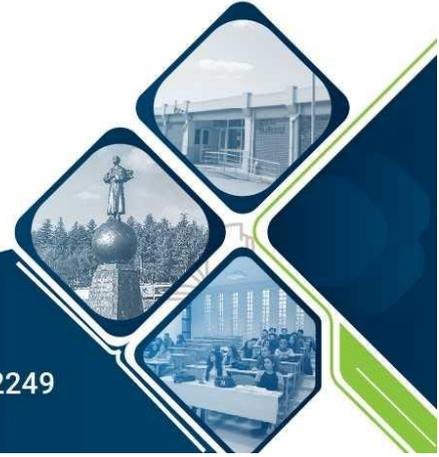


AUJEF

Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi
Cilt 6, Sayı 3 - 2022

ISSN: 2602-2249



İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Konuşma Kaygısı ile İletişim Kurma İstekliliği Arasındaki İlişki

The Relationship between Speaking Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate among Pre-Service EFL Teachers

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Article Type: Research Article³

Application Date: 04.03.2022

Accepted Date: 02.06.2022

To Cite This Article: Merç, A. and Özalp, Ö.S. (2022). The relationship between speaking anxiety and willingness to communicate: A quantitative inquiry. *Anadolu University Journal of Education Faculty (AUJEF)*, 6(3), 294-311.

ÖZ: İngilizce Öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı ve iletişim kurma isteklilikleri arasındaki ilişki üzerine, özellikle Türkiye bağlamında sınırlı araştırma olması, bu araştırmanın yolunu açmıştır. Bu nicel çalışma, birbirine ilişkili iki kavramın son derece önemli olduğunu göz önünde bulundurarak, konuşma kaygısı ile iletişim kurma istekliliği arasındaki ilişkiyi korelasyonel bir araştırma tasarımı ile incelemektedir. Bu çalışmaya bir Türk üniversitesinden 84 birinci sınıf İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencisi katılmıştır. Katılımcılara konuşma kaygısı ve iletişim kurma istekliliği düzeylerini değerlendirmek için Yabancı Dil Konuşma Kaygısı Ölçeği (FLSAS) ve İletişim Kurma İstekliliği Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. İki ölçek aracılığıyla toplanan veriler nicel veri analiz yöntemleri kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Sonuçlar (1) öğrencilerin orta düzeyde konuşma kaygısı yaşadıklarını ve yüksek düzeyde iletişim kurma istekliliği belirttiklerini, (2) kız öğrencilerin erkek akranlarından daha yüksek düzeyde konuşma kaygısına sahip olduğunu, ancak iletişim kurma istekliliği düzeyleri açısından cinsiyetler arasında fark olmadığını ve (3) konuşma kaygısının iletişim kurma istekliliği üzerinde önemli ölçüde bir etkisinin olduğunu, aynı şekilde iletişim kurma istekliliğinin de konuşma kaygısı üzerinde etkili olabileceğini göstermiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları ilgili literatür eşliğinde tartışılarak yorumlanmıştır. Ayrıca, hem uygulayıcılar için birtakım çıkarımlar ortaya konmuş hem de ileride yapılması olası çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Konuşma kaygısı, iletişim kurma istekliliği, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, dil öğrenimi

ABSTRACT: Limited research on the relationship between pre-service English language teachers' foreign language speaking anxiety and their willingness to communicate, particularly in Turkish context, paved the way for the present inquiry. Considering the utmost importance of the two interrelated concepts, this quantitative study investigates the relationship between speaking anxiety and willingness to communicate within a correlational

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research design. Eighty-four first-year ELT students from a Turkish university participated in this study. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) and the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale were administered to participants to assess their speaking anxiety and WTC levels. Data collected through two scales were examined by use of quantitative data analyses. The results showed that (1) students had a moderate level of speaking anxiety, while they indicated a high level of WTC, and (2) female learners had a higher level of speaking anxiety than their male peers, in terms of WTC levels, no difference was observed between genders, and (3) speaking anxiety had a significant impact on willingness to communicate and vice versa. The findings of the study are discussed along with the related literature and several implications and suggestions are presented both for practitioners and future studies.

Keywords: Speaking anxiety, willingness to communicate, EFL, language learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Learner differences in foreign language education have an important place in the learning process. The learner differences can be classified into three categories: learning styles, learning strategies, and affective variables (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). Affective factors include motivation, attitude, anxiety (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993), self-confidence (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997), and tolerance of ambiguity (Ehrman et al., 2003). According to language acquisition studies, affective factors such as foreign language (FL) anxiety have a significant effect on language achievement (Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 2001; Humphries, 2011; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Many students suffer from FL anxiety in the learning process (Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013). MacIntyre (1999) describes it as the “worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (p. 27). In the literature, three components of FL anxiety were identified: fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Horwitz et al. (1986) defined communication apprehension as “a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (p. 127). Test anxiety refers to a dread of failing tests, it is about fear of academic assessment. Lastly, fear of negative evaluation can be described as worry about other people's opinions and negative judgements (Horwitz et al., 1986). Although test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation seem similar, test anxiety is limited to the academic setting, while fear of negative evaluation can occur in many communication contexts.

One of the areas that FL anxiety affects the most is the speaking skills of the learners (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Woodrow, 2006). Therefore, FL anxiety, speaking skills, and Willingness to Communicate (hereafter, WTC) can be considered interdependent. More clearly, while FL anxiety can cause speaking anxiety, speaking anxiety can lead WTC to decrease (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Jackson, 2002).

McCroskey and Baer (1985) were the first to apply WTC to discuss native language use in the literature. It was defined as the likelihood of starting a discussion or communication when given the opportunity (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). Later, WTC evolved in EFL teaching and learning. It was adapted to the L2 context by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) in a model that attempts to highlight personal and situational factors in the decision to commence L2 communication. Since WTC is directly related to learners' speaking ability, several research has been carried out to investigate the association between WTC and psychological factors, because speaking skills can be found to be more affected by the psychological states of the learners (Cha & Kim, 2013; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Yu, 2011).

Even though FL anxiety, specifically speaking anxiety, and WTC have been studied extensively around the world, it has received little attention in Turkish university education. Narrowing it further, studies focusing on the relationship between first-year ELT students' speaking anxiety and their WTC levels are scant. Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to explore if there is a relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC in first-year ELT students.

1.1. Second/Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Second language acquisition researchers have inspected various types of anxiety under particular learning situations like reading, listening, writing, speaking, and test anxiety. In specific, circumstances requiring verbal communication in L2 have been found to initiate anxiety to a significant extent (Horwitz et al., 1986; Humphries, 2011; Kim, 2009). Speaking practices that require in-class and on-site performance cause the highest anxiety among learners (Young, 1990). Pertaub, Slater, and Barker (2001) stated that speaking anxiety generally emerges as a result of the fear of being humiliated or judged by

other individuals; public speaking and talking to a foreigner can be among the situations where this fear occurs. Learners who suffer from speaking anxiety feel hesitant to express themselves because they are worried about making mistakes (e.g. pronunciation mistakes), in addition, being less competent than their friends is also a disincentive for them to speak up (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991, as cited in Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014).

Several studies have been conducted on learners' EFL speaking anxiety. Dalkılıç (2001) found a strong connection between Turkish EFL learners' anxiety levels and their ability to succeed in speaking lessons. Other studies have also found a negative relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking ability (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Djigunovic, 2006, as cited in Gürsoy & Korkmaz, 2018; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019; Tüm & Kunt, 2013). According to the results, it was revealed that students with higher anxiety levels were particularly reluctant to talk for long periods, and anxiety negatively affected their communication processes.

Speaking anxiety may be influenced by some learner differences. Many studies with different results have been conducted on the effect of gender on speaking anxiety. In some studies, it was found that female learners had a higher level of speaking anxiety than male learners (Geçkin, 2020; Gerencheal, 2016; Mohtasham & Farnia, 2017; Park & French, 2013; Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015). On the other hand, according to some researchers, there is no difference between the two genders in terms of speaking anxiety (Aida, 1994; Bashosh, Nejad, Rastegar, & Marzban, 2013; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2013; Luo, 2014). Therefore, it can be said that the issue of whether gender affects speaking anxiety is still open to debate.

1.2. Willingness to Communicate

People's communication styles have been discovered to differ. Some individuals are active communicators, while others talk only when spoken to. In addition, sometimes individuals prefer to talk continuously with some communicators, on the other hand, they might stay silent with others. This also applies to L2 communication. WTC is a direct determinant of L2 use, in terms of learners' language achievement and communication processes (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003). WTC has been linked to perceived communication competence, introversion-extraversion, communication apprehension, self-esteem, and other traits (McCroskey & Baer, 1985, as cited in MacIntyre et al., 1998).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) stated that some factors like “the degree of acquaintance between communicators, the number of people present, the formality of the situation, the degree of evaluation of the speaker, the topic of discussion” (p. 546) may be the determinant of a person's WTC. They claimed that L2 learners' communication behavior is influenced by both enduring influences and situational influences. Enduring influences include “learner personality, inter-group relations”, on the other hand, situational influences include “knowledge of the topic, desire to speak to a specific person” (p. 546). In earlier studies, communication anxiety and perceived communication competence were revealed to be two of the most significant predictors of WTC (MacIntyre, Clément, Baker, & Conrod, 2001; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991).

Individual differences like gender might influence WTC. Several studies investigated the effect of gender on students' WTC levels. In some studies, it has been observed that gender has an effect on learners' WTC levels, and there are differences in WTC levels between male and female students (Altiner, 2018; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2002). On the other hand, some other studies found no difference between female and male students' WTC levels (Alemi, Tajeddin, & Mesbah, 2013;

Valadi, Rezaee, & Baharvand, 2015). More research is needed on this topic, as there is no conclusive evidence that gender influences WTC.

1.3. Speaking Anxiety and WTC

Earlier research has suggested that affective factors and personality traits establish the background for second language communication (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). L2 anxiety as one of the affective factors was revealed to be a major indicator of WTC, studies have also shown that there is a detrimental relationship between these two variables (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Léger & Storch, 2009; MacIntyre et al., 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987; Yashima, 2002). Chu (2008) discovered a significant negative correlation between Taiwanese learners' speaking anxiety and their desire to speak in English and Chinese. In another study, Denies, Yashima, and Janssen (2015) investigated French as a second language and WTC. They found that anxiety harmed WTC as well as learners' perceptions of their own competence. In terms of increasing WTC, MacIntyre et al. (1998) made a connection that implies if students' anxiety is low, self-confidence will increase, which will affect WTC positively. In addition, they stated that anything that raises anxiety lowers one's WTC.

Although literature gives significant information about the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC, especially in Turkey, the relationship between speaking anxiety of EFL learners and their WTC level is not clear. Furthermore, no study has measured the speaking anxiety of first-year English Language Teaching students and their WTC levels at the same time by examining the effect of gender on these two variables. As a result, this study looks for answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the level of speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners as first-year ELT students?
2. What is the level of WTC among them?
3. Is gender an effective factor in their speaking anxiety and WTC levels?
4. Is there a relationship between their speaking anxiety and WTC levels?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

By linking first-year ELT students' speaking anxiety and WTC levels, this quantitative study used a correlational research design. Seeram (2019) defines correlational research as “a type of nonexperimental research that facilitates prediction and explanation of the relationship among variables” (p. 176). Therefore, this design was preferred to examine the extent to which the two variables (speaking anxiety and WTC) interact with each other.

2.2. Participants and Context

The study used the convenience sampling method to select the participants. 84 first-year students who were studying English Language Teaching at Anadolu University participated in the study. 37 of the participants were male and 47 were female. Participants were informed that taking part in the study was completely voluntary, and all their answers were for scientific study, therefore, the data will be protected and will not be shared with anyone independent of the study. Data were collected with the permission of the ethics committee for the research at the end of the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

2.3.1. Willingness to Communicate Scale

To measure WTC level, Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign-Language Scale, developed by Baghaei (2013) was used. The scale consists of 20 items. There are two answer options: *Agree* and *Disagree*. Each *Agree* was given 1 point, while the *Disagree* was given 0 point. The overall score ranged from 0 to 20. A score between 0-7 shows a low level of WTC, 8-12 shows a moderate level of WTC, and 13-20 shows a high level of WTC. Cronbach's Alpha for the WTC scale was found to be 0.82 which indicates that the scale has high reliability.

2.3.2. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale

To measure speaking anxiety, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), was employed in the present study. The questionnaire originally contains 33 items; however, 18 items were selected for this study. These 18 items were determined to be directly connected to speaking anxiety after a careful examination of the literature. Saltan's (2003) and Öztürk and Gürbüz's (2014) research confirmed this association as well. 18 items were turned into a questionnaire and used to measure participants' speaking anxiety levels. 1 point stood for *Strongly Disagree*, 2 points stood for *Disagree*, 3 points stood for *Not Sure*, 4 points stood for *Agree*, and 5 points stood for *Strongly Agree*. As the number increases from 1 to 5, the level of anxiety increases. The scale was of a 5-point Likert type, so the overall score ranged from 18 to 90. After the total scores of the students were calculated, the scores between 18-90 were divided by the number of questions, and an average was taken. An average of 1,0-2,4 indicates that the participant is low anxiety. 2,5-3,8 shows moderate anxiety, and 3,9-5,0 shows high anxiety level. Cronbach's Alpha for the foreign language speaking anxiety scale was found to be 0.94 which indicates that the scale has excellent reliability.

2.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data analyses were used for data analysis. To answer the first two research questions, descriptive statistics were employed: the results obtained from the FL speaking anxiety scale and WTC scale were computed to explore the effect of gender on participants' speaking anxiety and WTC levels, as the third research question, an independent samples t-test was carried out. The relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and WTC was explored by conducting both bivariate correlation and bivariate regression to answer the fourth research question.

3. FINDINGS

The results of the data analysis are reported in this section concerning the four research questions.

3.1. RQs 1 & 2: Students' Speaking Anxiety and WTC Levels

The first research question looked into students' speaking anxiety and WTC levels. The mean scores were calculated using descriptive statistics to estimate the participants' level of speaking anxiety.

The results showed that first-year English Language Teaching students generally had a moderate level (M=2.6) of speaking anxiety (Table 1).

Table 1: *Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Level*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking Anxiety Score	84	1,0	4,8	2,657	,9241

As shown in Figure 1, the percentages of those with moderate (44,1%) and low-level (44,0%) speaking anxiety are very close to each other. What is interesting about the data in this figure is that the percentage of students with high-level (11,9%) speaking anxiety is much lower than those with moderate and low-level speaking anxiety.

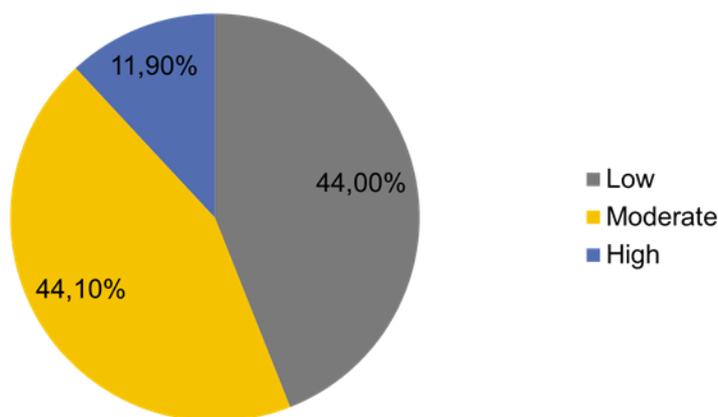


Figure 1: *Percentages of Participants' Speaking Anxiety*

The mean was calculated for each statement to see which of the situations in the scale increased the participants' speaking anxiety levels the most and which ones had the least. According to the results (see Appendix A), the mean score of the statements in the questionnaire about students' speaking anxiety ranges from 1.87 to 3.12, which is in between low to moderate levels. The item with the highest mean score is "I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes". The item with the lowest mean score is "I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English". The average mean score obtained was 2.657 which indicates that students tend to have moderate speaking anxiety.

Table 2: *WTC Level*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WTC Score	84	2	20	13,71	4,244

The mean scores were calculated using descriptive statistics to estimate the participants' level of WTC. As Table 2 shows, first-year English Language Teaching students generally have a high level of WTC.

Table 3: Percentages and Frequencies of Participants' WTC

	Percentages	Frequencies
Low level of WTC	8,3	7
Moderate level of WTC	22,7	19
High level of WTC	69,0	58
Total	100	84

As shown in Table 3, most students have a high level (69,0%) of WTC. Out of 84 students, 54 have a high level of WTC, 19 have a moderate level of WTC, and seven have a low level of WTC. Although the average speaking anxiety level is moderate, it can be seen that most students are willing to communicate in a foreign language. The mean scores were calculated for each statement to see which of the situations in the scale increased the participants' WTC levels the most and which ones had the least. The results (see Appendix B) showed that the mean scores of the statements in the WTC questionnaire ranged from .31 to .93, which ranged from low to high. The item with the highest mean score is "I am willing to talk with native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian)". The item with the lowest mean score is "If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them". The average mean score obtained was 13.71 which indicates that students tend to have a high level of WTC. The relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and WTC will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

3.2. RQ3: The Effect of Gender on Students' Speaking Anxiety and WTC Levels

An independent samples t-test was performed to explore whether gender was effective on students' speaking anxiety levels. The findings showed that there was a statistically significant difference between females ($M=3.021$, $SD=.8715$) and males ($M=2.195$, $SD=.7782$) in terms of speaking anxiety scores ($t(82)=-4.522$, $p<.001$). It can be concluded that gender was found to have a significant impact on speaking anxiety scores. This is a remarkable outcome because it shows that female participants had more speaking anxiety than male participants.

An independent samples t-test was carried out to investigate the effect of gender on WTC levels. The findings revealed that there was not a statistical difference between females ($M=13.60$, $SD=3.860$) and males ($M=13.86$, $SD=4.739$) regarding WTC levels ($t(82)=.287$, $p=.775$).

3.3. RQ4: The Relationship Between Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate

A bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC. According to the results, there is a significant moderate negative correlation between

speaking anxiety and WTC ($r=-.454$, $p<.01$), which shows that those who get higher scores on the speaking anxiety scale tend to get lower scores on WTC scale or vice versa. Furthermore, a bivariate regression analysis was used as a final step to predict and explain the relationship between the variables. (Table 4).

Table 4: *Bivariate Regression Results (Dependent Variable=WTC Score)*

	R	R Square	F	p
Speaking anxiety score	.454	.206	21.263	.000

As Table 4 presents, FL speaking anxiety scores significantly explain 20.6 % of the variation in WTC scores ($F(1, 82)=21.263$, $p<.01$). This proves that first-year ELT students' foreign language speaking anxiety levels are effective in their WTC in a foreign language.

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC in first-year ELT students. Results concerning the first research question “What is the level of speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners as first-year ELT students?” showed that first-year ELT students have a moderate level of speaking anxiety in general. These results are consistent with the previous studies indicating that undergraduate students have at least moderate speaking anxiety (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019). Although moderate speaking anxiety seems less harmful than high speaking anxiety, it is still an issue that should be considered. One of the reasons for this may be the anxiety of making mistakes while speaking in front of classmates since they have an above-average foreign language level. According to Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), students' concern about making mistakes is unfavorably connected with a desire to maintain a good image of themselves. Therefore, the fact that students do not want to be ridiculed in front of their classmates may explain their moderate speaking anxiety. At this point, it can be said that communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986) may have been effective on students' anxiety. Another reason could be that many students do not have the opportunity to gain sufficient proficiency in L2 communication until the beginning of their university education. First-year students may be exposed to more foreign language use than they have previously experienced, which may continue until they are psychologically ready to use the foreign language continuously, and their language level increases. As students' grade levels increase, their speaking anxiety levels may decrease with their development.

Findings concerning the second research question “What is the level of WTC among them?” are in line with Şener's (2014) study in which it was found that students studying ELT have WTC levels between moderate and high. This can be explained in two ways: (1) the students in the study were studying English Language Teaching and (2) most of their lessons were taught in English. These may be the factors that may push students to improve themselves in communicating in a foreign language. In addition, the high WTC level of the students in this study can be attributed to their moderate speaking anxiety. As shown in the findings section, the percentage of moderate anxiety was 44,0% and low-level anxiety was 44,0%, that is, the two levels are quite close to each other. Therefore, it can be inferred that the speaking anxiety level was not high among the students. Here, learner personality, one of the enduring influences, draws attention (MacIntyre et al., 1998), because speaking anxiety is one of the learner

personality traits. The fact that students do not have high speaking anxiety causes their WTC levels to be high. Hereby, it can be concluded that learner personality influences communication behavior, communication positively takes place as long as the student feels comfortable and does not have a high level of anxiety.

Findings concerning the third research question “Is gender an effective factor in their speaking anxiety and WTC levels?” indicated that gender has a significant effect on students’ speaking anxiety levels. Within the scope of first-year ELT students, female participants were found to have more speaking anxiety than male participants. These findings are consistent with studies which argue that gender has an impact on speaking anxiety (Geçkin, 2020; Gerencheal, 2016; Mohtasham & Farnia, 2017; Park & French, 2013). One reason may be the sociocultural context in which students live. It can be observed that women growing up in patriarchal societies are more abstaining than women growing up in other societies. While Park and French (2013) note the existence of this problem in Korea, the sociocultural context of Turkey can be targeted for this study. Briefly, in countries where women do not consider themselves equal to men in areas such as social status and roles, gender can have a greater impact on speaking anxiety. Conversely, these findings do not support some previous studies claiming that there is not a connection between gender and speaking anxiety (Bashosh et al., 2013; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2013). The results of the independent samples t-test showed that there is not a relationship between students’ gender and WTC levels. This concurs with findings from the studies in the field which claim that gender does not affect WTC (Alemi et al., 2013; Valadi et al., 2015). This may be because learning English provides professional development for students. As future English teachers, they may think that the more they improve their foreign language, the more beneficial it will be for them. However, the findings are not consistent with the results from the studies which argue that different genders can affect students’ WTC levels (Altmer, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Results concerning the fourth research question “Is there a relationship between their speaking anxiety and WTC levels?” demonstrated that speaking anxiety has an impact on WTC. This result is similar to that found in previous studies which emphasized that speaking anxiety and other affective factors have a significant impact on WTC (Baker, & MacIntyre, 2000; Lee, & Hsieh, 2019; MacIntyre, & Charos, 1996). Results also indicated that there is a negative relationship between students’ speaking anxiety and WTC. This finding is in line with the previous studies in which it was found that anxiety has a negative influence on WTC (Chu, 2008; Denies et al., 2015; Hashimoto, 2002; Léger & Storch, 2009; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Jackson, 2002; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987; Yashima, 2002). Students who score higher on the speaking anxiety scale also score lower on the willingness to communicate scale, on the other hand, students who score higher on the WTC scale are also likely to score lower on the speaking anxiety scale. Therefore, it can be said that when a learner has a high level of speaking anxiety, he or she will experience reluctance to communicate in a foreign language. Although students in this study have a high WTC level, speaking anxiety may prevent them from taking risks, participating in class, and communicating in and out of the classroom.

This research study has added to the expanding body of knowledge about the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC. First, this study demonstrated that first-year ELT students experience a moderate level of speaking anxiety. It also revealed that students’ WTC levels are generally high. Second, in terms of gender factor’s effect on students’ speaking anxiety and WTC levels, this study showed that while gender affects speaking anxiety, it does not affect WTC in the context of first-year ELT students. It is concluded that female students experience more speaking anxiety, but the same is not applicable for the WTC level. Third, this inquiry contributed to the knowledge about the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC. In this respect, it was found that speaking anxiety affects learners’ WTC. It turns out that when students have a high level of speaking anxiety, their WTC in a foreign

language will be low. The opposite is also possible: if one has a low level of speaking anxiety, an increase in the WTC can be observed.

4.1. Pedagogical Implications & Suggestions

The findings of this study can be used to make pedagogical recommendations for teaching second/foreign languages. Considering the significant impact of foreign language speaking anxiety on the WTC, instructors should plan lessons that help reduce speaking anxiety and, in turn, increase students' WTC. In line with this purpose, first of all, it would be a useful step to recognize anxious learners and explore the reasons for students' anxiety in-depth (Aida, 1994). The speaking anxiety scale used in this study or similar scales can be applied and detailed content analysis can be done to determine in which situations the students experience speaking anxiety the most, and then more information can be obtained by conducting one-on-one interviews with the students.

To reduce speaking anxiety, it may be useful to create a friendly, non-threatening environment and conduct lessons with activities that support classroom interaction (e.g. project works) as much as possible. Teachers who are patient and have a good sense of humor (Young, 1990) might also help to reduce students' anxiety and increase their confidence. In this way, students may feel more comfortable communicating with their classmates, which will support their WTC. Teachers should discuss with students the importance of foreign language practice in and out of the classroom and that experiencing anxiety is a normal situation. In addition, teachers can instruct students on how to cope with anxiety through several strategies (e.g. breathing techniques). In this way, students can be more ready to take risks, more willing to communicate and more confident (Liu & Jackson, 2008).

Integrating topics that appeal to students' interests in lessons can also help reduce speaking anxiety and increase WTC. Moreover, oral presentations (Hammad, 2020), games (Reinders & Wattana, 2015), group or pair works (Altner, 2018), mini-speeches, self-talk (Young, 1990), and scaffolded feedback (Öztürk & Öztürk, 2021) might be powerful methods to reduce speaking anxiety and increase WTC. As for error correction, for example, when students make a pronunciation mistake, the teacher should correct the students' mistake in a soft manner because when students who already have difficulty speaking in front of their classmates encounter an error correction with the wrong attitude, their level of anxiety will increase and they will not want to communicate. Furthermore, delayed error correction can reduce the level of shyness and anxiety, and contribute to participation (Zarrinabadi, Ketabi, & Abdi, 2014).

Individual differences like gender should not be ignored by teachers when dealing with learners' anxiety because these factors can help them to have an idea about the identities of the students and what methods they should follow. When differences arise between genders in terms of anxiety level, teachers may use methods such as observation and interviews to examine why female or male students have more speaking anxiety. Moreover, teachers can create activities in which both genders feel motivated to talk because students are more likely to speak without worry when they are engaged and enthusiastic about a topic (Çağatay, 2015).

4.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

The study has various limitations in itself and recommendations for future research. First, the study was conducted with 84 participants due to the low attendance because of the pandemic. To generalize the study findings to the whole population, future studies can be conducted with a larger sample. The sample might include students from second, third, and fourth grades. The relationship

between the two variables among different classes can be compared. In addition, this study can also be replicated with student groups from other universities and departments.

Another limitation involves the issue of the quantitative approach. In this study, the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC was measured using only two different scales. A mixed-method study can be done by using qualitative methods such as interviews to reach more detailed and reliable results and explore the students' perceptions. Since the main purpose of this study is to find the relationship between speaking anxiety and WTC, only gender was included in individual differences. Future studies may include other individual differences such as age, motivation, learner beliefs, intelligence, and the like.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – *Descriptive Results for the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale*

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.86	1.184
2. I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	3.12	1.284
3. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.72	1.237
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.	2.65	1.329
5. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	2.98	1.371
6. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	2.45	1.242
7. I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	2.81	1.393
8. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.92	1.364
9. I don't feel confident when I speak in English in my language class.	2.71	1.419
10. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.00	1.104
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.90	1.332
12. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.98	1.371
13. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.95	1.101
14. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.81	1.418
15. I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	2.25	1.201
16. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	2.24	1.274
17. I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.	1.87	1.117
18. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.71	1.331

APPENDIX B – Descriptive Results for the WTC Scale

Statements	Mean	SD
1.If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.	.82	.385
2.If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.	.31	.465
3.If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language, I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.	.90	.295
4.I am willing to accompany some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.	.62	.489
5.I am willing to talk with native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian).	.93	.259
6.If someone introduced me to a native-speaker of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.	.92	.278
7.If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.	.73	.449
8.If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.	.37	.485
9.If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.	.85	.364
10.I am willing to accompany some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.	.54	.501
11.I am willing to talk with non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.).	.82	.387
12.If someone introduced me to a non-native speaker of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.), I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.	.88	.329
13.In order to practice my English, I am willing to talk in English with my classmates outside the class.	.60	.492
14.I am willing to ask questions in English in the classes at the university.	.66	.476
15.I am willing to talk and express my opinions in English in the class when all my classmates are listening to me.	.67	.471
16.I am willing to have pair and group activities in the class so that I can talk in English with my classmates.	.67	.471
17.In order to practice my English I am willing to talk in English with my professors outside the class.	.53	.502
18.I am willing to give a presentation in English in front of my classmates.	.60	.492
19.In group work activities in the class when the group is composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.	.78	.415
20.In group work activities in the class when the group is NOT composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.	.60	.492