



A Correlation Study on EFL Students' Self-Efficacy and Attitudes Towards English and Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

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Abstract

Foreign language speaking anxiety has been a problem experienced by students for a long time. It has been thought to hinder students' learning a foreign language and to affect students' achievements. Although it has been studied widely, its causes are not still fully understood. Attitude has an important role in learning a foreign language. Self-efficacy beliefs of students also have an influence on language learning. Attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs are known to be factors that promote learning a foreign language or cause students to avoid it. Therefore, it is considered that foreign language speaking anxiety may be related to students' attitudes towards foreign language learning and their self-efficacy beliefs. This study aimed to investigate the correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and self-efficacy and the correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and the students' attitudes. Interviews were also conducted to determine the factors and possible solutions for foreign language speaking anxiety. Three Likert-type scales were used with the participation of 32 eleventh-grade EFL students. The quantitative data results showed that while there was a significant correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and self-efficacy, there was no correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and attitude. The findings of interviews indicated that from the participants' point of views, there were several academic factors that cause foreign language speaking anxiety such as exams and activities during classes. The participants' solutions for foreign language speaking anxiety were academic ones such as more speaking activities during class time.

Keywords: Foreign language speaking anxiety, self-efficacy, attitude

Yabancı Dil Öğrencilerinin Öz Yeterlilikleri, İngilizce Tutumları ve Yabancı Dil Konuşma Kaygılarına İlişkin Bir Korelasyon Çalışması

Özet

Yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı, öğrencilerin uzun süredir yaşadığı bir sorundur. Bu kaygının öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenmelerini engellediği gibi başarılarını da etkilediği düşünülmüştür. Tutum, yabancı dil öğreniminde önemli bir role sahiptir. Öğrencilerin öz-yeterlik inançlarının da dil öğrenimi üzerinde etkisi vardır. Tutumlar ve öz-yeterlik inançları, bir yabancı dili öğrenmeyi teşvik eden veya öğrencilerin dil öğrenmekten kaçınmasına neden olan faktörler olarak bilinmektedir. Dolayısıyla yabancı dil konuşma kaygısının öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenmeye yönelik tutumları ve öz-yeterlik inançları ile ilişkili olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada, yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı ile öz yeterlik arasındaki ilişki ve yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı ile öğrenci tutumları arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Yabancı dil konuşma kaygısının nedenlerini ve olası çözüm yollarını belirlemek için görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veri toplamak için üç Likert tipi ölçek kullanılmıştır. Nicel veri sonuçları, yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı ile öz yeterlik arasında bir ilişki varken, yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı ile tutum arasında bir ilişki olmadığını göstermiştir. Görüşmeler sonucu, katılımcılar yabancı dil konuşma kaygısına neden olan faktörlerin; sınavlar, ders içi etkinlikler gibi çeşitli akademik faktörlerin olduğunu belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların yabancı dil konuşma kaygısına yönelik çözümleri ders sırasında daha fazla konuşma etkinliği gibi daha fazla akademik aktivite yapılması olmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı, öz yeterlik, tutum

1. Introduction

Today, English has gained increasing importance to access knowledge and to transfer the information. It has become a very important communication language around the world (Yanar, 2008). English, becoming a lingua franca, is needed to communicate in areas, such as education, economy, and culture. Thus, learning English and being able to speak it has become crucial for individuals (Burn & Joyce, 2001). However, a foreign language learning process bears hardships, and it requires both time and effort for students. (Lopez, 2020). With the increasing importance, foreign language learning process has been studied more; however, there are still some issues to be carefully examined (Tulgar, 2018).

The English language learning process comprises four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Learners must take an active part in the learning process to get an overall acquisition of these skills. It is quite essential to excel in these skills especially in speaking skills to get effective communication in English (Hashemi, 2011).

However, while trying to get these communicative oral skills, the cognitive and affective features of the learners may hinder the learning process (Çağatay, 2015). In affective domains, such problems can be related to the students' attitudes, self-efficacy, and anxiety (Çağatay, 2015; Yanar, 2008). The students whose anxiety levels are high and whose self-confidence level is low can demonstrate harder and slower progress, especially in speaking abilities (Tridinanti, 2018). Ignorance of these issues may suggest EFL students are not willing to take part in the learning process (Créspin, 2021).

In classes and the general context of teaching English, teachers and students have concerns in common. Most of the students have high levels of anxiety about speaking in the target language. In general, anxiety which is the most common emotion has always been a focus of research in foreign language teaching and learning (Höl & Kasımi, 2022).

Although there have been numerous studies about foreign language speaking anxiety, there is still need for the study of the relationship between some variables and foreign language speaking anxiety especially for EFL high school students. It is very essential for a language teacher to know the variables that may affect their students' language anxiety. Therefore, it is believed that if the factors contributing to the speaking anxiety of Turkish students were identified, it would be easier to deal with the problem (Tekir, 2016).

1.1. Anxiety

Anxiety is a personal feeling of uneasiness, fear, or nervousness, triggering a person's own neural system (Spielberger, 1966). Anxiety results from difficulties in achievements or stressors that may be considered a threat. By disturbing cognitive processes, anxiety can cause a decrease in performance. In psychological and educational studies, anxiety has been researched widely since many learners have faced it during their educational process (Horwitz, 2001).

1.2. Foreign Language Anxiety

How students feel emotionally and how they act during their language learning form the definition of language anxiety (Höl & Kasımi, 2022). Some individuals are observed to be eager students. They are inclined to learn a foreign language, and they seem to have sympathy for the ones who are able to speak the target language. However, these individuals might react with anxiety, hindering themselves to display a successful performance in foreign language classes (Horwitz, 1986). The fact that 30-40 % of foreign language students have a moderate level of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has been pointed out in studies conducted worldwide (Horwitz, 2016).

FLA can be experienced by two variables. One of them is situational variables which are course level, activities done in classrooms, situations occurring in the class and classroom atmosphere. The other one is

students' variables which are character, learning strategies and styles, motivation, self-esteem, and attitudes (Chou, 2018). The process of learning a foreign language may be a very difficult task for some people. This perception can be caused by cognitive and affective factors in learning a foreign language. Motivation, character, skill, intelligence, and types and methods of learning are considered among these factors. Besides these factors, anxiety is another significant issue which could be experienced by many students when they learn a foreign language (Ellis, 2008).

FLA, which has been a main factor that can decrease the quality of a performance in many areas related to learning a foreign language, has been studied in a lot of research for the fact that FLA can be experienced by students of any level, age, gender, and nationality in foreign language classes (Vural, 2017). Nilsson (2019) found out that even young learners had FLA especially in oral performance in his study carried out in ten Swedish primary classrooms. One student in five reported frequent experience with FLA. In another study in which the effect of gender on foreign language speaking anxiety and motivation was examined, Öztürk and Gürbüz (2013) found that although female students were more motivated and showed a higher integrative motivation, they got more anxious than males.

FLA is a type of anxiety which causes difficulties for students when taking a class, taking part in learning and speaking. In almost all stages of students' education, foreign language anxiety continues to be an issue (Özkan, 2019).

Since foreign language anxiety is a difficult issue for learning a foreign language, this issue should be dealt with in a systematic way, and the studies should help understand the issue completely. A detailed understanding of factors of foreign language anxiety might be helpful for finding solutions to cope with this problem (Naser Oteir & Nijr Al-Otaibi, 2019).

1.3. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

The English language has four main skills, one of which is speaking. It is considered very essential and crucial for individuals to be interacted with each other and communicate with one another by using a foreign language (Diep et al., 2022).

Speaking skills in a language cover three dimensions which are as follows:

- 1-Knowledge, language, and discourse (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary),
- 2-Core speaking skills (chunking, signaling, intention, and turn-taking), and
- 3-Communication strategies (paraphrasing, rephrasing, and approximation) (Goh& Burn, 2012).

Speaking skill requires interaction and production of the students who must be active in communication (Carter & Nunan, 2002). Anxiety is an important problem that learners must cope with when they learn how to speak in another language (Horwitz, 1986). While students are getting progress in learning a foreign language, anxiety is encountered mostly in the speaking part of the language learning process (MacIntyre, 2017).

While speaking, a student has the others understand what he/she means in a successful way. With this aim, it can be said that when a student tries to convey meaning, he/she can have anxiety, as this process can be very hard for the students themselves. Therefore, students fear of using language in this sense can be defined as speaking anxiety (Balemir, 2009).

Learners' fear of making errors in pronunciation and the feeling of the possibility of humiliation in front of their peers are the most common factors of this anxiety (Basher et al., 2020). There have been some other factors such as participants' demographic features, gender, the participants' definition of anxiety, classroom atmosphere, students' skills, and survey methods found as the reason for Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) in different studies. (Korkmaz, 2019).

According to Gürbüz and Öztürk (2013) in the research conducted in classes, speaking has been pointed as the main source of anxiety among students. When students are to speak about a topic on the stage or make a presentation, they feel more threatened as the atmosphere in class gets more formal (Hashami & Abbasi, 2013).

Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014) conducted a study and investigated the level of, major causes for, and determining factors of foreign language speaking anxiety of pre-intermediate students of an English preparatory programme as well as students' perceptions of it in a Turkish EFL context. In their study, students' perception of speaking skills was found as a major factor in anxiety. Pronunciation, immediate questions, fear of making mistakes, and negative evaluation were found to be the major causes of EFL speaking anxiety. According to the study, FLSA has its own sources, aspects, variables, and effects.

Tridinanti (2018) investigated the correlation between fifth-semester teacher trainee students' speaking anxiety, self-confidence, and speaking achievement. Results pointed out that there was no significant correlation between speaking achievement and speaking anxiety, yet self-confidence had a significant correlation with speech achievement.

FLSA still causes problems during language learning, and most students still must cope with it (Korkmaz, 2019). According to the studies conducted, different variables affect FLSA, so it still needs to be studied.

1.4. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the apprehension of someone's ability to act to a certain degree (Bandura, 1986). What one chooses or how one acts is largely influenced by self-efficacy. Therefore, if a person had a feeling of confidence, he/she would try to do a task (Woodrow, 2011). Woodrow (2011) pointed out the fact that in her study, she got the results which emphasized that the students having low self-efficacy are inclined to have perceptions about their effort at a low level, while the students having high self-efficacy do not have to deal with pressure and are able to have a more enjoyable time during studying as well as they can achieve studying for long hours.

When students determine a goal for their academic development and when students evaluate themselves for a task, self-efficacy is crucial (Kim et al., 2015). Academic performance is determined significantly by students' beliefs of self-efficacy and feelings about success like anxiety as well as their intellectual capabilities (Roick & Ringeisen, 2017).

The criteria which can decide the degree of performance is self-efficacy rather than ability. In terms of academic success and performance, self-efficacy has been found to be an important determiner (Li et al., 2018). It is significant to study some motivational variables such as self-efficacy since these variables can have an effect on students' academic achievements, which can be influenced by the efforts of students for continuing a task, the monitoring of the students on their learning, and students' involvement in a task negatively or positively (Bai et al., 2020). In their study, Bai et al. (2020) found that academic self-efficacy and interest make students more motivated rather than the tasks they were given during learning English.

Self-efficacy depends on the context; thus, it is evaluated in terms of individual abilities to do certain tasks in certain context (Anam & Stracke, 2016). In their study, Anam and Stracke (2016) found that there were significant differences in terms of strategy use between the students who evaluate themselves as having capability for doing English tasks and self-regulating and the students who don't.

The beliefs about the extent to which a student perceives himself/herself about achieving a performance have long been a focus as the belief has an important part in students' motivations to succeed. Self-efficacy does not assess the qualities of individuals; on the contrary, it assesses the extent to which individuals are capable of performing in a context. Self-efficacy perceptions are not single but are multi-dimensional inclinations, and it is important to note that functioning areas can vary (Zimmerman, 2002). For instance,

students who have higher self-efficacy have higher English learning success. Although it can vary in terms of the skills in language learning, self-efficacy has an important role for overall learning in English and for achievement in learning English (Kitikanan & Sasimonton, 2017).

While dealing with a task in an academic way, the students can be influenced emotionally in a positive way by reducing their stress anxiety and depression with the help of self-efficacy perceptions. The effects of self-efficacy on behavior can vary according to students' perceptions of their personal competence. People's choices, acting ways, and efforts are affected by their self-efficacy. People tend to do tasks for which they think they are capable of doing. If they do not feel that they are capable of doing a task, they stay away from doing it. Efforts, persistence, and resilience are the factors that should be dealt with by a person with the help of self-efficacy in difficult situations (Dinther et al., 2011).

1.5. Attitude

An attitude is a readiness in a mental and neural way to get experience that utilizes directive or dynamic impacts on people's reaction to all things, which are in relation to these experiences (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). Eagly and Chaiken (1977) defined attitude as a psychological inclination which is stated by assessing a specific object or situation in terms of favor or disfavor. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitude is a learned tendency which causes continuous positive or negative behaviors towards a specific person, group, opinion, or situation. Attitude is evaluated as a reaction towards an object or concept on basis of one's beliefs or thoughts with a functional point of view (Gardner et al., 1985).

Attitude is a phenomenon which has an impact on every aspect of life and which is affected by them at the same time. Therefore, it is inevitable that attitude plays an important role in education. The effects of attitude, which have impacts on educational life and individual success, can be seen on a course basis. It can be considered that the positive or negative attitude of a student towards English may affect his/her academic success (Afacan, 2020). Therefore, language learning ought not to be considered merely as an academic phenomenon, rather it should be considered as a social and a psychological one (Abidin et al., 2012).

Attitude has been considered a significant factor in a foreign language process (Burgos & Molina, 2020). To achieve a thorough language learning, a student must have not only motivation but also a positive attitude (Gardner, 1985). Attitude is a significant factor for a language learner to achieve in learning a language. Those who have a positive attitude toward learning a language will be able to get more data; thus, they can interact one another in a better way (Jain & Sidhu, 2013). Students who have a positive attitude and high level of motivation will achieve more in comparison with those who have a negative attitude and low level of motivation (Bidin et al., 2009). According to Mat and Yunus (2014), in language learning process, a student's performance depends on his/her attitude.

It is very essential to have knowledge about students' attitudes to have them acquire basic skills that are necessary to learn English and use it effectively (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Knowing their students' attitudes and evaluation of these attitudes is crucial for a teacher to increase the quality of education since education is an important tool to have an important effect on students' attitudes (Baysal, 2020).

Attitude is a key concept in learning a language; therefore, how a student perceives or feels about learning a language process will surely have an impact on the student. If the student feels positive or is keen to learn the language in his/her English learning process, his/her attitude will help to improve positively. On the other hand, if the feeling of the learner is negative towards English and if the perception of the language is difficult, it will surely harm the language learning process (Zhu & Zhou, 2012).

Attitude and self-efficacy have a significant role in foreign language learning process. While learning a foreign language, students can go through FLSA. Attitude, self-efficacy and FLSA can all affect the

learning process. Therefore, to explain the level, causes or factors as well as the variables of FLSA of EFL high school students, the relationship between these variables must be understood. For that reason, the aim of this study is to obtain a detailed understanding of the relationship between EFL high school students' speaking anxiety and their self-efficacy and the relationship between their foreign language speaking anxiety and their attitudes towards English. In the light of the objectives, this study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1- Is there a difference in foreign language speaking anxiety, self-efficacy, and attitude by gender?
- 2- Is there a correlation between the students' levels of FLSA and their self-efficacy beliefs?
- 3- Is there a correlation between the students' levels of FLSA and their attitudes towards English?
- 4- What are the reasons for FLSA?
- 5- What are the students' suggestions?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

In this study, sequential explanatory mixed-method research design was used. First, the quantitative part of the study was carried out to understand whether there was a correlation between FLSA and the students' self-efficacy and whether there was a correlation between FLSA and their attitudes towards English by applying three scales. The qualitative part of the study was carried out to understand reasons and solutions of the students in terms of the results of the students' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards English through interviews.

2.2. Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select the participants to take part in this study as it was time saving and practical. The participants consisted of 32 11th grade EFL students studying in an Anatolian High School in Isparta. 13 of the participants were male students, and 19 of them were female. All the participants attended public schools in secondary school, and all of them have been having English courses since 2nd grade.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

In this research, three scales were used. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale developed by Orakçı (2018), Attitude Towards English Course Scale by Tulgar (2018) and The Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Sağlam and Arslan (2018) were used.

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale developed by Orakçı (2018) consisted of 16 items in a 5-point Likert format (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Some of the items on the scale was as follows:

"When I speak English, I worry that other students will not be able to understand me."

"I think other students speak English better than me."

The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of this scale were 0,95. The KMO value of the scale was 0.89. Bartlett Test result was $[X^2= 2093, 965; sd=87, p<0.01]$. It was determined that a total of 16 items from the scale formed two sub-dimensions (factors) with a valid and reliable structure by Orakçı (2018).

The second scale used to measure participants' attitudes in the study was the Attitude Towards English Course Scale. It was developed by Tulgar (2018). The scale consisted of 26 items in a 5-point Likert format (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Some of the items on the scale was as follows:

“It is a pleasure for me to take the English class”.

“I think English class is an opportunity to go abroad.”

The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of this scale were 0,96. Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted and KMO and Barlett tests were applied. KMO was found 0.963 and Barlett test χ^2 was found 6401,019 ($p < .001$) by Tulgar (2018).

The Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Sağlam and Arslan (2018) was also used in this study. The scale consisted of 22 items in a 5-point Likert format (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Some of the items on the scale was as follows:

“I can make dialogue in English.”

“I can express my feelings and thoughts in different forms in English.”

The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of this scale were 0,82 to 0,91. Explanatory factor analysis was conducted to prove the construct validity of the developed scale. The KMO value is 0,96 and the Barlett test significance value is 0,000. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, the scale of 22 items, the high item total correlations of the items forming the scale factors show the high structural validity of these scale items by Sağlam and Arslan (2018).

The scales were stated that they were valid and reliable scales that can measure students' FLSA, Self-efficacy and Attitudes. Since the scales were accessible and they took less time and effort for the participants to perform scoring, they were selected to be used in this study.

After three scales were applied, interviews were conducted with six participants according to their FLSA level in 11th grade students. As for qualitative data, after applying the scales, the interview questions developed by Ak (2021) were applied in this study. Distinct questions were developed for each group of participants, taking their anxiety level into mind. The questions focused on the participants' self-perceptions of the FLSA (Ak, 2021). Therefore, the questions enabled the participants to answer questions more efficiently. For the qualitative part of the study, six participants were asked to answer the questions developed by Ak (2021) below:

Interview questions for participants with a high or moderate level of FLSA are as follows:

1. What are the situations in which you experience anxiety while speaking English?
2. What are the possible causes underlying your English-speaking anxiety?
3. What have you done or are doing to overcome your English-speaking anxiety?
4. What should the Turkish educational system do to help students overcome their English-speaking anxiety?

Interview questions for participants with a low level of anxiety are as follows:

1. What are the reasons that place you in the category of a learner who does not experience English-speaking anxiety?
2. Have you ever had English-speaking anxiety in the past? If so, in what condition and why?
3. How did your English-speaking anxiety disappear?

2.4. Data Analysis

SPSS Analysis software was used to analyze the quantitative data. Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted (Table 1). Values of the measurements were determined (Table 2). Independent samples-t test was used to answer the first research question. The correlations between FLSA and attitude and between

FLSA and self-efficacy were measured by using Pearson Correlation. As for the qualitative part of the study, the interview data were content analyzed and interpreted by listening and transcribing the audio records of the participants.

2.5. Data collection procedure

For the quantitative data, FLSA, Self-efficacy and Attitude Scales were administered to 32 participants in 11th EFL classes during class time. The participants were explained the purpose of the study by the researcher. Then the participants were asked to answer questions on the scales. They completed the answering in 40 minutes.

2.5.1. Interviews

Six participants were chosen among them according to their levels of foreign language speaking anxiety. The researcher had observed six participants before; therefore, two participants with high levels of FLSA, two with moderate levels of FLSA, and two with low levels of FLSA were chosen and asked to be interviewed in English. Then six participants were asked to answer open-ended questions related to FLSA and its reasons.

3. Findings

3.1. FLSA, Attitude and Self-efficacy

In this part of the research, the findings of the quantitative data obtained as a result of the research are as follows:

The measurements about FLSA, Attitude and Self-Efficacy are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1.

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Data

Measurements	Shapiro-Wilk			Kurtosis-Skewness	
	Statistics	sd	p	Kurtosis	Skewness
FLSA	0,969	32	0,464	0,424	-0,523
Attitude	0,980	32	0,792	0,040	-0,745
Self-efficacy	0,969	32	0,474	0,491	0,297

Table 1 shows the findings regarding the distribution of data. In order to examine the distribution of the data collected in the study, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was used since the sample number was less than 50, and according to the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, it was determined that the distribution of the data came from a normal distribution. At the same time, another method of checking whether the distribution of the data is normal is whether the kurtosis-skewness values are between -2 and +2. Because the kurtosis and skewness were between ± 2 , it was determined that the data obtained came from a normal distribution (George & Mallery 2010). Another method of looking at the normal distribution is the central limit theorem, which is whether the number of participants is sufficient. Based on the central limit theorem for the number of participants ($n \geq 30$), statistically stronger parametric methods were used (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012).

Students' level of FLSA, attitude and self-efficacy needed to be determined to understand whether there was a relationship between their FLSA and their attitude and self-efficacy. Means, standard deviations, and minimum (Min.) and maximum (Max.) values were calculated Table 2 illustrates the anxiety, attitude and self-efficacy levels of the students.

Table 2.

Descriptive findings of the measurements

Measurements	Min.	Max.	Mean.	s.d
FLSA	31	63	44,84	8,35
Attitude	81	126	102,50	11,98
Self –efficacy	56	109	79,38	12,23

When Table 2 is examined, it was determined that the anxiety levels of the participants were 44.84 ± 8.35 , their attitude levels were 102.50 ± 11.98 , and their self-efficacy levels were 79.38 ± 12.23 .

To determine whether there is a difference in foreign language speaking anxiety, self-efficacy, and attitude by gender, Independent Sample T-Test was conducted. The results are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3.

Independent Sample T-Test Result of the Differences in the Anxiety, Attitude and Self-Efficacy Scores of the Participants by Gender

Measurements	Gender	Mean	s.d	t	p
FLSA	Female	48,00	8,65	2,871	0,007*
	Male	40,23	5,40		
Attitude	Female	102,26	11,21	-0,133	0,895
	Male	102,85	13,50		
Self-efficacy	Female	76,58	11,78	-1,602	0,120
	Male	83,46	12,16		

*p<0.05

When table is examined, it was determined that the anxiety levels of the participants differed significantly according to gender ($t=2.871$; $p=0.007 < 0.05$), but their attitude levels did not differ according to gender ($t=-0.133$; $p=0.895 > 0.05$), and self-efficacy did not differ according to gender ($t=-1.602$; $p=0.120 > 0.05$). When the variable with the difference was examined, and when the means were examined, it was determined that the anxiety levels of female students were higher than male students.

In order to explore whether there was a relationship between the students' FLSA and their attitude and self-efficacy Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted. Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Participants' Speaking Anxiety, Attitude, and Self-Efficacy Scores is given in Table 4.

Table 4.

Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Participants' Speaking Anxiety, Attitude, and Self-Efficacy Scores

Variables		FLSA	Attitude	Self-efficacy
FLSA	r	1	-0,131	-,509**
	p		0,476	0,003
Attitude	r		1	,419*
	p			0,017
Self-efficacy	r			1
	p			

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

When table 4 is examined, it was determined that the relationship between the speaking anxiety levels of the participants and their self-efficacy levels was statistically negative and moderately strong at 99% confidence level ($r = -0.509$; $p = 0.003 < 0.05$). This result means that when the speaking anxiety levels of the participants' increase, there will be a moderate decrease in their self-efficacy. The relationship between attitude levels and self-efficacy levels was statistically positive at 95% confidence level ($r = 0.419$; $p = 0.017 < 0.05$). This result means that when the attitude levels of the participants' increase, there will be a moderate increase in their self-efficacy. It was determined that the relationship between the anxiety levels of the participants and their attitude levels was not statistically significant ($p = 0.476 > 0.05$).

3.2. Interview Analysis Results

Two male participants with low FLSA were chosen by the researcher and were asked the questions. The answers to the first question were the personal traits of both participants. They expressed that as they feel relaxed while speaking English, they feel almost no anxiety while speaking English. Their answers were as follows:

S2: *As I am a sociable person, I find easy to interact with people. That's why I don't feel anxious while speaking English.*

S6: *Generally I love spending time with my friends and I feel very comfortable while talking to them. For most of the time I enjoy chatting with other people and socializing with them. I guess that's is the reason why I don't feel anxious while speaking English.*

For the second question, the answers varied. The first participant pointed out that when he was in secondary school, he was mocked by the other students while speaking English. His statement was as follows:

S1: *It was embarrassing for me, actually. I couldn't pronounce the word correctly and the others laughed at me.*

As for the second participant, it was the day when he tried to talk to a tourist and could not be understood by him. His statement was as follows:

S5: *I was very eager to talk to him. I tried to chat with him but he couldn't understand what I was trying to say.*

They both pointed out that they watched many movies, listened to music all in English, and tried to repeat the actors or singers while watching or listening as an answer to the third question.

One female and one male participant with moderate FLSA were chosen to answer the questions. As for the FLSA reasons, they both suggested speaking exams. They pointed out that while it does not cause anxiety to speak English during activities, speaking exams do cause FLSA. Their statements were as follows:

S2: *During speaking exams, I get really anxious and I always forget what I am going to say.*

S6: *What makes me anxious is not to speak English, but exams make us stressed and we have difficulty in trying to speak English.*

They both suggested that anxiety is mostly caused by inefficient speaking activities during English classes. They signified the fact that if an English teacher speaks English during class time, students may feel less anxious in time. Their statements were as follows:

S1: *If the teacher can speak English more in classes, I can feel more relaxed while speaking English.*

As for the Turkish educational system, they both criticized the system of the YKS Language Exam as this exam does not measure listening, writing, and speaking skills.

Two female participants with high levels of FLSA were also selected to participate in the interview to answer the questions. One of them pointed out that speaking exams are the reasons for her to face FLSA, while the other participant told that speaking activities, peer pressure, and fear of humiliation are the reasons for her FLSA. They both told that they still try some techniques to get over their FLSA by watching a lot more series and trying to repeat the lines, read more, and listen to the songs in the target language. Their statements were as follows:

S6: *“I think what we should do to get over our anxiety is that we should watch a lot more series in English and try to imitate the stars. We can be better at pronunciation and we can feel much more relaxed while speaking English.”*

As for the Turkish educational system, they both criticized the system of the YKS Language Exam as this exam does not measure listening, writing, and speaking skills. Their statements were as follows:

S3: *“As we have an important exam to pass to study at a university, we focus on studying on reading, vocabulary and grammar. We don't have time for speaking activities, as this exam doesn't measure our skills on speaking or listening.”*

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the first research question concerned the gender difference among 11th-grade EFL students in terms of FLSA, attitude, and self-efficacy. The findings of the study indicated that the FLSA level of the students differed according to gender. In their study, Gürbüz and Öztürk (2013) found a similar result, suggesting that when they are required to speak English in classes, male students get less anxious than female students. Another study conducted by Park and French (2013) also pointed out similar results to this study. In comparison with male students, female students were reported to have higher anxiety levels. Gender is a significant factor for FLSA which is higher for female students. In their study, Gerencheal and Mishra (2019) got similar findings that suggested Ethiopian EFL students' anxiety level differs significantly according to their gender. Female students have higher levels of FLSA. However, all these findings contradict the findings that Hussain et al. (2011) got in their study. They found out that the girls showed less anxiety in language classes than the boys did. When all these findings are considered, it can be said that the findings of this study about the level of FLSA according to gender suggest similar results to many studies conducted in the literature.

The second finding about gender was that the attitude levels of the participants did not differ according to gender. There have been many studies that show different results. Paradewari and Mbato (2018) found out that English language attitude was related to gender positively meaning that in terms of foreign language attitude female learners have more positive attitudes than male learners. In another study conducted with Polish students, attitudes toward a foreign language, French, that female and older Polish students had, were more integrative than the attitudes that younger and male Polish students did (Okuniewski, 2014). Khong et al. (2017) found out female students in Malaysia displayed significantly higher attitudes toward learning Spanish. All these findings show that gender has an important role in foreign language attitudes which are expected to be higher for female learners, yet in this study, attitude levels did not differ according to the gender of the participants.

The third finding was that self-efficacy did not differ according to gender in this study. Truong and Wang (2019) found no significant differences between female and male Vietnamese college students in terms of self-efficacy related to their English proficiency. Similarly, Torres and Alieto (2019) got results indicating that the self-efficacy beliefs of female and male students did not show any significant difference. Although no significant difference was obtained in the study, the self-efficacy beliefs of males were slightly higher than female learners'. However, both gender felt like they were equally able to learn English (Iwaniec, 2017). In another study conducted by Mills et al. (2007), the research findings showed a difference from the others mentioned. In that study, female students reported more self-efficacy for learning French than

male students. As can be understood from the findings, results about self-efficacy in terms of gender can vary. In this study, self-efficacy did not differ according to gender.

The relationship between the anxiety levels of the participants and their self-efficacy levels was statistically negative in this study. This result means that when the participants' anxiety levels increase, there will be a moderate decrease in their self-efficacy. Similar findings were obtained in a study carried out by Karairmak and Mede (2017). They found a strong correlation between self-efficacy and FLSA. In another study, a significant correlation was found between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their English language-speaking anxiety (Tahsildar & Kabiri, 2019). In a study carried out Çubukçu (2008), the results showed no correlation between self-efficacy and anxiety.

The last finding was that the relationship between the anxiety levels of the participants and their attitude levels was not statistically significant. In their study, Karagöl and Başbay (2018) found a negative and medium correlation between the students' foreign language anxiety and their attitudes towards English. In another study, the findings showed that students with high-level positive attitudes had significantly low levels of FLSA (Liu & Chen, 2013), which differs from this study.

The finding of the interviews conducted with participants showed that the factors that cause FLSA were mostly academic, yet the solutions for FLSA were mostly individual. The factors are similar to the ones that were found in the study conducted with non-English major academics by Yıldız (2021). This study's findings were also similar to Ak (2021) who studied the factors that cause FLSA in university students.

This study aimed to determine whether there was a correlation between 11th-grade EFL students' FLSA and their self-efficacy and whether there was a correlation between their FLSA and their attitudes towards English. The other aim was to find out the possible causes and possible solutions for FLSA from the participants, as FLSA is still a problem faced by most students. The study also consisted of some findings related to the level of FLSA, self-efficacy and attitude by gender. The findings showed that the level of FLSA differed according to gender, suggesting female students have a higher level of anxiety while speaking English than male students do. However, there were no differences in the level of students' self-efficacy and attitudes by gender. In light of the other findings, it was found that when the participants' anxiety levels increase, there will be a moderate decrease in their self-efficacy, which suggested there was a correlation between students' FLSA and their self-efficacy beliefs although there was no correlation to be found between their FLSA and their attitudes. Participants with different levels of FLSA suggested some possible causes for FLSA faced by the students themselves. The findings of the interview indicated that evaluation for speaking, teachers' attitudes, and peer pressure can trigger FLSA, especially in classes. The solutions suggested by the participants were reading, listening and watching some things in the target language and, if it is possible, to get exposed to speaking exercises more in the class. This study has some limitations. First, this study was conducted with a very limited number of participants at only one Anatolian high school. If the study had been conducted with a larger sample of participants, there would be different results. Secondly, the participants may not have answered the questions objectively. They might have reflected desirable and expected answers. Therefore, the findings might have differed. Another limitation was the type of the school. This study was carried out in Anatolian public high school. If the study were conducted at other schools, the results might differ. The participants' backgrounds were similar so the answers of students with different backgrounds may vary. In this study no correlation was found between the students' attitudes and their FLSA, yet further study should be conducted in-depth in order to understand the relation more thoroughly. There needs to be more studies to be carried out on students' self-efficacy as it is one of the most important factors in English classes. An EFL teacher ought to understand the self-efficacy beliefs of the students to develop more strategies for an effective language teaching which may help the students to reduce or get over their FLSA. Finally, the participants' views on FLSA factors and solutions should be studied more in detail as they can contribute to the strategies of EFL teachers. Although there are some limitations, the study has a significance in that it will shed light to the EFL high school

teachers for whom FLSA can still constitute obstacle for effective teaching. It will also help them be aware of the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and FLSA of the students and revise their teaching strategies accordingly.

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