

What are the Main Sources of Turkish EFL Students' Anxiety in Oral Practice?

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"Why can't I speak what to think a lot in English? I'm so bitter, trying hard. I'd like to speak a lot; however, I can't. Finally, I think my basic abilities of English ran short. I'm disgusted with myself" (Foss & Reitzel, 1988, p. 437).

Abstract

This study was designed in order to investigate two potential sources of the anxiety of Turkish learners of English in oral practice: 1) an individual student's fear of negative evaluation, and 2) his/her self-perceived speaking ability. A total of 55 first year students enrolling in Anadolu University, Education Faculty, ELT Department participated in the study. A 55-item multiple-choice survey was administered to the participants in a regular classroom hour. The survey consisted of five parts: Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Self-Rating Can-Do Scale (SR-CDS), Self-Rating for the Current Level of Study (SR-CL), Self-Rating Perception by the English (SR-EPE). The Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analyses were run for the statistical interpretation of the data. To achieve valid and reliable results, 15 students were also randomly chosen to conduct an interview in order to find out their reasons for being anxious in using English. The students' responses given to the survey were probed to have a better understanding of sources leading to high anxiety. The results of the study indicated a positive correlation between an individual's fear of negative evaluation and his/her anxiety level. Moreover, the findings of the current study revealed that there were significant negative relationships between anxiety and three of self-ratings; SR-CDS, SR-CL and SR-EPE. In addition, it was showed that among the FNE and the three self-ratings of English speaking ability, the combination of the FNE, the SR-CL and SR-CDS was the most appropriate model of predictors of anxiety level of this sample. Finally, the analysis of interview data provided valuable information about the main sources of the students' anxiety in oral practice such as: personal reasons, teachers' manners, teaching procedures, and previous experience.

Keywords: *Foreign language anxiety; potential sources of anxiety; anxiety in oral production*