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REVEALING SOURCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING BOREDOM IN ONLINE SPEAKING CLASSES: IDENTIFICATION OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Yaşar Üstün KAPLAN¹

ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of positive psychology, investigating emotions has become a prevalent concern for researchers within foreign and second-language classroom research settings. Positive emotions in a second or foreign language learning and teaching have been commonly under investigation so far. However, there has been little discussion about negative emotions, which play pioneering roles in language classes. Although there is a growing body of research concentrating on anxiety as a negative emotion in foreign language learning, it can be put forward that there is still a scarcity of studies on foreign language learning boredom experienced by learners in online speaking courses. Considering this, this paper attempts to present the results of a study focusing on such a negative emotion- boredom- experienced by 59 university students majoring in English. To this end, it identifies sources of boredom experienced by EFL learners in an online speaking course. Also, it seeks to reveal learners' proposed solutions for coping with it. Using qualitative inquiry modes, data were collected through reflective reports and structured and semi-structured interviews. As a result of content analysis, five themes concerning factors responsible for boredom emerged. These are disturbing experiences during the lesson, classroom context-dependent sources, teacher-related sources, task-related sources, and student-related sources. Additionally, learners' proposed solutions for alleviating boredom in foreign language learning were presented in the study. They are lesson itself and teaching-related solutions, task-related solutions, classroom context-related solutions and teacher-related solutions. Finally, the study concludes with implications and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Foreign Language Learning Boredom, Online Speaking Course, Boredom Sources, Proposed Solutions, EFL Learners

¹ Asst. Prof., Bingöl University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, ukaplan@bingol.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2479-6029>

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ÇEVİRİMİÇİ KONUŞMA SINIFLARINDA YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENME SIKILGANLIĞI KAYNAKLARININ ORTAYA ÇIKARILMASI: KATKIDA BULUNAN FAKTÖRLERİN BELİRLENMESİ VE ÇÖZÜM ÖNERİLERİ

Yaşar Üstün KAPLAN¹,

ÖZ

Pozitif psikolojinin ortaya çıkışından bu yana, duyguların araştırılması, yabancı dil ve ikinci dil sınıfı araştırma ortamlarındaki araştırmacılar için kayda değer bir ilgi alanı haline gelmiştir. İkinci veya yabancı dil öğrenimi ve öğretiminde olumlu duygular şimdiye kadar yaygın olarak araştırılmıştır. Ancak, dil sınıflarında öncü rol oynayan olumsuz duygular hakkında çok az tartışma yapılmıştır. Yabancı dil öğreniminde olumsuz bir duygu olarak kaygıya odaklanan çok sayıda araştırma olmasına rağmen, çevrimiçi konuşma derslerinde öğrenciler tarafından deneyimlenen yabancı dil öğrenme sıkılhanlığı üzerine yapılan çalışmaların az olduğu söylenebilir. Bunu göz önünde bulundurarak, bu çalışma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen 59 üniversite öğrencisinin deneyimlediği bu tür olumsuz bir duyguya, sıkılhanlığa, odaklanan bir araştırmanın sonuçlarını sunmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu amaçla, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenenlerin çevrimiçi bir konuşma dersinde yaşadıkları yabancı dil öğrenme sıkılhanlığının kaynağını açığa çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin sıkılhanlık ile başa çıkmak için öne sürdükleri çözüm önerilerinin de ortaya çıkarılması hedeflenmektedir. Nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılarak, yansıtıcı günlükler, yapılandırılmış ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla veri toplanmıştır. İçerik analizi sonucunda, can sıkıntısından sorumlu faktörlere ilişkin beş tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar; ders sırasındaki rahatsız edici deneyimler, sınıf bağlamına bağlı kaynaklar, öğretmenle ilgili kaynaklar, görevle ilgili kaynaklar ve öğrenciyle ilgili kaynaklardır. Çalışmada ayrıca, öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenme sıkılhanlığını hafifletmek için önerdikleri çözümler de sunulmuştur. Bunlar dersin kendisi ve öğretimle ilgili çözümler, görevle ilgili çözümler, sınıf bağlamıyla ilgili çözümler ve öğretmenle ilgili çözümlerdir. Son olarak, çalışma gelecekteki araştırmalar için çıkarımlar ve önerilerle sonuçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Sıkılhanlığı, Çevrimiçi Konuşma Dersi, Sıkılhanlık Kaynakları, Çözüm Önerileri, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğrenenler

¹ Dr. Öğretim Üyesi, Bingöl Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, ukaplan@bingol.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2479-6029>

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in technology and global events like COVID-19 have led to a move toward online learning in foreign language instruction, making the current study essential (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). While online language learning has many advantages, such as flexibility and accessibility, it also has significant drawbacks, which might cause students to feel unpleasant emotions (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Despite having the potential to influence learners' motivation, performance, and engagement negatively, foreign language learning boredom (FLLB), one of the most common feelings, especially in online learning contexts, remains inadequately investigated (Kruk, 2016). In other words, although research in foreign language education has increasingly acknowledged the importance of emotional factors such as anxiety and enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), boredom has received little systematic investigation in the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning (Pawlak et al., 2023). Furthermore, existing studies on boredom in foreign language learning have primarily focused on traditional classroom settings (Pawlak et al., 2020), leaving a noteworthy gap in understanding how boredom manifests in online environments. Given the unique dynamics of online learning, including limited physical interaction and often monotonous instructional formats, the sources of boredom in these settings are likely to differ from those in face-to-face classrooms. The reasons for student boredom in an online class may differ from those in an onsite class due to variations in the learning procedure, classroom environment, the interaction between teachers and students, and students themselves (Yang et al., 2021). Furthermore, to my knowledge, the proposed solutions from learners, who are the primary stakeholders in this context, have not been adequately explored in the literature.

Bearing these in mind, the current study aims to fill these gaps by focusing specifically on EFL learners' experiences of boredom in online English-speaking lessons. It identifies the sources of boredom and delves into learners' self-reported propositions for overcoming it. By incorporating learners' perspectives of solutions, this research offers practical recommendations for reducing boredom and enhancing engagement in online foreign language speaking classes.

In addition, the study adds to the growing body of literature on learner emotions in language learning by offering an understanding of boredom influenced by various pedagogical and contextual factors (Dewaele & Li, 2020). In particular, the study's findings will have implications for educators, curriculum designers, and researchers aiming to improve the effectiveness of online language teaching. By exploring learners' proposed solutions, the study offers practical insights into how educators can modify their teaching practices to reduce boredom, especially in speaking courses, thus contributing to more effective and engaging online language instruction. Aside from that, the COVID-19 epidemic has provided a new viewpoint on education and a look into the future, in which online courses might replace traditional classrooms. As a result, it would be negligent for SLA academics and practitioners to disregard the issue of boredom in L2 online classes.

This study is significant since it sheds light on the causes of boredom in online speaking lessons and potential solutions to it in online classrooms from the perspectives of Turkish EFL university students in the hopes of providing some practical guidelines for future online educators as well as assisting educational stakeholders in responding effectively to online teaching in the event of future pandemics and disasters. The current study is also significant since it will likely be one of the few studies investigating foreign language learning boredom conducted in online speaking classrooms.

This being said, the current study revolves around the following questions:

- 1- What are EFL learners' primary sources of foreign language boredom in online English-speaking classes?
- 2- What solutions do EFL students propose to reduce boredom in online English-speaking classes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The transition to online education has profoundly influenced the dynamics of foreign language learning. One of the crucial difficulties in online learning environments is boredom, which can negatively influence the learners' academic performance, motivation, and emotional well-being (Pawlak et al., 2020). Boredom, particularly in language learning, has been associated with lower participation and unfavourable attitudes regarding learning (Dewaele & Li, 2020). More precisely, boredom is driven by an unpleasant sensation, low arousal, a desire to stop a troublesome situation, and an inclination to think that time is moving slowly (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2010).

FLLB has been extensively examined in traditional face-to-face classes, and it has been concluded that critical contributors are repeated activities, lack of contact, and uninteresting content (Kruk, 2016; Zawodniak et al., 2021). However, the shift to online education has given rise to new aspects of boredom, as students frequently report feeling alone, frustrated by technology, and unable to communicate instantly (Pawlak et al., 2020). Although factors that contribute to students' boredom in traditional L2 classrooms are extensively discussed in the literature, little is known about the sources of students' boredom in the online L2 classroom (Chen et al., 2022; Derakhshan

et al., 2021; Kruk et al., 2022; Pawlak et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021). This gap in the literature emphasises the need to research how EFL students experience and deal with boredom. Additionally, the way that boredom manifests itself in online language learning environments is a developing area of research. Considering this, the current study concentrates on the FLLB in online English as a foreign language speaking lessons by examining its sources and learners' proposed solutions to alleviate it. By identifying the reasons and potential solutions to boredom in virtual speaking classrooms, teachers can design more engaging online learning environments that boost students' motivation and overall language competency (Pawlak et al., 2020).

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Various theories and models have been developed to explain student boredom. As a result of a literature review, it was decided that the control value theory of achievement emotions (CVT) proposed by Pekrun (2006) and Pekrun et al. (2010) is an appropriate theoretical framework for the current study. Pekrun (2006) and Pekrun et al. (2010) identify the primary cause of student boredom in academic contexts and its negative impact on students. CVT posits that boredom is an emotion experienced by those who believe they have no control over a particular activity and place little or no value on it (Pekrun, 2006). Concerning the source of boredom, Pekrun (2006) and Pekrun et al. (2010) claim that students become bored when they feel a lack of value or have high or low control over the assigned achievement tasks. CVT also contributes by developing techniques to strengthen students' control over academic-related activities and their perceived value of given accomplishment assignments (Shimray & Wangdi, 2023).

Shimray and Wangdi (2023) identified three main characteristics that lead to student boredom in L2 classrooms, both onsite and online: 1) course material and content and classroom responsibilities, 2) instructor behaviour in the classroom, and 3) academically poor students and their personality characteristics.

First, regarding course content and classroom activities, research has identified various reasons students get bored. It has been suggested that factors such as easy or difficult content, poor lesson preparation, inappropriate teaching materials, and repetitive activities may cause students to feel bored in foreign language classes (Coşkun & Yüksel, 2022; Derakhshan et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2020; Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2010; Zawodniak et al., 2021). Also, it has been revealed that unprofessional behaviour and unplanned practices by teachers in EFL classrooms can lead to student boredom (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2020; Tam et al., 2020; Zawodniak et al., 2021). There was clear evidence that teachers play crucial roles in the EFL setting (Wangdi & Shimray, 2022), and they also have the most significant impact on students' FLLB in L2 courses. For example, Tam et al. (2020) and Zawodniak et al. (2021) hypothesised that students are bored because teachers cannot maintain interaction with learners in the classroom, with long lectures and inadequate explanations of classroom activities. Aside from inappropriate course content, classroom tasks, and teachers' unprofessional behaviour, the literature revealed another crucial factor that causes students to feel FLLB in L2 classrooms: students' lack of competence in the target foreign language (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018). In this regard, Nakamura et al. (2021) remark that learners frequently become bored when they lack the cognitive abilities necessary to comprehend the content of the target language. This conclusion from Nakamura et al.'s (2021) research is consistent with what has been claimed in CVT. Pekrun (2006) and Pekrun et al. (2010) stated that students' incapacity to manage prescribed accomplishment assignments would cause them to become bored in the classroom.

2.2. Solutions to FLLB

Several studies in the SLA field have been conducted, both onsite (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Derakhshan et al., 2022; Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018; Xie, 2021; Zawodniak et al., 2021) and online (Asmalı, 2022; Derakhshan et al., 2021; Dewaele et al., 2022; Kruk et al., 2022; Kruk & Pawlak, 2022; Yang et al., 2021) and provided with potential solutions for overcoming FLLB in these contexts. The overall pattern of boredom solutions from the research above provides some suggestions to alleviate FLLB while learning L2, especially in online classes, such as providing free writing activities (Asmalı, 2022), creating virtual breakout discussion rooms (Dewaele et al., 2022), and encouraging students to communicate (Kruk, 2022). Allowing students to choose their favourite learning materials and activities may also help reduce boredom in an L2 classroom (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018). Furthermore, Yang et al. (2021) recommended that teachers encourage students through constructive feedback, motivate students, and enhance classroom involvement to cope with boredom effectively.

In light of studies in the literature, it is acknowledged that boredom is an essential emotional state in language acquisition; comparatively, little research has examined how students experience boredom in online courses or what solutions they recommend to get beyond it. Learners' views are critical in establishing practical, learner-centred ways to minimise boredom and increase engagement in virtual classrooms (Dörnyei, 2020). By examining the causes of boredom as well as the strategies put forth by EFL students to minimise its negative effects in online English-speaking classes, the current research attempts to fill this gap.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative case study to examine the causes of FLLB in online English classes and their proposed solutions. Case study research is ideal for in-depth analysis of specific phenomena in real-world situations (Yin, 2018). This technique provides a thorough knowledge of participants' experiences and the contextual factors contributing to foreign language boredom in online contexts by focusing on a particular situation. A case study method is also proper when multiple data sources offer a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena under inquiry (Stake, 2006). Based on this, three different data collection tools—semi-structured interviews, structured interviews, and reflection report—were employed to get a detailed interpretation of the situation and increase the trustworthiness of the results. Since they provide comprehensiveness and adaptability, semi-structured interviews were adopted as the primary means of data collection (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this study, a reflection report encouraging participants to articulate their thoughts and emotions regarding the construct under scrutiny was also utilised as a data collection tool through which participants could reflect on what got them bored in online English-speaking classes and their proposed solutions for overcoming them (Moon, 2006).

The study's participants were selected according to the criterion purposeful sampling method the criteria intentional sampling approach. The reason behind employing the criterion purposeful sampling technique was that the researcher had the opportunity to evaluate the potential of collecting relevant data to achieve the study's objectives with the determined participants (Fraenkel et al., 2011). The detailed criteria for the sampling are outlined below:

- a) The students were required to be taking an online English-speaking course at the time of the study.
- b) They were supposed to be majoring in English at a university.

As for the analysis, the data drawn from three different modes of qualitative data collection were analysed based on the steps outlined by Krippendorff (2004). Ethical issues were also incorporated throughout the investigation. Participants were adequately informed about the research goal, their right to withdraw, and how their information would be utilised. All interview transcripts and reflection report were anonymised to ensure confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board.

4. FINDINGS

The current study attempted to reveal sources of FLLB experienced by learners in an online speaking class. Accordingly, reflection report, structured interviews, and semi-structured interviews were administered to 59 foreign language learners taking the course at a state university in Türkiye. Qualitative data derived from these sources were analysed based on content analysis. As a result, two sets of themes have been found, one of which is related to sources of boredom such as disturbing experiences during the lesson, classroom context-dependent sources, teacher-related sources, task-related sources, students-related sources, and the other one is about possible solutions proposed by learners to FLLB such as lesson itself and teaching related solutions, task-related solutions, classroom context related solutions, and teacher-related solutions. Each group of themes is explained in this section according to the research question to which they belong.

4.1. Research Question 1: What are EFL learners' primary sources of foreign language boredom in online English-speaking classes?

First, sources of boredom that learners experience in the online speaking class were figured out. As a result of content analysis, five themes have been yielded: disturbing experiences during the lesson, classroom context-dependent sources, teacher-related sources, task-related sources, and students-related sources.

4.1.1. Theme 1: Disturbing experiences during the lesson

The first theme is related to situations in which students get involved during the online speaking lessons, experiences, and behaviours they have been exposed to. As a result of the analysis, four categories were yielded.

The first category is the influence of students around on the experience of FLLB. In this category, the most frequently expressed code is low student participation. Students express that when the number of students participating in the online speaking class is low, they feel bored in the class. In other words, silence in the class makes students feel bored in the lesson. This view is exemplified in the following excerpts:

P-24: As students, we also made the lesson boring. Participation was very limited indeed. When asked about the reason for not speaking, they said they were unavailable, and there was nothing to prove this situation in the lessons. My friends' behaviour was mixed. The number of people speaking was less. That is why I felt bored (Reflective Report)

P-32: What bothered me the most was that when our teacher asked our classmates questions, our friends did not answer, remained silent, did not attend the lesson, and waited for them. As annoying as it was, the silence in the classroom made me lose interest in speaking English. (Reflective Report)

Secondly, a lesser proportion of the participants exclaimed that they also get bored when they witness their friends' performances, which are better than theirs. To put it another way, the fact that students see their classmates who perform better than themselves in terms of speaking English causes them to experience boredom in the online classroom. These notions are exemplified in the following excerpts:

P-14: The fact that a few people in the class speak better than me, and I see that they speak better English than me, causes me to get in trouble and get bored in the lesson. While they are talking, I begin to criticise myself for what I am lacking and where I am making mistakes. (Structured Interview)

P-19: There are times when I get bored in some classes. Although this shyness is usually caused by myself, sometimes the classroom environment also affects it. For example, when I have classmates who perform better than me when speaking English, I get bored, so I cannot speak. (Semi-structured Interview)

Finally, a few participants stated that when they observed their classmates being unwilling to participate in the course, they felt bored and did not want to participate in the lesson by speaking English. They illustrated that their classmates' reluctant and indifferent attitudes and behaviours towards the lesson caused them to feel bored during the online speaking lesson. These ideas are explicated in the following:

P- 17: One reason for my boredom is that my classmates generally have no desire to speak or that the speakers are indifferent and unwilling to speak. The fact that different opinions and comments are not discussed and there is no atmosphere of conversation makes me feel bored. (Semi-structured Interview)

The second category is reactions from the environment that the student is exposed to, causing FLLB. First of all, participants declared that while speaking English, the cynical attitudes and behaviours or reactions of other classmates about their performance are seen as the most crucial factor that disturbs them and causes them to experience boredom in the lesson. The following excerpt illuminates the claim:

P-54: In a speaking class, I get bored the most when one of my classmates makes fun of the person while speaking, laughs at him, throws contemptuous looks, or criticises everyone's opinion without respecting each other. If I get the same reactions from my friends when I speak, I get tense and bored. (Structured Interview)

In addition, the participants consider being interrupted by their classmates and their statements not being listened to when they speak in the lesson as factors that cause boredom. This is exemplified in the following:

P-22: In speaking lessons, perhaps when we have difficulty gathering our courage, some of our friends interfere with our sentences and try to correct them, or they interrupt us directly and start to speak. This reduces our mood and causes us to get bored for the rest of the lesson. (Structured Interview)

Thirdly, participants declared that they get bored and do not want to speak in class when other students look at them as soon as they start to speak. In other words, they stated that the glances towards them make them feel embarrassed even if their friends' intentions were not judgmental. Just being looked at makes them feel tense and bored while speaking. The following excerpts taken from data sources exemplify participants' views:

P-10: When I attend the class, all eyes are on me. This is uncomfortable in an environment. Because you want to talk, but you forget what to say because of the pressure in the environment. (Structured Interview)

P-16: Often, we have to observe people during the lesson because we are in contact with people in the speaking lesson. We naturally look at them; we can understand what they want to say from their movements and facial expressions. However, I get bored when someone looks at me while talking. I do not want to speak in class, so they will not look at me. (Semi-structured Interview)

The third category is situations encountered by the students during lessons. In this category, the participants talk about the situations that cause them to get bored in the online speaking lesson, such as the weekly lesson time, the time of the speaking lesson in a day, the practices they are involved in, and the experiences that should live in the lesson but are not. First, participants stated that the lack of communication between students in the speaking class caused them to feel bored during the lesson. In connection with this, participants believe student interaction should be ensured at the maximum level in the online lesson. These ideas were explained in detail in the following excerpts:

P-35: The interaction in the speaking class I am in is unfortunately very low, and this is one of the most significant problems of my boredom because if you do not interact with someone or share something, a student will quickly get bored in that class. (Structured Interview)

P-1: There should be interaction in the classroom in English-speaking lessons, but some friends stay away from the activities because they do not interact with each other, and they do not interact with each other, which causes them to get bored. (Semi-structured Interview)

Secondly, participants explained that listening to their friends who talk for a long time during the lesson and waiting for a long time for their turn to talk makes them bored.

P-21: Another thing I got bored within the class was that some of my friends were unnecessarily prolonging their conversations. Waiting for them to finish speaking was boring to me. (Reflective Report)

In addition, it is stated that asking the participants to talk in a monotonous lesson all the time causes boredom.

P-53: I got bored with the monotony of the lesson because a topic was being determined, and most of them were saying the same things about that topic, which bored me. Not only was I bored, but when I asked my friends, they said they were bored, too. (Reflective Report)

The last category is disturbing experiences during lessons that are related to classmates causing FLB. This category contains statements about how effective the classmates of the participants are in determining the FLLB they experience in the classroom. First of all, class members who made fun of their friends and did not respect the people in the class and their performance was the most frequently expressed code in this category. The participants cited their classmates, who disrespected them and made fun of them all the time, as one of the sources that caused them to get bored. The following expressions explain the situation:

P-34: I feel uncomfortable in a classroom environment where many people are constantly making fun of everything in the classroom and laughing among themselves while someone is talking. Because I never felt comfortable in that environment. These people often cause me to get bored in class. (Structured Interview)

In addition, the participants see their friends who always look for mistakes, are judgmental and highlight only the negativities in their speaking performance as a source that determines their boredom level.

P-5: In the classroom environment, most people are jealous of each other. Everyone is looking for each other's fault. Unfortunately, I have seen this situation even among close friends. That is why we get bored and do not hesitate to talk. That is why we cannot improve ourselves. This is getting very annoying. This situation in the classroom environment and its consequences also cause us to get bored with the lesson. (Structured Interview)

4.1.2. Theme 2: Classroom context-dependent sources of FLLB

The participants also elaborated on the factors related to the classroom environment while discussing the sources of foreign language learning boredom. The first category is called social formations and interpersonal relationships in class. Participants state that the relationship among students in foreign language classrooms, the nature of the teacher-student relationship, the competitive environment in the classroom, and the active role of some students during the lesson are effective on the boredom they experience in the lesson. First of all, the majority of the participants state that they are uncomfortable with the groupings among the students in the classroom, and this situation causes them to feel bored during the online speaking lesson, as the following excerpts show:

P-43: Our class, the people in the class in general, are boring. In other words, when I enter our classroom, I faint, and no one in our classroom speaks to each other. No one has a proper relationship with anyone. Everyone has an established group, and everyone hangs out in their way. This situation causes my other friends and me to get bored in class, and our desire to speak decreases. Naturally, we do not perform well in the classroom. (Structured Interview)

P-30: As a matter of fact, I do not feel comfortable in the classroom at all. The reason for this is the groupings in the classroom. (Structured Interview)

P-6: Everyone in the class has set up their circle. Therefore, they only talk to certain people, namely their group members. There is no general interaction; there is intragroup communication. This situation caused me to get bored during the lesson because I wanted to act together and communicate with each other rather than group. (Semi-structured Interview)

Secondly, students participating in an online speaking lesson stated they were bored because only some students were constantly active during the lesson. In other words, they said that they are not given equal rights to speak, but that certain students are given the right to tell all the time, causing them to get bored during the lesson.

P-57: What bothers me the most is that a single person or a group of students dominate the course in terms of participation and prevent other students from participating. (Reflective Report)

P-23: In some cases, I can observe that other students in the class are bored with me. For example, the fact that the teacher continues the lesson with the same students causes us to experience boredom. (Semi-structured Interview)

In addition, competition between students is one of the factors leading students to experience FLLB in the online speaking lesson. According to the participants, the existence of competition among the students in the classroom and the fact that the students compete with each other in terms of frequency of speaking English in the lesson cause students to experience boredom. This idea was explained in the following excerpts:

P- 41: The race in the class, the ambition to beat each other, but this ambition is not a good one; it is a grudging feeling, constantly desiring to speak up, a state of being continually at odds with the thoughts of classmates cause me to get bored in class. (Structured Interview)

The second category is the social context of the classroom leading to FLLB. Participants presented some factors related to relationships in class, the social structure of the class, and the interactions that occur within this structure. To put it more clearly, several participants expressed that they get bored when they have a lesson in a stressful and tense classroom environment. The following excerpts illuminate as follows:

P- 15: My friends are generally negatively affected by the tension in the classroom, so they cannot get nervous and speak English. This causes them to get bored and stay passive in the lesson. (Semi-structured Interview)

P-4: When there was a tense atmosphere in the classroom, we all felt stressed. This made us all feel uneasy about speaking English. This stressful environment in the classroom naturally caused us to feel bored. (Reflection Report)

Secondly, participants exclaimed that they prefer a classroom environment with effective student communication. In the classrooms with low interaction, the participants stated they felt bored. The following excerpt from the data exemplify these views of the participants as follows:

P-5: The main reason for feeling bored is the need for a realistic interaction environment in the classroom. So, the real problem here is among students. In other words, it is the need for more communication among students. Although the activities are suitable, student interaction is needed to lead an effective conversation. Therefore we are bored. (Semi-structured Interview)

Last but not least, the analysis revealed that the stagnant, constantly monotonous classroom environment and ordinary speaking lessons without energy caused boredom in the participants. Participants prefer to see an energetic, continually renewing, and dynamic lecture in speaking lessons. The excerpts below exemplify the situation better as follows:

P- 9: A quiet and unenergetic classroom environment makes a class boring for me. For example, if the teacher teaches the lesson just using slides, does not encourage students to participate, always uses the same tone of voice, and always uses the same activities and materials, it makes me bored in the lesson. Moreover, this situation reduces my motivation and interest in the lesson. (Semi-structured Interview)

The last category is the physical context of the classroom. Here, the participants talked about the factors related to the physical condition of the classroom that caused them to experience boredom in the classroom. First, the participants stated that irrelevant speeches in the classroom and the noise pollution they caused also caused boredom in the lesson. The following excerpts explain the situation better:

P-14: The inability of my friends to maintain silence in the classroom and talk among themselves causes noise and boredom in the school. (Semi-structured Interview)

Additionally, in the light of the analyses made, it has been revealed that crowded online classrooms are one of the factors that cause the participants to experience boredom during the lesson. According to the participants, the frequency of speaking English in crowded classrooms decreases, preventing them from attending the lesson as they should. As a result, the participants stated that they felt bored during the lesson. The following excerpts illuminate the situation:

P-41: One of the most significant factors that make me bored in the class is that I attend the lesson in a crowded classroom. A classroom environment with 45-50 people makes me bored because the time allotted for us to speak English in such classes decreases, and the noise increases during the lesson. These problems arise from crowded classrooms, so crowded classrooms cause me boredom in my English-speaking class. (Semi-structured Interview)

4.1.3. Theme 3: Teacher-Related Sources of FLLB

Another factor that caused students to experience boredom in foreign language learning in the online speaking course was teacher-related causes. This theme consists of 3 categories: the teacher's certain behaviours in the classroom, factors related to the teacher's teaching practices and teachers' personality.

The first category in the related theme is about teacher's instructional activities. The most frequently mentioned codes in this category were as follows: the teacher's constant, monotonous teaching, the teacher's low energy during the lesson, the teacher's uninterrupted talking during the lesson, the teacher's spending the whole time of the lesson teaching, and the teacher forcing the student to talk.

First, the teacher-related factor that caused students to feel bored in the online speaking course was the monotonous teaching style of the teacher. According to the students, the lack of variety, fixed and monotonous course content, and course practices are considered boring. The following excerpt illustrates the situation:

P-31: The teacher's monotonous tone of voice, a rather boring lecture, repeating the same content, or using the same activities even if the content was different caused us to get bored during the lesson (Structured interview).

Another prominent code in this category is the teacher's low mood and energy. According to the students, the teacher's low enthusiasm for teaching, low tone of voice, low energy, and lack of motivation caused them to experience FLLB in the online speaking lesson.

P- 36: First, when the teacher is tired in the speaking class, it affects me negatively. Also, if the teacher yawns constantly or occasionally if I get an unmotivated vibe from them, I get bored in the lesson. (Structured interview).

In addition, students indicated that another factor that caused them to feel bored in online conversation classes was that the teacher spent all the time lecturing. In other words, students get bored of spending time in an online class where only the teacher dominates the class.

P-53: I get bored when the teacher talks all the time in class. After all, this is a speaking class, and the students should be the priority. (Structured interview)

Finally, in online speaking lessons, the teacher forcing students to speak English despite their unwillingness to do so has emerged as another teacher-related cause of student boredom. The following explicates the findings.

P-11: The point where I feel bored in online speaking lessons is the mandatory nature of the speaking activity, meaning we are forced to speak English even when we do not want to. In class, it is necessary to be willing to speak. Sometimes, students can be encouraged to speak, but if this happens constantly, it can make the students feel bored during the lesson. (Semi-structured interview)

Another category concerning the factor that caused students to feel FLLB in online speaking classes was certain teacher behaviours in class. The main codes in this category were teacher belittling students, teacher humiliating students for their mistakes, teacher threatening students about passing the class in online classes, and teacher giving privileges to certain students.

The most frequently reported situation in this category was the teacher's belittling of the students in the online lesson. The teacher's condescending behaviour during the lesson due to mistakes made by the students, such as grammar or pronunciation, caused the students to feel bored in the online speaking lesson. This result is exemplified in the following excerpt.

P-2: I get very bored if a teacher is arrogant towards their students. I do not like teachers who try to create a source of entertainment for themselves from student mistakes. I was belittled for my pronunciation mistakes, which made me highly bored in class. (Structured Interview)

In addition, students reported that a teacher who constantly yelled at them in online speaking classes caused them to feel bored. In other words, a teacher who exposes students to negative and harsh criticism in a harsh style and scolds students bores them in class.

P-13: I was very bored when the teacher was tense or angry. I did not want to talk, practice, or learn the correct pronunciation of a new word. When my teacher was angry at everything said in class and criticised us badly for our mistakes, I was bored and did not want to participate in the lesson. (Semi-structured Interview)

Last but not least, although almost all students in the class were present in the live online speaking lesson, the fact that the lesson was taught by focusing on only a few people created boredom in the students. The fact that a few of their classmates were given priority, only those people were given the right to speak, or feedback was given to them created the feeling that they were discriminated against, which caused them to experience FLLB in the online speaking lesson. This situation is expressed in the following excerpt.

P-36: Additionally, my teacher constantly communicated with specific students in some classes, reducing my desire to participate. For example, speaking English to certain students hurt my enjoyment of the course. (Structured Interview)

Finally, the analysis revealed that the teachers' personalities caused the FLLB experienced by the students due to the teacher. The students stated that the teacher in the online speaking lessons was naturally nervous, so they avoided participating in the lesson. They felt bored because they were afraid of the teacher not to be scolded by the teacher.

P-34: My teacher's behaviour towards us was harsh and rude. He would suddenly get angry and get angry with us. For example, my voice was unclear once because of my internet connection. I could not help it, but he got angry and got angry with me. In such situations, I feel afraid of the teacher and get bored in class. I get bored speaking English. (Structured Interview)

In addition, the teacher's serious attitude and the fact that they did not make jokes or smile during the lesson due to their serious nature caused the students to experience FLLB in the online speaking lessons. This situation is exemplified below.

P-57: I always remember our teacher as serious in online classes. Always formal...This inevitably bored us and made us nervous in class. I did not want to speak English; I was bored. (Reflective Report)

4.1.4. Theme 4: Task-Related Sources of FLLB

The next theme referring to the sources of FLLB experienced by EFL learners in online speaking classes is task-related sources of FLLB. In this theme, emergent categories are the content and subject matter of the activity causing FLLB, the nature of the activity causing FLLB, and the type of activity causing FLLB.

First, it was revealed that students' boredom in the online speaking lesson was related to the content and subject matter of the speaking activity. According to the students, topic-orientated speaking activities that are not suitable for their interests and desires, that are formal, and require students to have a certain level of knowledge to talk about them cause students to experience FLLB. The following quotes exemplify this result.

P-2: We were expected to discuss topics we did not know about. While doing this, my friends and I get very nervous and bored. It is boring for us to talk about something we do not know. (Structured Interview)

P-3: The only thing that made the online course boring was discussing a boring topic. It was very boring for me when they discussed a topic that did not interest me. (Semi-structured Interview)

In addition to the above, the following excerpt, 'If my speaking teacher talks about the same topics repeatedly' (Structured interview, 52), revealed that students repeatedly feel FLLB when they speak English on the same topic in online speaking lessons. All these results suggest that students hope to talk about issues related to their interests and away from monotony in online speaking lessons.

The second category in this theme is related to the nature of the activities included in online speaking classes. More specifically, activities that make students listen to the teacher or the students in the class for most of the lesson instead of making them talk caused students to experience FLLB. In other words, the variety of activities that did not attract the student's interest and that similar activities were carried out in the lessons rather than diversity caused the students to experience FLLB. This result is shown in the following excerpt.

P-18: The most boring part of the English-speaking online lesson was when I listened to the online presentations. During the lesson, 3 or 4 of our friends made presentations with cameras on, and we listened to them. There was no interaction, so I was bored. (Reflective Report)

P-22: I can imagine that in some cases, students get bored because I realise that some of the activities do not appeal to them, i.e., the activities are not interesting, which leads to boredom. (Semi-structured Interview)

The last category refers to the results related to the type of activities that cause students to feel bored in online speaking classes. These activities are listed as presentations, talks about a book, and photo descriptions according to the frequency of mention. This result shows that the types of activities that did not require interaction in the lesson caused the students to feel FLLB in the online speaking lesson. The following quote exemplifies this result.

P-5: The most boring moment in English class was when we analysed a book. Our teacher recommended a book for us and told us to read this book and talk about it in class. However, I would not say I liked reading books at that time, but I had to like reading books as a requirement of my department, and fortunately, I do now. We answered the questions our teacher asked us about the book we read in class and talked about the book. (Reflective Report)

4.1.5. Theme 5: Student-Related Sources of FLLB

The last theme in revealing the sources that cause foreign language learners to experience FLLB in online speaking classes is student-related. The categories included in this theme are factors related to English competency, student-related emotional factors, and students' fears according to the frequency of citations.

Firstly, one of the student-related factors causing students' boredom was related to their foreign language competence. The students stated that they needed help understanding what the teacher and some of their classmates were saying in online classes, and, therefore, they were bored. In addition, students stated that they needed to see themselves as effective in language proficiency, so they hesitated to speak English in online classes. As a result, they felt bored in the class. The following quotations exemplify this result as follows:

P-27: I did not consider myself competent enough to participate in online classes and listened to people speaking silently. During the lesson, I was incredibly bored looking at the screen without saying anything (Structured Interview)

P-13: Sometimes, I could not understand what was being said in class, and I was bored and even demotivated to improve my English (Semi-structured Interview)

Secondly, students reported that they experienced FLLB in the online speaking course due to some affective reasons. It was revealed that these emotions were generally negative emotions such as embarrassment, lack of self-efficacy, lack of self-confidence, and anxiety that prevented them from participating in the course. The students mostly stated that they were bored in the online speaking lesson because of their anxiety about public speaking. Due to anxiety, they do not participate in the lesson, or they are nervous that it might be their turn to speak, and as a result, they get bored in the lesson. In addition, even if the students were proficient enough to speak English, their belief that they could not speak effectively caused them to remain silent in the lesson, and as a result, they experienced FLLB. Finally, embarrassment and introversion are personal traits that cause students to feel bored in online speaking classes. The following quotes exemplify these results.

P-4: Among the intrinsic factors in the speaking lesson, I think it is because I am excited because sometimes there are topics in the speaking lessons that I am knowledgeable about, and although I want to speak, I cannot express myself because I am very excited and naturally I cannot speak and therefore I get bored in the lesson (Semi-structured Interview)

P-48: The part that comes from me is that I am a shy, timid, low-speaking person in everyday life, which causes me to be silent in class and then get bored. (Structured Interview)

Finally, students' fears also emerged as one of the factors that caused them to experience FLLB in online speaking lessons. These fears included fear of making mistakes and receiving negative reactions from classmates. Firstly, it was revealed that any negative look, demotivating comment, or correction from the environment towards students' speaking performances caused students to get bored in the lesson. This result shows that environmental reactions affect students' boredom in online classes. It was also found that students were afraid of making mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, especially pronunciation and accent when speaking English, and this fear caused them to experience boredom during the online lesson. The following quotes exemplify this situation.

P-6: I am uncomfortable in the classroom; will they laugh at my speech? What will they say about my speech? What do they say after I speak? Or did I make a mistake? Why did I hear such a voice? (Semi-structured Interview)

P-20: I usually do not speak because I am afraid of making a pronunciation mistake, and I get bored because it creates stress for me to correct this mistake at that moment. The same thing happens when I make a grammar mistake. When I make a mistake, it is corrected at that moment, and I would not say I like it. Over time, I got bored with the online course because I feared making mistakes. (Structured Interview)

4.2. Research Question 2: What solutions do EFL students propose to reduce boredom in online English-speaking classes?

In addition, the present study also aimed to reveal the solutions suggested by the students for the boredom they experienced. As a result of the analysis, four themes referring to solution suggestions emerged: task-related solutions, teacher-related solutions, classroom context-related solutions, lesson itself, and teaching-related solutions.

First, students most frequently offered task-related solutions for the boredom they experienced in the online speaking course. These were related to the characteristics of the speaking activities, the nature of the activities and materials brought to class, and the type of speaking activity.

The first category is related to the characteristics of the speaking activities included in online courses. When the solution suggestions of the students were examined, it was seen that they suggested that group activities where information exchange takes place rather than individual activities should be included in the courses. In addition,

to overcome FLLB in online speaking lessons, students suggested using funny activities that entertain the students during the lesson as a solution suggestion. The following excerpts summarise this situation as follows:

P-44: If there is strong communication between classmates participating in the lesson in groups rather than individually, it can help to minimise the boredom of most of our friends, including me, in the lesson and increase the activity in the lesson. (Structured Interview)

P-15: We should do cheerful activities in class; we should be busy with something fun; of course, this is a university; we cannot do primary school activities, but I am sure there are cheerful, fun activities suitable for our level. (Semi-Structured interview)

In addition, as can be seen in the following quotations, concerning the characteristics of the activities, the students stated that FLLB could be overcome in the online speaking lesson through motivating activities that align with the student's interests and encourage them to talk.

P-27: The activities should be more interesting for the students. Suppose the activities that will increase our motivation in connection with our interests are closer to the students in terms of the period. In that case, our participation in the lesson will increase, and we will not get bored. (Structured Interview)

This result may suggest that as the students' participation in the lesson increases, the level of FLLB they experience decreases.

The second category is related to the topic of the speaking activities and the material used in the online lesson. Students' interest also manifested itself in this category. It was found that asking students to speak on topics that interest them and engaging them in the lesson with interesting materials will cause a decrease in their FLLB levels. In addition to the relevance to the student's interests, the students suggested that the activities should be interpretative and related to current issues without requiring students to use a language above their existing language proficiency. In this way, FLLB can be overcome in online speaking lessons. This situation is explicated in the following.

P-3: I think that if current issues are emphasised more in the lesson, this boredom situation will somewhat decrease. Suppose current issues are emphasised instead of talking about the locust, a species in India. In that case, everyone will express their opinions comfortably, and the lesson will be fun and fluent. (Semi-structured Interview)

The last category in this theme suggests the types of activities that can reduce students' FLLB in online speaking lessons. The students suggested that FLLB can be decreased through activities such as roleplay and various games where students can work together with their classmates by having fun. This result is illustrated in the following.

P-53: One of the activities I feel most comfortable with is the activity where we play taboo. We were scattered in chat rooms or played games like charades with the camera on, and friends talked. In this way, games where everyone can talk can be included. (Structured Interview)

In addition to these activities, students suggested that listening and pronunciation-oriented activities should be incorporated into the lessons to reduce FLLB in online speaking lessons.

P-45: After expressing myself well in activities focusing on pronunciation, I say, 'My pronunciation is good,' and my self-confidence increases. I never get bored in such situations. (Structured Interview)

P-54: Speaking lessons should include not only speaking but also listening activities. This way, the lesson will be more fun, and there will be a change in the lesson. Moreover, I like the lessons where we watch a video or listen to a podcast and then talk about it. (Structured Interview)

These results suggest that FLLB can be overcome by including activities in online speaking lessons where students can have group fun and develop their language skills.

The second theme refers to the students' solution suggestions related to teachers. In this theme, categories refer to the results of the teacher's teaching practices, the teacher's personality, and the teacher's behaviour in the lesson.

The first category is related to the teacher's teaching in the online course. According to the students, to overcome FLLB in online speaking lessons, the teacher should keep the lessons from being monotonous and integrate various activities into the lessons. Secondly, the students suggested that a teacher who is energetic in online speaking lessons and can engage the students by adopting an active role during the lesson can reduce FLLB. The following excerpts exemplify this situation. In addition, the teachers are advised not to impose activities or materials in the lesson. Instead, they are advised to bring various activities and materials and give students choices to select the most appropriate.

P-23: When we do different activities, the lesson is more productive and fun because we learn something and the lesson is fun. We do not get bored. (Structured Interview)

P-51: When there is no participation in the class, I do not listen to the lesson because the participation of the students encourages me even more. To overcome my boredom, I suggest that the teacher should be active and involve us all in the lesson somehow. (Reflective Report)

In addition, the students suggested that a teacher who plans online speaking lessons by taking into account the students' views, who observes equality and fairness among the students, and who creates a positive learning environment away from stress and tension can reduce FLLB in online speaking lessons. The following quotations clarify this situation as follows:

P-19: If a student is bored with the lesson, first of all, the student should be asked what kind of lesson they expect. The student should be contacted, and the problem of why they seem bored in the lessons should be solved. It is challenging to solve the problem without communicating with the student. (Structured interview).

P-45: First of all, the teacher should state that every student in the class is equal in their eyes and that they do not differentiate us from each other because I get very bored when there is injustice, inequality, and favouritism. (Structured Interview)

The second category concerning teacher-related proposed solutions to FLLB is teacher personality. The students believe that having a friendly teacher is the first thing in an online speaking class. As mentioned in the previous result, they stated that a smiling and friendly teacher could reduce FLLB by creating a stress-free environment in the classroom. In addition, to maintain calmness and a favourable classroom climate in online speaking classes, teachers with a high sense of empathy and respect for students are also considered factors that can reduce or prevent FLLB in online courses. The following quotations explain this result as follows:

P-37: I get bored when the teacher is arrogant in the speaking lesson. I do not get bored if the teacher is friendly and sincere. My interest and love for the lesson increases, and I participate in. (Structured Interview)

The last category includes the results referring to the teacher's constructive behaviour during the online lesson. The participants suggested that a teacher who does not judge the students in the lesson, intervenes constructively in their mistakes, motivates and supports the students to speak, builds strong bonds with the students, and gets to know them closely can reduce FLLB in an online speaking lesson. The following quotations exemplify this result as follows:

P-15: A teacher who encourages me to speak and gives me constructive feedback in the speaking lesson ensures that I do not get bored in the lesson. (Structured Interview)

P-45: I think a teacher should never give up on a student, keep the bond between them alive, and support them by telling them their valuable positive aspects. In this way, the energy in the classroom will be high, and we will not get bored. (Structured Interview)

P-50: The teacher's camera should be on in the online class, and despite the mistakes I make, I want to encounter my teacher's encouraging looks and words that he/she believes that I will succeed because every human being can make mistakes, and I believe that I will find my direction and move towards success thanks to these mistakes, I think there is nothing more motivating than this, and I will never get bored in the class. (Structured Interview)

Based on these results, establishing positive relationships with students in online speaking classes and creating a safe and supportive online classroom climate prevent students from experiencing FLLB.

The previous themes mentioned the results referring to the solution suggestions related to the nature of the course material and the course subject to reduce FLLB in online speaking courses. With this theme, the results related to the suggestions for reducing FLLB that occur or may occur due to the course itself in online speaking courses are included. To explain further, the categories that emerged in this theme are student-centred course practices, characteristics of the online speaking course, feedback, and time-related categories. The students first stated that an online course allowing them to adopt an active role in the lesson and to participate continuously can reduce their FLLB. The participants who noted that the online speaking course could be more disadvantageous regarding human interaction stated that continuously increasing interaction can reduce FLLB. The following quotes exemplify this result.

P-31: The only way to overcome boredom in the online speaking class was to attend more classes. I had to participate in speaking activities more often to avoid getting bored. (Reflective Report)

Different from the above-mentioned result, some participants stated that they were bored of speaking in online speaking classes and suggested that there should not be a compulsion to force students to speak English if they are not volunteered. In connection with these results, the participants indicated that informing the students beforehand

about the topics to be discussed to prepare them rather than spontaneously speaking in the lesson could effectively overcome FLLB. The following quotations illustrate this result.

P-28: When I look at online speaking lessons in general, it was very enjoyable for us to be informed about a topic in advance and do activities about that topic in the lesson (for example, watching a video and talking about it). Such activities can prevent boredom. (Reflective Report).

P40: I would not be bored if the students who wanted to speak in the class spoke, and those who did not volunteer were not forced to speak English. (Structured Interview).

Based on all these results, it can be said that if the students adopt an active role in the lesson on a voluntary basis and if they are informed in advance about the topics of discussion to be included in the online lesson, their frequent interaction will reduce the possibility of FLLB.

The second category is related to how the online speaking lesson should be. According to the students, the classroom environment in the online speaking course should have an atmosphere where students can feel comfortable and have fun with natural conversations.

In addition, the participants who stated that the online speaking course is distraction-prone noted that the course should be well-planned in detail and that technology should be integrated into the lessons frequently. Thus, students believe that with a strict lesson plan and technology support, their interest in the lesson will increase, and possibly FLLB will decrease. The following quotations further explain this result.

P-9: Teachers should plan what they will do in the lesson; they should know and be ready for it. Otherwise, it would be an unplanned, unsystematic lesson, and I would be distracted, disengaged, and bored. (Structured Interview)

P-15: Also, when discussing activities, it is necessary to use websites on the internet, such as smart boards and various Web 2.0 zero tools. (Semi-structured Interview, 15)

The next category is related to feedback in online speaking lessons. It was found that the type of feedback and the way of giving feedback affected the boredom experienced by the students in the lesson. Firstly, the participants remarked that they were not bored when they received constructive feedback from the teacher about their speaking performance. They noted that only when constructive feedback is given to students to figure out their weaknesses can FLLB be reduced in online speaking classes to some extent. In addition, the participants stated that their boredom decreased when they received feedback individually after the lesson. Based on these results, students think that constructive feedback that they receive individually in a delayed manner rather than during the online lesson will reduce their level of boredom in foreign language. The following quotations illustrate these results.

P-20: I think constructive feedback from our friends should be given afterwards rather than during the mistake. Otherwise, I find it wrong. (Structured feedback)

P-31: I was thrilled to see that I only made two sentences once, that my teacher wanted to continue communicating with me, and that my teacher appreciated my performance. Positive feedback from the teacher seems to be the first step to being eager to speak, and this kind of behaviour does not create boredom in the lesson. (Reflective Report)

The last category is related to the results indicating lesson time and duration factors that may reduce FLLB. This category has findings about both lesson time and talking time. The students stated that long online lessons and being asked to speak for a long time caused them to feel bored during the lesson, and it was revealed that online lessons of optimal length and speech performances that were not long would cause students not to feel bored. The following quotes exemplify these results.

P-30: Lesson hours should not be long enough to bore students. In this way, the student can improve efficiency and be less bored in the lesson. (Structured Interview)

P-22: Shorter lectures would allow us to listen to our friends' opinions and speak without getting bored. (Structured Interview)

The last theme includes classroom context-related factors that can reduce FLLB in online speaking classes. This theme includes factors related to the classroom's physical environment and the student-student and student-teacher dynamics that can overcome FLLB. The emerging categories are interaction and social formation in the class, the physical context of the class, and the psychological context of the class.

The first category is the psychological context of the class. The results in this category refer to an emotional environment that influences how students perceive and engage with speaking English in online classrooms. In this category, it was frequently explained that the online classroom environment should be peaceful. When students felt like they were in a comfortable, natural, friendly environment, they said FLLB could be reduced. Also, about

this result, students indicated that an inclusive and respectful classroom environment in which every student is equally accepted, mistakes are not judged, cooperation rather than competition prevails, and ideas are expressed freely could alleviate the FLLB in online speaking classes. The following excerpts illustrate this result.

P-34: If we teach our lessons in an environment where everyone looks at each other with love and respect, if we participate in our lessons with the confidence and comfort that our teacher gives us, in this peaceful environment, no one will be bored, and everyone's development will progress well. (Structured Interview)

P-13: Students always compete, but this should not be overdone. The classroom environment should be a place where everyone is equal. There should be cooperation, not competition, so we feel comfortable and not bored. (Structured Interview)

These results show that making students feel emotionally comfortable in online speaking classes causes them to experience FLLB less.

The second category is the interaction and social formation in the classroom. This category is related to the nature and type of interaction in online speaking classes. Students complaining about the lack of human interaction in online classrooms suggested that teachers and students should have a continuous, positive dialogue. They also suggested that students should support each other's learning, which can be achieved by assigning tasks to students in heterogeneous groups. In addition, the student said that FLLB would not occur when they communicate with their familiar, sincere friends rather than with students they do not know or are not sincere within online class group work. These results are illustrated in the following extracts.

P-5: I think, first of all, to prepare students for speaking, it is necessary to create a certain dialogue atmosphere in the whole class and increase interaction between students. (Semi-structured Interview)

P-47: I feel more comfortable with my friends, and I can speak English more fluently where I am more comfortable. I get maximum efficiency from speaking lessons and do not get bored. (Structured Interview)

The last category includes suggestions for solutions related to the physical condition of the classroom that would reduce or prevent FLLB in online speaking lessons. The students suggested that the cameras should be turned on and that students should see each other's faces so that they do not get bored and take the lesson seriously. In addition, students who mentioned the crowded classes in online courses suggested that the number of students should be as minimal as possible. In this way, students believe that the frequency of conversation will increase and the possibility of getting bored will decrease. The following quotations illuminate this result.

P-54: Speaking classes should be organised so that everyone can see each other. I would like to see the face of the person speaking; the camera should be open. (Structured Interview)

P-10: I think speaking classes should be divided into two because speaking in a class of 50 people and speaking in a class of 25 would be different. At least in a class of 25 people, the boredom rate would decrease, and you would have the chance to express yourself more comfortably. (Structured Interview)

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The current study was structured around two central research questions: the factors contributing to FLLB in online speaking classes and the potential solutions to lessen such boredom. The findings indicated that the sources of students' boredom were multifaceted, encompassing negative in-class experiences, contextual and teacher-related issues, task characteristics, and student-related variables. In response to these challenges, students proposed various pedagogical, task-oriented, and classroom context-based solutions to reduce FLLB during online speaking classes. These findings are elaborated on below and situated within the context of existing literature.

The sources of FLLB identified in this study support previous research (Coşkun & Yüksel, 2022; Kruk, 2016; Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018; Pawlak et al., 2020; Pekrun, 2006; Tam et al., 2020; Zawodniak et al., 2021). The findings also resonate with the theoretical framework of the Control-Value Theory (CVT), which postulates that when learners perceive a task as unengaging or of low personal relevance and when they attribute minimal value to the task, they are likely to disengage and experience boredom (Pekrun, 2006). In line with CVT, participants reported a lack of motivation to engage in speaking tasks misaligned with their interests or preferences for online learning, leading to heightened boredom.

Another significant finding was that monotonous and insufficiently stimulating classroom activities contributed substantially to FLLB. This observation corroborates earlier findings by Kruk and Zawodniak (2018), Pawlak et al. (2020), and Zawodniak et al. (2017), who highlighted that repetitive and low-stimulation tasks diminish student curiosity and involvement. From the CVT perspective, there is a curvilinear relationship between task difficulty and boredom, suggesting that under-stimulating and over-challenging tasks may result in boredom (Pekrun, 2006;

Pekrun et al., 2010). This is further supported by the Under-Stimulation Theory (Larson & Richards, 1991), which identifies the absence of novel stimuli as a primary contributor to disengagement.

Additionally, students' insufficient English language proficiency emerged as a significant factor in their disengagement during speaking activities. This mismatch between task difficulty and student ability aligns with CVT's assertion that students who perceive low control over learning tasks are more likely to experience boredom (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2010). In such contexts, learners' limited proficiency may hinder their participation, especially in cognitively demanding tasks, leading to feelings of boredom.

Teacher dominance and lack of student autonomy also contributed to the FLLB. Students indicated that materials and activities were often teacher-selected, limiting their sense of agency in the learning process. These findings are consistent with those of Shao et al. (2019) and Watt and Blanchard (1994), as well as the Forced-Effort Model (Hill & Perkins, 1985), which asserts that boredom arises when students are subjected to imposed tasks without adequate opportunities for choice and self-direction.

Furthermore, the lack of meaningful interaction and limited student engagement in online speaking classes were cited as other factors contributing to FLLB. This is in line with previous research emphasising the importance of interaction in reducing boredom and maintaining student interest (Deweale & Li, 2021; Derakhshan et al., 2021; Fahlman et al., 2013; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Pawlak et al., 2020; Shimray & Wangdi, 2023). Within the framework of CVT, limited opportunities for self-regulated learning and active participation negatively impact learners' emotional engagement and academic performance.

The final noteworthy factor was related to teacher behaviour and instructional practices. Specifically, unprofessional classroom conduct, unstructured lesson delivery, and lack of motivational strategies or constructive feedback increased FLLB (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Tam et al., 2020; Zawodniak et al., 2021). These findings are consistent with prior research, although some studies (e.g., Chapman, 2013) have downplayed the teacher's role in student boredom. Based on these observations, it is recommended that instructors offer consistent feedback and foster greater student autonomy to reduce FLLB in online environments.

Regarding solutions proposed by the participants, diversifying classroom activities was highlighted as a key strategy to reduce FLLB. Monotony and a lack of activity variety were commonly identified as boredom-inducing factors, and students advocated for a broader range of speaking activities that aligned with their interests. Previous studies have emphasised the importance of learner autonomy and interest-aligned activities (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018; Shimray & Wangdi, 2023). One practical recommendation is to involve students in selecting class activities and materials to better align instruction with their preferences.

Additionally, the challenge posed by difficult tasks and students' limited language proficiency echoed the findings by Kruk et al. (2020) and Pekrun (2006). To overcome this issue, teachers can be advised to assess students' proficiency levels at the beginning of the course and design tasks accordingly. The Under-Stimulation Theory (Larson & Richards, 1991) suggests that tasks matched to students' cognitive capabilities can enhance motivation and reduce boredom.

Finally, the lack of communication in online speaking classes was perceived as a significant drawback. In line with findings from Tam et al. (2020) and Zawodniak et al. (2021), students recommended fostering environments that support both peer-to-peer and teacher-student interactions. Additionally, providing timely, constructive feedback was suggested as a possible solution to enhance student motivation and participation (Li et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021).

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ÇALIŞMANIN ETİK İZNİ

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Yazar 1, araştırmanın tümünden sorumludur.

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