991). In order to assimilate into an unfamiliar environment, migrants must acquire the language, which may result in experiencing foreign language anxiety, particularly in scenarios such as participating in a job interview.

Furthermore, gender has been identified as a potential source of anxiety. The study conducted by Kitano (2001) has identified a correlation between gender and foreign language anxiety. Specifically, male learners who hold a self-perception of lower competence in a foreign language tend to experience higher levels of foreign language anxiety compared to their female counterparts. In keeping with Kitano's (2001) findings, female learners have reported a higher level of enjoyment in their foreign language classes compared to their male counterparts. Conversely, female individuals have encountered elevated levels of foreign language anxiety in comparison to their male counterparts.

Lastly, parental pressure has the potential to impact foreign language anxiety (Sabuncuoğlu, 2021). An illustrative instance of this phenomenon is the tendency of parents to force their children to acquire proficiency in English, often resulting in a substantial financial investment in language instruction. Children have to try to achieve their highest potential to ensure their parents' fulfillment with their academic performance. The imposition of high expectations by parents upon their children may lead to an increased likelihood of academic success.

3. The Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety on Foreign Language Learning

Research on the impact of foreign language anxiety on foreign language acquisition typically falls into two distinct categories, as identified by MacIntyre and Gardner in 1994. Research within Category 1 investigates the impact of foreign language anxiety through the utilization of comprehensive measures of foreign language acquisition, including academic performance, standardized assessments of language proficiency, and self-assessments of language proficiency. Studies conducted in diverse educational settings and languages of instruction have demonstrated a negative association between anxiety and achievement measures (e.g., Aida, 1994; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Horwitz, 1986; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Trylong, 1987).

Research in the second category commonly focuses on examining the impact of foreign language anxiety on complicated components of foreign language acquisition. According to the study conducted by Steinberg and Horwitz (1986), students who experience anxiety tend to provide comparatively less interpretative content than their peers who are more relaxed while orally explaining stimulus pictures in a second language. The potential impact of anxiety on three stages of foreign language (FL) acquisition, namely input, processing, and output, was investigated by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994). The study involved the participation of 97 students from a Canadian university that primarily uses English as the language of instruction. These students were undergoing the process of acquiring French as a second language. Three scales consisting of six items each were created to assess the level of anxiety experienced during the three distinct stages of acquiring proficiency in the French language.

The performance at each stage was evaluated through three tasks. The study revealed noteworthy associations between anxiety levels specific to different stages and corresponding tasks. One finding indicates that there exists a negative correlation between processing anxiety and the accuracy of translation.

Sellers (2000) conducted a study categorized as Category 2, which examined the correlation between anxiety and reading. The study was conducted on a sample of 89 American university students who were studying Spanish. The findings indicated that the quantity of pausal units recalled was significantly impacted by FL reading anxiety or general FL anxiety, with no other factors having a significant

effect. A pausal unit, as defined by Sellers (2000), refers to a unit that features "a pause at each end during normally paced oral reading." (Sellers, 2000: 514).

Seller's (2000) study revealed that individuals who experience greater amounts of anxiety while reading exhibit reduced capacity to recall central concepts of a given passage. Additionally, those who experience heightened levels of general anxiety demonstrate decreased ability to recall ideas of intermediate significance. Furthermore, regardless of the specific type of anxiety, individuals with high levels of anxiety exhibited a greater degree of cognitive interference in comparison to their counterparts with lower levels of anxiety. The above-mentioned results support a commonly accepted notion that anxiety related to learning a foreign language can have a negative impact on the process of learning that language (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Woodrow, 2006).

Numerous pieces of evidence have indicated that foreign language anxiety has negative impact on FL learning. Therefore, it is imperative to consider foreign language anxiety as one of the causal variables that contribute to inadequate foreign language learning. According to Horwitz (2000), the widely accepted phenomenon in the fields of psychology and education is the potential of anxiety to disrupt learning and performance. Additionally, it is imperative to investigate the impact of foreign language anxiety on foreign language proficiency over time, given that prior research in this domain has primarily been cross-sectional in nature.

4. Relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Performance

The relation between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and performance is another significant subject for discussion in the field. According to Sparks and Ganschow (1993, 2007), anxiety is caused by inadequate performance and not vice versa. People's early first language (L1) literacy success is a powerful indicator of their potential L2 proficiency and anxiety, according to their argument (Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). Under this view, poor performance resulting from a language processing disability is the cause of anxiety, not its consequence. If anxiety results from low proficiency instead of being the source of it, they argue that teachers could first need to assist learners increase their performance and abilities before assisting them with anxiety management. According to Sparks and Ganschow (2007), as the achievement of the learners improves, their anxiety level will go down.

Regardless of these assertions, many academics contend that anxiety is responsible for poor performance. For instance, MacIntyre claimed that anxiety "can play a significant causal role in producing individual differences in learning and communication, including performance" (MacIntyre, 1995:90). For instance, students hesitate when they are asked questions in front of their peers, despite of the fact that they know the answers, and consequently perform inadequately (Ortega, 2009). In the same vein as Horwitz et al. (1986), who identified anxiety as a predictor of performance, MacIntyre asserted that anxiety "may cause cognitive processing deficits and impair task performance" (MacIntyre,1995: 92).

5. The Research Design on Foreign Language Acquisition

The measurement of foreign language anxiety is a topic that has been explored in the literature through the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, as noted by Aydın (2001). The selection of qualitative methods is based on the specific objectives of the research. The techniques employed to gather data from individuals regarding their own experiences and perceptions are commonly referred to as self-reports, covering methods such as diaries and interviews.

According to Aydın (2001), in studies done with qualitative research method, diaries and interviews are commonly favored as they offer extensive information regarding the manner in which learners experience anxiety. Diary studies are considered to be of significant importance as they provide researchers with the opportunity to observe the emotional states of learners in various contexts. According to Aydın (2001), individuals tend to write down their personal experiences frankly in diaries due to the assurance of confidentiality. Interviews provide researchers with the opportunity to analyze the particular aspects that attract their interest.

Quantitative research methods include the utilization of questionnaires, with subsequent statistical analysis of the gathered data. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) is widely recognized as the most frequently used tool for measuring anxiety levels. Its development is attributed to Horwitz et al. (1986). The scale comprises 33 items that pertain to communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The measurement instrument employed in this study utilizes a Likert scale consisting of five points. The respondents are required to

indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the given statements, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Anxiety is commonly assessed by researchers through the utilization of the FLCAS or its adapted variations, which are selected based on the specific objectives of their investigations. To examine the correlation between anxiety and the four language skills, it is customary to adapt the statements in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) or create new scales. Woodrow (2006) introduced a new instrument, the Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS), for assessing anxiety levels in second language speaking.

6. Language Proficiency and Language Attitude

Proficiency is a component of the educational journey that individuals attain through specific stages. Thus, it was hypothesized that a positive attitude towards the language being studied would be positively correlated with higher levels of proficiency among students. However, it is worth noting that potential gender differences in achievement may exist, as suggested by Chan (2018).

As defined in Oxford Online Dictionary proficiency is characterized by “*the ability to do something well because of training and practice.*”

There is a very similar definition in Cambridge Online Dictionary for proficiency as of; by “*the ability to do something very well*”

(<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/proficiency?q=proficiency>)

(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-turkish/proficiency>)

Assessing an individual's language proficiency can be a challenging task. To address this issue, several language institutions have devised standardized scales to facilitate the evaluation of an individual's language competency. The scales may exhibit variations in their level of detail; however, they share a common core. The proficiency of the respondents was measured in this study using the Interagency Language Roundtable and Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as the standard. The CEFR classifies language proficiency into six levels, A1 to C2, which can be further classified into three broad categories: Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User, depending on the demands of the local context. 'Can-do'

descriptors are used to define the levels.

C. Speaking Anxiety

In this part, the likely causes and sources of speaking anxiety is discussed by the help of existing literature.

1. Review of Relevant Previous Studies

Students may develop language anxiety if they are faced to several unpleasant experiences in a foreign language environment, according to research (Chen and Chang, 2004; Sparks et al., 2000). Additionally, anxiousness can lead to discouragement, loss of confidence in one's abilities, withdrawal from classroom activities, and even abandonment of efforts to learn a language proficiently (Na, 2007).

Horwitz et al. (1986) categorized foreign language anxiety into three components:

1. Communication apprehension, which stems from students' failure to communicate effectively.
2. Fears of adverse social judgment resulting from a learner's desire to create a favorable impression on others.
3. Test anxiety, concern about academic assessment.

Most learners of English with communication anxiety struggle with both speaking and listening to interpret the messages of others (Horwitz et al., 1986). Previous studies about foreign language anxiety had a clear focus on the language skill of speaking (e.g., Aida, 1994; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Phillips, 1992; Anandari, 2015), while the study of foreign language anxiety in relation to other language skills such as reading, listening, and writing has only recently attracted the attention of researchers. (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999; Saito et al., 1999; Vogely, 1998).

Perhaps this has been due to the fact that the learner's anxiousness was readily apparent while they were doing their speech. There are more factors that induce anxiety among language learners. According to Zhang and Zhong (2012), the primary source of anxiety is "learners' unrealistic or erroneous assumptions about

language acquisition." Some believe they lack the talent or capacity to learn a new language (Price, 1991). Nonetheless, others feel that two years or less is adequate to become fluent in a second language (Horwitz, 1988) without evaluating the complexity of the language-learning process; as a consequence, they may endure conflict and anxiety.

Hsu (2004) performed study about the reading anxiety and performances of their speaking on 125 junior military college EFL students and discovered that nervous students had a tendency to retain less textual material than less anxious students. Additionally, Sellers (2000) explored the probable association between language anxiety and speaking effectiveness with 89 undergraduate students studying Spanish as a second language. The findings demonstrated that speaking anxiety was associated with but distinct from linguistic anxiety.

Students who have significant amounts of speaking and language anxiety might remember a smaller portion of the article's content. Considering that anxiety is a negative rather than being a positive component, this is most certainly the result of the study the author anticipated. Previous studies on anxiety and acquisition of L2 focused on the relationship between language anxiety and language-skill-specific (i.e., speaking, listening, writing, and reading) anxiety, as well as their functions in L2 acquisition. They propose that anxiety in listening, reading, and writing is connected to yet distinct from linguistic anxiety. The majority of researchers show a negative correlation between language anxiety and L2 performance. Additionally, there is a negative relationship between language-skill-specific anxiety and performance, indicating that students with greater listening, speaking, writing, and reading anxiety likely to have worse listening, speaking, writing, and reading performance.

2. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Understanding the broad meaning of English-speaking anxiety is important in order to analyze it. It significantly affects how things are taught and learned. Anxiety is a major obstacle to overcoming for a successful performance, and many ESL students perceive it as a bad aspect of language acquisition. As a result, this idea has been researched by several academics. There are several definitions that come from various angles. The anxiety, as defined by Scovel (1978), is an unease that may be a

foreboding condition or an uncertain dread originating from an ambiguous fear. Another definition refers to it as an emotional response to a limitation displayed when a person observes anything essential to his being. (May, 1977).

Taş (2006) defined anxiety as a sensation someone has after experiencing physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. According to Fox (1993), anxiety is a sensation that arises when a person feels insecure or when there is a relationship between the anxiety and certain health and societal issues. On a broad scale, Spielberger (1983) defines anxiety as a result of autonomic nervous system activity, which manifests as personal tension and apprehension.

According to the experts' definitions, anxiety is a negative emotion. When it is a common and commonplace sensation, it is unavoidable to face it during the process of learning. Feeling capable and prepared is one of the essential learning phases, and challenging circumstances can quickly interfere with this process. Because of this, anxiety affects learning significantly and might hinder and lower self-respect (Branch, 1965). It can have a variety of effects on a learner's performance, particularly if it is over the mild level. Its intensity dictates how it will impact a student; a high intensity prevents a learner from engaging in the activities voluntarily, while a low intensity can encourage. Although it would be harsh to specify anxiety as the precise cause of unwillingness, several symptoms can be seen. Young (1991) identified many characteristics of nervous learners, including refraining from speaking, averting their eyes, and giggling out of dread. All of them demonstrate how excessive reactions result from high levels of worry.

According to Wilson's (2006) findings, speaking is often a significant cause of anxiety among language learners. To a certain degree, numerous language learners experience foreign language speaking anxiety, which can be briefly characterized as the apprehension of utilizing the language verbally. To facilitate a discussion on the reasons behind the prevalence of anxiety among learners during speaking activities, it is essential to conduct an analysis of the act of speaking itself.

Speaking and writing are both productive skills, however, they differ in various aspects such as grammatical structure, lexical usage, and discourse patterns. According to Carter and Nunan (2002), speaking can be defined as a skill that involves both production and interaction.

The psycholinguistic perspective entails an examination of the cognitive processes involved in the production of speech. This is achieved through the utilization of an information processing structure, as proposed by Levelt (1989), which comprises four distinct stages: conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring. The term "conceptualization" relates to an initial stage prior to verbal expression, during which the speaker strategizes the content of their speech. This entails establishing a connection between prior knowledge and the subject matter, as well as the contextual factors surrounding the delivery of the speech. In the process of formulation, suitable linguistic expressions comprising of words and phrases are identified and subsequently paired with their corresponding grammatical markers such as affixes, articles, and auxiliaries. During the stage of articulation, the speaker utilizes their articulatory organs in order to pronounce each word. In the final stage, the speaker engages in self-monitoring to track and eliminate any errors, thereby maintaining control over all stages of the speech production process.

Thus, the achievement of the various stages is contingent upon the attainment of automaticity. The process of acquiring a foreign language may present challenges for L2 speakers at each phase, as a result of their limited automaticity, as noted by Carter and Nunan (2002). In 1998, Huang conducted a survey study with the aim of investigating the potential sources of learning difficulties experienced by students majoring in various fields in the United States when it comes to speaking courses. Huang (1998) discovered that learners' deficiency in automaticity when applying the language in the classroom resulted in their experiencing anxiety, which was identified as one of the primary sources of difficulty. Shumin (1997) asserts that the acquisition of communicative competence is a crucial component in achieving proficiency in speaking a foreign language.

According to Brown, communicative competence refers to "the capacity to effectively transmit and comprehend messages, as well as to negotiate meanings in interpersonal settings that are context-specific." (Brown, 2000: 246) The examination of communicative competence elements allows for the identification of the fundamental constituents of L2 speaking proficiency that may pose challenges for learners, as posited by Shumin (1997). The complexity of communicative competence, encompassing grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio-linguistic competence, and strategic competence, may pose a challenge for L2

speakers.

3. Communicative Competence

Communicative competence refers to the capacity to effectively accomplish communicative objectives in a manner that is socially acceptable. The individual demonstrates a capacity for structured and motivated by purpose behavior, characterized by a capacity to identify and use skills that are suitable and successful within the given circumstances. Hymes (1967) introduced the term 'communicative competence' as a response to Chomsky's concept of grammatical 'competence.' Hymes criticized Chomsky's goal of discovering universal language knowledge and instead advocated for an ethnography of communication approach that emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of how language is produced and interpreted for communicative purposes within diverse groups and cultures.

According to Hymes (1967), communicative competence is the ability to effectively convey and interpret messages, as well as negotiate meanings in interpersonal contexts within specific settings.

According to Chomsky (1965), the concept of communicative competence sufficiently includes the social and functional rules of language. However, Chomsky did not explicitly define the concept of communicative competence.

Canale and Swain (1980) explained the sub-categories of communicative competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence is a comprehensive competence that encompasses four distinct yet interrelated competencies, grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies.

The model of communicative competence covers four distinct domains, grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence is understanding how to use a language's vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. What words do I use? is a grammatical competency question.

Discourse competence is understanding how to create longer linguistic expansions and analyze the bigger context so that the components make up a cohesive whole. How are sentences, phrases, and words put together to produce

conversations, speeches, emails, and newspaper articles.

Socio-linguistic competence is understanding acceptable language usage and response given the context, the subject, and the relationships of those who are speaking. Understanding which phrases and words are appropriate in this context and for this subject.

Strategic competence is understanding the causes of communication mistakes, how to fill up language gaps, and how to learn more about the language and its use in society.

In Figure 4 below sub-categories contributing to communicative competence are presented as a summary.

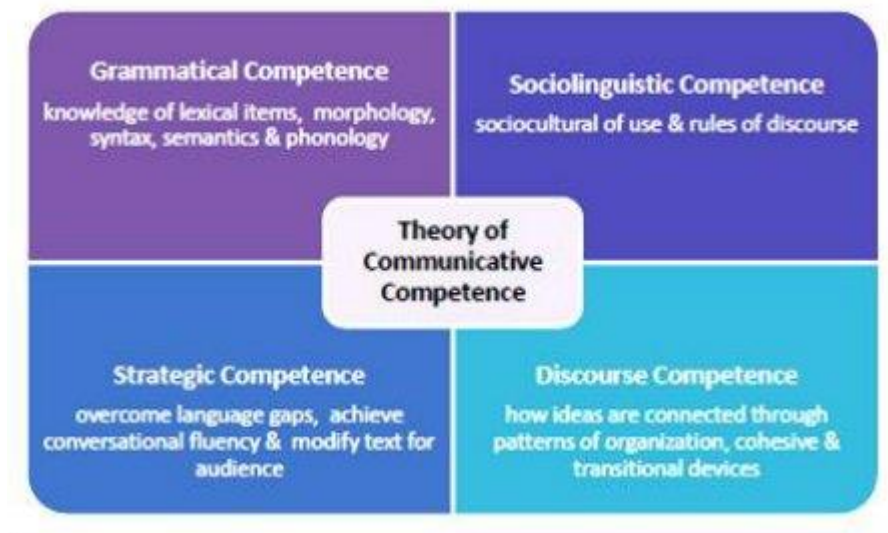


Figure 4 Sub-categories of Communicative Competence (Canale and Swain, 1980, taken from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275480565_Assertiveness_Among_Undergraduates_in_a_Malaysian_Public_University_Implications_Towards_Improved_Employability/figures?lo=1)

In Figure 4, communicative competence has four areas such as grammatical, socio-linguistic, strategic and discourse competence. Knowledge in all of these areas is a necessary for an individual.

4. Fostering a Stress-free Environment in the Classroom

As was previously said, it is critical for educators to make the classroom as pleasant as possible for the learners in order to lessen the nervousness that comes

before doing a job. First, instructors should not place unrealistic expectations on their learners and the objectives they establish should be reasonable. Also, students shouldn't have unrealistic expectations of themselves.

At the start of each lesson, teachers might establish specific goals and emphasize the learners that they must be persistent and tolerant in order to acquire native-like competency in their acquired language. Educators must not only set realistic goals but also keep a positive attitude, starting with avoiding being overly critical when they respond to students' remarks, correct them, or assign grades. Additionally, they must recognize and encourage their learners' achievements since they help them recall what they accomplished and reduce their own fear. Teachers must assist learners in comprehending the value and advantages of making errors. Furthermore, instructors have an impact on the classrooms by their behavior in class. Instead of having learners perform in front of one another, they may turn it into a learning atmosphere, which will boost their confidence and speed up their understanding and comprehension.

Educators construct a special environment that should be encouraging, safe and helpful through the tasks they choose, the kinds of regulation they demand, the way they make corrections, and their interactions with the students. According to Frantzen and Magnan (2005), they can contribute to creating a feeling of belonging in the class, which is crucial for making the learners feel at ease (Frantzen and Magnan, 2005). Amusing material and courteous comments are also effective methods for easing folks into a situation. Teachers may assist students in lowering their affective filters by establishing reasonable objectives for them, acting positively, and fostering a happy learning atmosphere. However, the majority of those discoveries were established twenty years ago, and even today, instructors are aware that their learners still experience anxiety, demonstrating the need for further study.

Krashen's Affective Filter theory supports the concept of a stress-free classroom environment in language teaching. According to this theory, a variety of "affective variables" facilitate but do not cause second language learning. Motivation, confidence, anxiety, and personality characteristics are some of these factors. According to Krashen, second language learners who are highly motivated, self-assured, less anxious, extroverted and who have a positive view about

themselves are more likely to succeed. A "mental block" that inhibits intelligible input from being used for acquisition can be created by poor motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, introversion, and inhibition. These factors may additionally raise the emotional filter. In other words, when the filter is "up," language learning is limited. On the other hand, for acquisition to occur, positive impact is quite essential but not sufficient on its own (Krashen, 1982).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study, which aims to examine the likely relationship between proficiency level and foreign language anxiety, and whether the anxiety level changes according to learners' proficiency level. In this part, the information about participants, settings, stages and contents of the exams, data collection procedures, data analysis and instruments are discussed.

A. Participants

The research was carried out in a foundation university in İstanbul. The sample size was 162 students and they were randomly selected among the whole students of English Preparatory Program which has totally 2.000 students. The participants were selected from the classes whose levels were 2 (elementary), 3 (lower-intermediate), 4 (intermediate) and 5 (upper-intermediate) but level 5 students were not taken into consideration because of their low number (7). The participants' instructors provided permission to the researcher to carry out the investigation with their students. The individuals in question are enrolled in a preparatory course offered by the English Preparatory Program. Upon arrival at the school, students are categorized into different levels of proficiency, including starters (Level 1), elementary (Level 2), lower-intermediate (Level3), intermediate (Level 4), and upper-intermediate (Level 5), based on their performance on the placement assessment managed at the start of the semester. By the conclusion of the academic year, it is anticipated that the individuals in question will have attained a level of proficiency in the upper-intermediate range.

The survey was carried out by 52 students from Level 2 (elementary), 52 students from Level 3 (lower-intermediate), 51 students from Level 4 (intermediate) and 7 students from Level 5 (upper-intermediate). Their ages are between 18 and 22. The questionnaire serves as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire has questions to determine the likely cause of anxiety and as it was carried out among 4 levels, it serves as the specific anxiety relationship between different proficiency

levels as well as the sort of anxiety experienced when in English classroom.

Their gender is as follows: 87 female, 70 male students with 5 students who preferred not to say.

For Level 2, at the beginning of the academic year, students with limited or elementary proficiency in the English language are assigned to this particular level. To successfully complete the Prep Program at this level, students are required to pass Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 consecutively. Upon commencement of the academic year, students who are initially assigned to Level 2 will finalize the Prep Program in June, upon successful completion of Level 5.

For Level 3, at the commencement of the academic year, students whose proficiency in English falls just below the intermediate level are assigned to this particular level. In order to successfully complete the Prep Program at this level, students are required to sequentially pass Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5. Upon the start of the academic year, students who are initially assigned to Level 3 will conclude the Prep Program in June, provided that they have effectively met the requirements of Level 5.

For Level 4, at the start of the academic year, students whose proficiency in English is at the intermediate level are assigned to this particular level. In order to successfully complete the Prep Program at this level, students are required to sequentially pass the Level 4 and Level 5 courses. Students who are initially assigned to Level 4 at the start of the academic year are considered to have completed the Prep Program in February, provided they successfully pass without any instances of failure at the conclusion of the first two terms.

The Proficiency assessment is a standardized assessment consisting of multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate a student's language proficiency and reading comprehension abilities. Preparatory Program has Stage 1 (Placement Exam) and Stage 2 (Prep Exemption Exam) written exams.

Stage 1: Level Placement Exam

In stage one, The Cambridge University Press-created level placement test serves two purposes: it establishes the students' English proficiency and identifies those who are qualified to take the second stage of the exam. The test consists of two short paragraph writing projects in addition to 20 reading and 30 language usage

multiple-choice questions. Students who score 45 or above on this test out of 70 are allowed to move on to the second stage of the exam, and if they pass that exam, they are permitted to start their departmental studies. According to their performance on the first stage of the test, students who receive a grade below 45 or who fail the stage 2 exam are assigned to a level in the English Preparatory Program that is appropriate for them. A sample of this placement test is not provided here for legal reasons. This test is similar to several multiple-choice placement tests that are offered abroad.

A summary of the distribution of students based on their placement exam scores is revealed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 The Enrollment of Learners Based on Level Placement Exam Results

0 - 15	Level 1
16 - 27	Level 2
28 - 36	Level 3
37 - 44	Level 4
45 - 70	Level 5

Stage 2: Proficiency Exam

In stage 1, students who get 45 or higher grade out of 70 are admitted to the Stage 2 exam. Students who get lower than 45 cannot take the stage 2 exam. They are placed directly in English Preparatory based on their scores explained in Table 1.

Stage 2 has three parts, speaking (35%), Reading (30%), and Writing (35%). Students who pass this test with a score of 60 or better are released from the English Preparatory Year and are able to start their departmental courses. According to their stage 1 exam results, students who receive a grade of less than 60 begin the English Preparatory Year at the appropriate level.

In speaking part, English teachers ask questions on the test in English to each student individually. Each student is offered three to four questions on general issues about which they can express an opinion during the exam, which lasts roughly four to five minutes.

In reading part, the reading test may include questions that seek knowledge on the following: the key notion or point, detailed understanding, comparison, effects and causes and what a text says and doesn't say.

Finally in writing part, the following factors will be taken into account while grading their essay: content organization, accuracy in the use of language and terminology, language and vocabulary usage and diversity.

A sample of this exam can be seen in Appendix 1.

B. Data Collection

Descriptive and inferential quantitative data collection method were used in this research. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire-collected data was evaluated using descriptive and inferential quantitative statistics. One questionnaire “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986) was used in data collection part. The Turkish version of this questionnaire was given to the Level 2 students so that they could understand and answer all the questions. As the Turkish version is used frequently in anxiety research, no admission was required. The questionnaire was entered into Google Forms, and EFL students taking preparatory classes at the university was provided with the link. Their levels were asked in this questionnaire. Maximum 15 minutes was needed to complete the questionnaire. SPSS 21 was used to examine the data (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). ANOVA was used to examine group differences in terms of the independent variables.

The research was carried out during the second academic term 2022-2023. In February of 2023, permission was obtained from the English Preparatory Program in a foundational university to administer the FLCAS questionnaire to participants.

During the third week of February, researcher administered the FLCAS questionnaire to 162 students enrolled in the English Preparatory Program outside of their scheduled class time.

C. Data Analysis and Instrument

Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was conducted, FLCAS (1983) for the purposes of this study. Horwitz created the FLCAS to investigate the extent and severity of language anxiety. The FLCAS's items are representative of speaking anxiety, and fear of receiving poor feedback. Horwitz (1986) developed a 33-item Likert-type measure with five potential outcomes, from

"strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," called the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale.

Its purpose is to measure the level of foreign language anxiety as shown by low expectations for oneself in terms of performance and social comparisons (*example item 23: "I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do"*), psycho-physiological signs (*example item 20: "I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class"*), and behavioral problems (*such as item 17: "I often feel like not going to my language class"*).

SPSS version 21 was used to analyze the data that was obtained from the questionnaire.

In Figure 5 below, the distribution of the questions in FLCAS questionnaire according to their likelihood of the foreign language classroom anxiety can be seen.

Causes of language anxiety	Questionnaire Items
Communication Anxiety	1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29 and 32
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31 and 33
Test Anxiety	2, 8, 10, 19 and 21
English Classroom Anxiety	4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 26, 28 and 30

Figure 5 The Distribution of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Questions

(Horwitz et al., 1986, taken from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281405565_International_Journal_of_English_and_Education_Exploring_Classroom_Anxiety_among_Urdu_EFL_Learners_at_Secondary_Level_in_Pakistan/figures?lo=1)

As seen in Figure 5, the association between research questions and questionnaire is as follows:

-Research question 1 covers 33 items in FLCAS questionnaire.

-Research question 2 which aims to find out the relationship between *fear of*

negative evaluation and *language proficiency*, covers 9 questions numbered # 3,7, 13,15,20,23,25,31 and 33.

- Research question 3 which aims to find out the relationship between *communication anxiety* and *language proficiency*, covers 8 questions numbered 1,9,14,18,24,27,29 and 32

- Research question 4 which aims to find out the relationship between *test anxiety* and *language proficiency* questions covers 5 questions numbered # 2,8,10,19 and 21.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE DATA

This part consists of the results of the research questions. They were analyzed with ANOVA, Fischer's LSD and Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests.

A. Analysis

Table 2 below shows the information about the data collection and data analysis based on the research questions.

Table 2 Information about the data collection and data analysis based on the research questions

Research Questions	Data Collection Instruments	Data Analysis
1. Do the foreign language anxiety levels of students differ significantly according to their proficiency level?	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)	One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA (analysis of variance) Post-hoc Tests Fischer's LSD & Tukey's HSD
2. What is the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and language proficiency?	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)	One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA (analysis of variance) Post-hoc Tests Fischer's LSD & Tukey's HSD
3. What is the relationship between students' communication apprehension and language proficiency?	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)	One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA (analysis of variance) Post-hoc Tests Fischer's LSD & Tukey's HSD
4. What is the relationship between students test anxiety and their language proficiency?	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)	One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA (analysis of variance) Post-hoc Tests Fischer's LSD & Tukey's HSD

In Table 2 above, the data of the research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 is collected by Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) instrument and the questions are analyzed by One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA (analysis of variance), Post-hoc Tests, Fischer's LSD &, Tukey's HSD.

In Table 3 below, the demographic information of the students taking the proficiency exam are shown.

Table 3 Participants' Demographic Information Taking the Proficiency Test

		N	%
Gender	Female	87	53.7
	Male	70	43.2
	Prefer not to say	5	3.1
Proficiency	A2	52	32.1
	B1	52	32.1
	B2	51	31.5
	C1	7	4.3
Total		162	100

In Table 3 above, among 162 participants, 87 of them are female, 70 of them are male, 5 of them preferred not to say.

A total of 162 participants took part in the study. Out of this total, 87 were female (53.7 %), 70 were male (43.2 %). 5 participants did not specify their gender (3.1 %). Additionally, the sample consisted of 52 A2 level (32.1 %), 52 B1 level (32.1 %), 51 B2 level (31.5 %), and 7 C1 level students (4.3 %). As C1 students were too low in number, they were excluded from the analyses.

In Table 4 below, the findings of the research question 1, research question 2, research question 3 and research question 4 are presented according to ANOVA results.

Table 4. Results of the One-Way ANOVA Between Subjects Comparing Students with Different Proficiency Levels in Terms of Their Foreign Language Anxiety and Subscale Scores

	Proficiency	Mean	SS	F	p
Foreign Language Anxiety	A2	95.12	18.01	.55	.58
	B1	95.35	15.46		
	B2	92.04	20.05		
Fear of Negative Evaluation	A2	45.69	9.84	.20	.82
	B1	46.62	6.95		
	B2	45.84	9.77		
Communication Apprehension	A2	40.44	7.97	2.33	.10
	B1	38.85	8.90		
	B2	36.69	9.65		
Test Anxiety	A2	8.98	2.35	2.04	.13
	B1	9.88	2.01		
	B2	9.51	2.51		

$p < .05$

In Table 4 above, the findings of the research questions are shown. The relationship between foreign language anxiety and language proficiency, the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and language proficiency, the relationship between communication apprehension and language proficiency and the relationship between test anxiety and language proficiency are listed.

Table 5 below shows the scores of the anxiety level. The FLCAS provides an extensive score that covers from 33 to 165. Based on the calculation technique introduced by Horwitz et al. (1986), the participants' overall scores were categorized as follows.

Table 5 Scoring of the answers in the FLCAS

SCORE	
33-75	Low
76-119	Medium
Above 120	High

According to Table 5, this study may categorize the foreign language anxiety of A2 (mean = 95.12), B1 (mean = 95.35), and B2 (mean = 92.04) level students as having *medium* anxiety. So, based on the first research question, which looks for the classroom anxiety difference between 3 levels, this study may claim that there is no significant difference among A2, B1, B2 students' anxiety level in terms of their proficiency level.

As Everitt and Skrondal (2010) suggested, the alpha value was set at .05 to balance the probability of making type 1 and type 2 errors.

A One-way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of English proficiency on students' foreign language anxiety (FLA). Results indicated that the effect of English proficiency on FLA was insignificant, $F(2, 152) = .55, p = .58$ (Table 4). Likewise, neither Fischer's LSD nor Tukey's HSD post-hoc test showed a significant group difference in terms of FLA ($p > .05$).

A One-way ANOVA was carried out to compare the effect of English proficiency on students' fear of negative evaluation (FONE). Since Levene's test of homogeneity showed that the assumption of homogeneity was violated ($p = .02$), Welch test results were reported. It was revealed that the effect of English proficiency on FONE was not significant, $F(2, 98.06) = .20, p = .82$ (Table 4). Similarly, neither Fischer's LSD nor Tukey's HSD post-hoc test pointed out to a significant group difference in terms of FONE ($p > .05$).

A One-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of English level on communication apprehension. As shown by the results, proficiency had no significant effect on how shy the students felt about communicating in English, $F(2, 152) = 2.33, p = .10$ (Table 4). However, Fischer's LSD and Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests showed conflicting results for two of the group comparisons (Table 6). While Fischer's LSD indicated that A2 students felt significantly more apprehended in communication than do B2 students ($p = .03$), no such effect was found by Tukey's HSD test ($p = .08$). In order to avoid committing Type 1 error, the result of Tukey's

HSD was taken into account.

A One-way ANOVA was carried out to compare the effect of English proficiency on test anxiety. As indicated by the results, proficiency had an insignificant impact on participants' test anxiety scores, $F(2, 152) = 2.04, p = .13$ (Table 4). Nevertheless, Fischer's LSD and Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests revealed incongruent results in two group comparisons (Table 6). Though Fischer's LSD pointed out that B1 students were more anxious test takers than A2 students ($p = .046$), such a significant result was not found by Tukey's HSD test ($p = .11$). So as not to commit Type 1 error, Tukey's HSD test result was taken into consideration.

Table below 6 presents the findings of the research question 3 and 4 analyzed by post-hoc tests.

Table 6 Conflicting Significance Results Stemming from the Use of Different Post-hoc Tests

	Communication Apprehension A2 - B2	Test Anxiety A2 - B1
Fischer's LSD	.03*	.046*
Tukey's HSD	.08	.11

$p < .05$

In Table 6 above, relationship of the communication apprehension between A2-B2 levels is shown according to Fischer's LSD and Tukey's HSD.

Also, in Table 6 above, relationship of the test anxiety between A2-B1 levels is shown according to Fischer's LSD and Tukey's HSD.

B. Discussions

1. Research Question 1

According to research question 1 "Do the foreign language anxiety levels of students differ significantly according to their proficiency level?", it was discovered that the participants' levels of anxiety were not significantly influenced by their proficiency level when the data were evaluated in terms of the association between foreign language anxiety and proficiency level. That is, the proficiency level of the learners did not exhibit a noticeable effect on the level of their anxiety, whether facilitating or debilitating.

Previous research has identified relationships between language anxiety and

proficiency level, as evidenced by studies conducted by Dalkılıç (2001), Llinas and Garau (2009), and Liu (2006). The researchers Dalkılıç (2001) and Liu (2006) conducted research on the relationship between foreign language anxiety and proficiency. Their findings indicate that as proficiency levels increase, foreign language anxiety levels decrease. Liu's (2006) research demonstrated notable variations in foreign language anxiety levels among advanced and elementary participants.

Juan Garau (2009) conducted a study to investigate possible differences in foreign language anxiety levels. The findings revealed an important difference in the correlation between language proficiency and language anxiety. The results of her study indicated that individuals divided as advanced learners obtained the highest scores on the language anxiety scale. This implies that there exists an association between language proficiency and anxiety levels.

The findings of Llinas and Garau's (2009) investigation also supported correlation between language anxiety and proficiency level. The research revealed that individuals who were at an advanced level of Spanish proficiency exhibited the most significant degree of anxiety when it came to learning a foreign language. The previously mentioned observation was attributed by the researchers to the learners' motivations for acquiring Spanish language skills. Specifically, it was noted that advanced level learners were mainly motivated by their desire to work alongside Spanish-speaking individuals, which consequently established a greater sense of responsibility for achieving proficiency in the language.

Additionally, this result is in contrast to that of McIntyre and Gardner (1991: 111), who claim that "as experience and proficiency increase, anxiety declines in a fairly consistent manner."

The current investigation's outcome can be considered new within the existing literature. The observation that individuals with higher proficiency level, which is B2, did not experience a decrease or increase in anxiety within English language classrooms. This result could potentially be linked to the unique features of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings.

2. Research Question 2

According to research question 2 “What is the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and language proficiency?”, the results from the analyses indicated that the participants' fear of negative evaluation was not significantly influenced by their proficiency level when the data were evaluated in terms of the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and proficiency level. That is, the proficiency level of the learners did not exhibit a noticeable effect on the fear of negative evaluation anxiety, whether facilitating or debilitating.

These findings have confliction by the researcher in earlier studies (Tzoannopoulou, 2016). The findings of the factor analysis in this study (Tzoannopoulou, 2016) and t-tests indicated a significant negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement, as well as between anxiety of negative evaluation and student performance. The aforementioned results have also been supported by researchers in previous studies also revealing relationship between foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. (Aida, 1994; Cheng et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000).

Moreover, considering the previous studies, according to a study (Zhao, 2007), performance in a foreign language was not greatly impacted by fear of negative evaluation. It reveals that this study conflicts with the previous studies and it could be linked to again uniqueness of the language classes, students' perception of language learning, students' perception of life in terms of the country that they live.

3. Research question 3

According to research question 3 “What is the relationship between students' communication apprehension and language proficiency?”, while the findings showed insignificant relationship between students' communication apprehension and language proficiency according to the analysis of One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA and Tukey's HSD, Fischer's LSD indicated that A2 students felt significantly more apprehended in communication than B2 students ($p = .03$). However, not to commit type 1 error, the researcher took Tukey's HSD test result into consideration.

The findings of ANOVA and Tukey's HSD, correlates with the study that has been conducted by Zhao (2007). The research conducted by Zhao (2007) indicates

that there is no significant correlation between communication apprehension and foreign language performance.

4. Research question 4

According to the research question 4 “What is the relationship between students test anxiety and their language proficiency?”, while the findings showed insignificant relationship between students’ test anxiety and language proficiency according to the analysis of One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA and Tukey’s HSD, Fischer’s LSD indicated that B1 students felt significantly more apprehended taking tests than A2 students ($p = .03$). However, not to commit type 1 error, the researcher took Tukey’s HSD test result into consideration.

In accordance with the findings of the research, it was observed that there is no relationship between test anxiety among students and their proficiency in language. The present research outcome matches with the previous studies.

Yoğurtçu and Yoğurtçu (2013) discovered a lack of connection between test anxiety and the language proficiency of preparatory university students. Cheraghian, Freidooni Moghadam, Baraz-Pardjani, and Bavarsad's (2008) study found no significant correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement. The existence of a correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement does not necessarily imply a direct causal relationship between these two variables. According to Goonan's (2003) assertion, test anxiety does not have a direct influence on academic performance. However, its manifestation may vary depending on several factors such as familial background, level of achievement, motivation, and intellectual giftedness (2003: 7). Cassady and Johnson (2002) suggested that the connection between academic performance and test anxiety continues to be unclear, as it is uncertain whether poor academic proficiency leads to test anxiety or vice versa.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research is to enhance the current comprehension of foreign language anxiety and related variables through looking at its relationship with language proficiency. The research results indicate a lack of correlation between the level of proficiency of English learners and the foreign language anxiety. Furthermore, the researcher found no correlation between the students' level of proficiency and their communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety.

The lack of a decrease in foreign language anxiety among advanced learners in the current study suggests that their overall proficiency might not necessarily relate to their foreign language proficiency.

The results of this study suggest that instructors should take into consideration that learners experience foreign language anxiety to some extent, regardless of their level of proficiency in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Given the possible detrimental effect of anxiety on the educational achievement of students, it is helpful to provide an anxiety free atmosphere in foreign language classroom.

It is recommended that learners are positively encouraged to engage in activities and are given constructive feedback in an encouraging educational setting. It is recommended for instructors to remain alert for signs of anxiety among their students. A careful observation of the learners in the classroom can facilitate educators in recognizing students who exhibit increased levels of anxiety and then providing them support in managing their apprehensive behaviors. Along with careful observation, students could be requested to write weekly or monthly journals, providing them with an opportunity to express their emotions, positive and negative perspectives regarding the lesson, and recommendations for addressing the issues they recognize.

Given that certain students exhibit apprehension towards committing errors, it

is recommended that educators emphasize the idea that committing mistakes is a natural component of obtaining a language. Rather than selecting students at random to engage in oral activities, it may be beneficial to promote voluntary participation. This approach can be advantageous as some students may not feel comfortable speaking the language aloud until they are confident in the accuracy of their response. It is highly suggested to respect the silent period of learners before they are encouraged to produce language output. Language teachers should always keep in mind that coercing the learners for early production would only increase their stress and anxiety and this would delay a successful acquisition of language skills.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research was carried out only at one foundation university located in Istanbul. Consequently, the outcomes related to the proficiency level and relationship of anxiety in foreign language acquisition cannot be generally applied to alternative contexts.

The use of the questionnaire resulted in further limitations. According to Dörnyei (2007), questionnaires can be a valuable tool for efficiently gathering information from a large number of individuals within a restricted time frame, provided that they are carefully designed and carried out. Dörnyei (2007) acknowledges that the use of questionnaire items may not afford respondents a broader outlook. The brief and simple nature of item statements is primarily driven by pragmatic considerations, which may limit the extent to which researchers may include additional information. Therefore, the addition of open-ended questions within questionnaires may help the acquisition of more comprehensive insights regarding the subject matter.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Sample Exam of Stage 2

Appendix 2. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Appendix 3. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Turkish

Appendix 4. Ethics committee approval

Appendix 1. Sample proficiency exam of stage 2

a. Siblings Relationships: A Brief Analysis

1 During childhood, sisters and brothers are a major part of each other's lives for better or for worse. As adults they may drift apart as they become involved in their careers, marriages and families. But much later in life, after retirement, when the children leave home and parents and sometimes spouses pass away, brothers and sisters often turn to each other for a special closeness and link to

the past. "In the stressful, fast-paced world we live in, the sibling relationship becomes for many the only intimate connection that seems to last," says psychologist Michael Kahn of the University of Hartford. Friends and neighbors may move away, former coworkers are forgotten, marriages break up, but no matter what, our sisters and brothers remain our sisters and brothers.

2 The late-life bond between siblings may be especially important to the "Baby Boom" generation, people who were born in the United States from 1946 to 1964 when the birth rate increased dramatically. These people, now in adulthood, average about two or three siblings each. Divorce rates are high among the members of this generation because they have different values from their parents; they do not attach the same level of importance to family as their parents. For the same reason, most of those couples who stayed married decided to have only one or no children. Divorce and having one or no children will force members of this generation to look to their brothers and sisters for support in old age.

3 Another important factor in sibling relationships is critical events. Critical events can bring siblings together or deepen an existing gap. Parental sickness or death is a prime example. A study done by the University of Cincinnati showed that siblings engaged in rivalry and conflict were even more torn apart by the death or sickness of a parent. On the other hand, those siblings who had been close since childhood became closer.

4 As brothers and sisters advance into old age, closeness increases and rivalry diminishes. Old age is seen as a time to heal wounds. Older people tend to focus more on what they need now than on bad events of the past. As a result, people become more involved with and interested in their siblings as they age. Most elderly people have supportive and friendly dealings and get along very well with their brothers or sisters. Furthermore, with family and career obligations reduced, they have more

time for each other. Another reason for increased contact is anxiety regarding a sister's or brother's declining health. Many older people like to check in on their siblings to see how they are doing.

Siblings also assume special importance as other sources of contact and support weaken. Each of us moves through life with a group of people who supply comfort and nurturance. As we age, the size of this group gradually declines because of death, sickness or moving. Brothers and sisters who may not have been important members of the group earlier in life can become so in old age. And they do more than fill in gaps. The loneliness older people feel cannot be satisfied by just anyone. They want a specific type of relationship, one that only someone who had shared their past could provide.

5 This far-reaching link to the past is a powerful bond between siblings in later life. There is a review process we all go through in old age to resolve whether or not we are pleased with our lives. A sibling can help retrieve a memory more accurately. We can remember some with our spouse or with friends but the only person who goes all the way back is our sister or brother. Only they can help us remember the past events the way they happened. Discussing the past helps us feel the warmth of early family life once again. Furthermore, going back in time with a sister or brother can improve our morale.

6 Some of the factors that affect how much contact siblings will have, such as how near they live, are obvious; others are more unexpected. For example, relationships are closer if there is a sister involved. Elderly people most often feel closest to a sister and are more likely to keep in touch through her. Sisters, by tradition, often assume a caretaking and kin-keeping role, especially after the death of their mother. In many situations, two brothers do not talk to each

other that much but keep track of each other through their sisters. Researchers have found that the bond between sisters is strongest, followed by the one between sisters and brothers and, last, between brothers.

- 7 Sisters and brothers who live near each other will, as a matter of course, see more of each other. However, proximity is not crucial to a strong relationship later in life. Because of multiple chronic illnesses, people in their 80s and 90s cannot get together that easily. Even so, these siblings seem to evoke positive feelings based on the images or feelings inside. Just the idea that the sibling is alive and that there is someone they can call is comforting, so while contact among siblings may decrease, positive feelings increase.
- 8 Although older people may find comfort in the thought that their siblings are there if they need them, they rarely call each other for help or offer each other instrumental support, such as borrowing money, or help with shopping or cleaning. There are several reasons why siblings do not turn to each other more for instrumental help. First, since they are usually about the same age, they may be equally needy or weak. Another reason is that many people consider their siblings safety nets who will save them after everything else has failed. A son or daughter will almost always be turned to first. It's more acceptable in the society to look up or down the family ladder for help than sideways. Finally, siblings may not turn to each other for help because of hidden rivalry. They may believe that if they need to call on a brother or sister, they are admitting that the other person is a success while they are a failure. Therefore, some people would rather continue on their own than ask their sister or brother for help.

Despite the quarrelling and competition many people associate with the mere mention of their sisters and brothers, many will find unexpected strengths in this relationship in later life. As people age, their siblings become the most important people in their lives. As a result, one sibling may be worth all the friends, colleagues, neighbors a person has.

Part A: Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with information from the text.

1. The baby boom generation becomes dependent on their siblings later in life because

_____.

2. Siblings who have a good relationship support each other even more in situations like

_____.

Part B: Complete the following summary of paragraph 4.

Siblings get closer when they get older due to several reasons. Firstly, as they age, they do not see each other as rivals because they attach less importance to

(3)____. In addition, siblings can spare time for their relationship thanks to fewer (4)_____. The third

reason for this closeness is siblings' worries about (5)_____. Finally, when they lose the people around them, people turn to their siblings instead of other people because (6)_____.

Part C: Answer the following questions according to the information in the text.

7. In addition to helping us remember past events correctly, how may talking about the past with a sibling help us?

8. What prevents siblings at very old ages from seeing each other?

9. Which of the following is **NOT** mentioned in paragraph 8 as a reason why

older siblings rarely ask each other for favors?

- a. They prefer to seek help from other family members first.
- b. Siblings of an old person may not be in good conditions, either.
- c. They get help from other members of the society.
- d. They do not want their sibling to think that they have failed.

10. According to **paragraphs 6&7**, who would have a stronger relationship after losing their parents?

- a. Siblings who live nearby.
- b. Siblings whose mother dies.
- c. Siblings with a chronic illness.
- d. Siblings involving a sister.

B. Write an essay of about 400 words on the writing question given below. Use the necessary supporting techniques to develop your opinions in your essay. You have 60 minutes + 15 minutes extra time.

Writing Question:

“Discuss how social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have changed our lives.”

You may use the following prompts or your own ideas to write your essay.

- Social life
- Connections with others
- Personal privacy

a. You MAY use the following facts in addition to other supporting techniques to develop your ideas.

- There were 1 billion Facebook and 645 million Twitter users by the end of 2013. (*Datablog of the Guardian.com, February 2014*)
- The average number of friends among adult Facebook users is 338. (*2014 survey by Pew Research Center*)

You will be asked two or three questions on the theme “transportation & traffic”. You should try to talk about each question for about 1-2 minutes. So, please give detailed answers.

The questions you will be asked are **in bold**. If the instructor feels that you need to elaborate your answers, s/he will ask you some of the questions in *italics*.

b. THEME: TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC

Drivers’ Problems in İstanbul

- **Why are there traffic jams in İstanbul?**

How do traffic jams affect people? (their psychology / stress level / punctuality) What do you do to avoid traffic jams?

- **How do parking lots cause problems? (around the school / in your neighborhood) Are parking lots cheap or expensive?**

- **What are some of the characteristics of drivers in İstanbul?**

Do they obey traffic rules?

Do they respect other drivers? How about the pedestrians? What are some of the characteristics of taxi drivers?

Appendix 2. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = No comment, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Appendix 3. Foreign language classroom anxiety scale Turkish

1 = Kesinlikle katılmıyorum, 2 = Katılıyorum, 3 = Kararsızım, 4 = Katılıyorum,
5 = Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1. Yabancı dil derslerinde konuúrken kendimden asla emin olamıyorum.
2. Yabancı dil derslerinde hata yapmak beni endişelendirmiyor.
3. Yabancı dil derslerinde bana söz verileceği zaman titriyorum.
4. (Öğretmenin yabancı dilde söylediklerini anlamamak beni korkutuyor.
5. Daha fazla yabancı dil dersine girsem bile sıkılmam.
6. Yabancı dil derslerinde kendimi dersten başka şeyler düşünürken buluyorum.
7. Diğer öğrencilerin yabancı dil konusunda benden daha iyi olduklarını düşünüyorum.
8. Yabancı dil derslerinin sınavlarında genellikle rahatım.
9. Yabancı dil derslerinde hazırlıksız konuşmam gerektiğinde panik olmaya başlıyorum.
10. Yabancı dil derslerinde başarısız olmamın sonuçları beni endişelendiriyor.
11. Bazı insanların yabancı dil derslerinde neden mutsuz olduklarını anlamıyorum.
12. Yabancı dil derslerinde bildiğim şeyleri unuttuğumda çok sinirlenebiliyorum.
13. Yabancı dil derslerinde parmak kaldırmaya utanıyorum.
14. Yabancı dilimi ana dili olarak kullanan biriyle konuşurken gerilmezdim.
15. Öğretmenimin yaptığı düzeltmeyi anlamadığımda üzülüyorum.
16. Çok iyi hazırlanmış olsam bile yabancı dil dersinde kaygılı hissediyorum.
17. Sıklıkla yabancı dil derslerine gitmeyi istemiyorum.
18. Yabancı dil derslerinde konuşurken kendime güveniyorum.
19. Yabancı dil öğretmenim yaptığım her hatayı düzeltecek diye korkuyorum.
20. Yabancı dil derslerinde bana seslenildiği zaman kalbimin çarptığını hissedebiliyorum.
21. Yabancı dil dersinin sınavına ne kadar çok çalışırsam kafam o kadar karışıyor.

22. Yabancı dil derslerine çok iyi hazırlanınca kendimi baskı altında hissetmiyorum.
23. Diğer öğrencilerin yabancı dili benden daha iyi konuştuklarını her zaman hissediyorum.
24. Diğer öğrencilerin önünde yabancı dilde konuşurken çok sıkıldığımı hissediyorum.
25. Yabancı dil dersleri öyle hızlı ilerliyor ki geride kalmaktan endişeleniyorum.
26. Yabancı dil derslerinde diğer derslerdekinden daha gergin ve sinirli hissediyorum
27. Yabancı dil dersinde konuşurken sinirleniyorum ve kafam karışıyor.
28. Yabancı dil dersine giderken kendimi rahat ve güvenli hissediyorum.
29. Yabancı dil öğretmenimin söylediklerini kelimesi kelimesine anlayamayınca sinirleniyorum.
30. Yabancı dili konuşmak için öğrenmem gereken kuralların sayısı beni boğuyor.
31. Yabancı dilde konuşurken diğer öğrencilerin bana güleceklerinden korkuyorum.
32. Öğrendiğim yabancı dili ana dili olarak kullananların yanında kendimi muhtemelen rahat hissedirdim.
33. Yabancı dil öğretmeni hazırlanmadığım yerlerden sorular sorduğunda sinirleniyorum.

Appendix 4. Ethics committee approval
Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 25.05.2023-86500



T.C.
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Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Mehmet Sencer GİRGİN
Müdür Yardımcısı

RESUME

Name Surname: Gamze KIZILTEPE

Education:

2015-2020 İstanbul Kültür University-English Language and Teaching Department

2021-2023 İstanbul Aydın University-Master, English Language and Literature
Department

Work Experience:

2020-2021 Bilfen Educational Institutions / English Teacher

2021-...İstanbul Bilgi University-English Preparatory School / Instructor

Languages:

-Turkish: Native Language

-English: Advanced

Skills:

-Communication, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Flexibility, Creativity

- Computer skills (Microsoft Office) and others