

47. Learning German as a foreign language: The impact of grammar on German-speaking anxiety

Erkan ZENGİN¹

Aygül ŞAHİN TOPTAŞ²

APA: Zengin, E. & Şahin Toptaş, A. (2023). Learning German as a foreign language: The impact of grammar on German-speaking anxiety. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi*, (33), 763-779. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.1279143

Abstract

It is known that many innovative studies have been carried out on materials, approaches and methods in Foreign Language Teaching thanks to recent technological advances and the update in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, learning, teaching, Assessment in recent years. However, there are other important factors that affect the process of language teaching and learning. These factors can be listed as readiness, awareness, motivation and anxiety. In particular, the fact that motivation and anxiety manifest themselves in a distinct fashion in all four skills can cause learning problems. The study attempts to explore speaking anxiety in general, and the effect of grammar on this kind of anxiety in particular. The test group of the study consists of students who learn German as a Foreign Language, and study in a German Language and Literature program. In conclusion, the effect of the knowledge of the mother tongue as well as the knowledge of the German language on the anxiety involved in speaking a foreign language is explained, and the importance of the mother tongue especially in the foreign language learning process is emphasized. In the light of all these clarifications, it can be said that grammar is very effective in speaking skills, and that the lack of grammar is a factor that increases speaking anxiety.

Keywords: Speaking anxiety, grammar, foreign language, German language and literature, language use

Yabancı dil olarak Almanca öğreniminde dil bilgisinin (Gramer) konuşma kaygısına etkisi

Öz

Son yıllarda gerek teknolojinin gelişimi gerekse Avrupa Ortak Başvuru Metninde yapılan güncelleme ile birlikte yabancı dil öğretiminde materyal, yaklaşım ve yöntem ile ilgili birçok yenilikçi çalışmaların yapıldığı bilinmektedir. Ancak dil öğretiminde ve öğreniminde süreci etkileyen önemli olan başka etkenler de vardır. Bu etkenler hazırbulunluşluk, farkındalık, motivasyon ve kaygı şeklinde sıralanabilir. Özellikle motivasyon ve kaygının dört beceride farklı olması öğrenimin sağlıklı işlemesine neden olabilmektedir. İlgili çalışmada konuşma kaygısı, özellikle de dil bilgisinin bu kaygıdaki etkisi üzerinde bir tespit bu bulunmaya çalışılmıştır. çalışmanın evrenini yabancı dil olarak Almanca alanında öğrenim gören öğrenciler, evreni temsil eden örnekleme ise Alman Dili ve Edebiyatı programında öğrenim gören öğrenciler oluşturmaktadır. Bu öğrencilerin konuyla ilgili

¹ Doç. Dr. Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Alman Dili ve Edebiyatı (Ankara, Türkiye), ezengin@hacettepe.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3306-839X. [Araştırma makalesi, Makale kayıt tarihi: 24.01.2023 kabul tarihi: 20.04.2023; DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.1279143]

² Dr., Gazi Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Almanca Öğretmenliği (Ankara, Türkiye), aygulshn@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8468-1688

tutumları, duygu ve düşünceleri ile ilgili bilgiye ulaşabilmek için araç olarak ölçek kullanılmış ve öğrencilerle görüşme yapılmıştır. Sonuç bölümünde yabancı dilde konuşma kaygıları hususunda Almanca dil bilgisi kadar anadildeki dil bilgisinin etkisine de yer verilerek Anadilin özellikle yabancı dil öğrenim sürecindeki önemi de vurgulanmıştır. Tüm bu veriler ışığında dil bilgisinin konuşma becerisinde oldukça etkili olduğu ve dil bilgisi eksikliğinin konuşma kaygısını artırıcı bir unsur olduğu, özellikle yabancı dildeki konuşma kaygısını azaltmak için hem yabancı dilin hem de anadildeki dil bilgisi eğitimine gereken önem verilmesi ve iyi bir dil bilgisi temeli oluşturulması gerektiği söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Konuşma kaygısı, dilbilgisi, yabancı dil, Alman dili ve edebiyatı, dil kullanımı

Introduction

One of the most common ways of communication is through speaking skill. However, there are many factors that affect speaking, whether in the mother tongue or in a foreign language. Some of these factors make it easier to speak a foreign language, while others make it difficult. These factors can be internal, that is individual, or external factors. Speaking a foreign language for various reasons poses a problem for many people, as well as for those who study in this field from time to time. One of the reasons, perhaps the biggest reason, is anxiety (Gölpınar, Hamzadayı & Bayat, 2018). Foreign language anxiety, also known as Xenoglossophobia refers to feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and stress about learning or using a foreign language. Spitzer (2002) emphasizes that acquiring a new language other than the usual one also brings a conflict between a person and a foreign language. In the same vein, Andrade and Williams (2009, s. 11) state that based on their previous experiences in foreign language learning, many students may be coming to the classroom mentally prepared to experience some type of anxiety.

Anxiety in general can be evaluated in terms of social relations as well as individual causes classified as trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (Eysenck, 1992). It is also common for the individual to avoid speaking with such anxieties, which is essentially the fear of being judged by others (Schlenker & Leary, 1982, s. 642; Strohner, 2006, s. 76). In parallel to this, it not only prevents the emergence of an individual's true ability, but also makes it difficult to measure. Considering Spitzer's (2002) definition above, in addition to individual and social reasons, the situation becomes more complicated when the anxiety of speaking in an unusual foreign language is added to this anxiety, and it becomes even more difficult to measure.

Foreign language speaking anxiety has been the subject of different studies such as psychology and sociology (Leary, 2001). Such studies, which generally focus on communication difficulties due to the concern of leaving a negative impression on the other party, focused on some suggestions to overcome these difficulties. We can list the following suggestions:

1. A more realistic evaluation of performances as a whole, instead of immediately judging all kinds of mistakes, will reduce anxiety (Foss & Reitzel, 1988).
2. Improving pronunciation in foreign language learning will reduce anxiety (Nerlicki, 2011).
3. Without examining the difficulties experienced by a small number of students in learning and speaking a foreign language in a group, not overlooking these difficulties only by stating the correct version based on the majority will reduce anxiety (Tutula, 2006).

In light of these studies, the primary aim of this study is to evaluate the anxiety of speaking German as a foreign language in terms of the grammar of the students who are actively studying in the German Language and Literature program. The impact of students' grammar, which is one of the most anxiety inducing factors in speaking German, was included in this context, and the impact of students' grammar on their speaking skills was revealed. Inevitably, an assessment of one's competence can yield partially relative results. This is because factors such as motivation in communicating, one's own foreign language knowledge, interest, and readiness may vary depending on the situation (Foss & Reitzel, 1988, s. 442). In order to prevent this, the data will be discussed in two stages. The data will be solidified through the means of an interview, which was created in light of the quantitative data obtained in the first stage of the research. Thus, it will be possible to show how knowledge of the German language among students studying in the Department of German Language and Literature affects their speaking anxiety. In order to better interpret the results, it would be appropriate to start with introducing the scale that was applied.

Methodology

A mixed-method design was used in this study, in which the effects of the grammar knowledge of students studying at the Department of German Language and Literature on German speaking anxiety and students' views on speaking German were examined. The mixed method research design is a method in which quantitative and qualitative research methods are employed together (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, s. 297). In the quantitative research method, the findings are expressed with numbers and related graphics (Hussy, Schreier & Echterhoff, 2013, s. 52). The aim here is to measure the general validity of the previously established hypothesis. Quantitative methods do not allow a subjective orientation due to the evaluation of result-oriented numerical data. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, use data that needs to be interpreted, such as verbal expressions or visuals (Hussy et al., 2013, s. 190). Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative methods are mainly used to explore new research areas and derive hypotheses and theories from the data obtained (Peters & Dörfler, 2014, s. 39). In the first stage, quantitative data were collected and analyzed with the German Speaking Anxiety Scale. In line with the quantitative data obtained, oral interviews were conducted with the students to gather qualitative data.

While quantitative research provides measurable and generalizable information, qualitative research, on the other hand, serves to investigate social interaction and also requires a non-standardized interpretive method and reflective participation by the observer (Knappertsbusch, Langfeldt & Kelle, 2021, s. 261). For this reason, the mixed-method research design was adopted in this study in order to consolidate the findings of the research, explain the findings better, and compensate for the limitations of both research methods with the strengths of the other. In this research, it was necessary to start with the quantitative research method in order not to overlook the issue at hand and to consider the high degree of accuracy. In this context, primarily quantitative data were collected in the research, and the collected data were used to determine the participants for qualitative research and to establish the data analysis method. In this respect, the research has the characteristics of an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this reason, this order was followed in the course of the study as well.

Table 1. *Research Questions and Data Collection Tools*

	Research Questions	Data Collection Tools
RQ1	Relationship of German Speaking Anxiety of Participants with Independent Variables	German Speaking Anxiety Scale
RQ2	Grammar Mistakes Made by Participants While Speaking German	Practice- Oral Interview
RQ3	Participants' Views on Speaking German	Interview form

Quantitative Research

The hypothesis of the quantitative research can also be expressed that students' speaking anxiety will be high in departments where the medium of instruction is German, not their mother tongue. Depending on this general hypothesis, other hypotheses are as follows:

- The participants' fear about speaking German lessens as they get older.
- As the individuals' grade level rises, their concern about speaking German reduces.
- The participants' German-speaking anxiety decreases as the length of stay in a country where the official language is German increases.
- The fear of speaking German reduces as the use of German in and out of the classroom becomes more common.
- As the participants' extracurricular listening, watching, and reading activities increase, their German-speaking anxiety decreases.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, 142 students actively studying in departments providing German as a foreign language in Turkey participated in the research. Dörnyei (2007) states that at least 100 participants are sufficient for factor analysis. In this case, the sample size in the research was found to be suitable for the research.

The German Speaking Anxiety Scale, developed by Şahin Toptaş and Koçak (2021), was used to measure the participants' German-speaking anxiety in the quantitative stage of the study. The personal information form was used to collect demographic data as well as to reveal their frequency of using German and the items with which they struggled. Quantitative data for the research were collected through Google Forms on a voluntary basis. The data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0 and Mplus 7.0 package programs.

In order to facilitate the evaluation of the resulting figures it is essential to elaborate on the scale. First of all, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the construct validity of the scale, that is, the accuracy of the factor structure, prior to evaluating the quantitative findings of the study. In order to evaluate the confirmatory factor analysis results in the study, Chi-Square/Degree of Freedom (χ^2/df),

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were used as model fit indices, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) values were examined.

Next, an Independent Sample T-Test and a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine the German-speaking anxiety of the participants according to various variables.

Overall accuracy scores

Table 2. *Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of the German Speaking Anxiety Scale*

X ²	df	/df	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
588,8	296	1,98	,00	,083	,047	,90	,90

Note: x²=Chi Square, df=Degree of Freedom, p=p value, RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index.

The x²/df value of the model fit indices for good fit should be <2-5; CFI and TLI values ³ 0.90; the SRMR value ≤ 0.08 and the RMSEA value ≤ 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Lance, Butts & Michels, 2006; Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008). In line with this, when the model fit indices were examined, it was found that the values obtained were at an acceptable level.

Figure 1. *Path Diagram of the German Speaking Anxiety Scale*

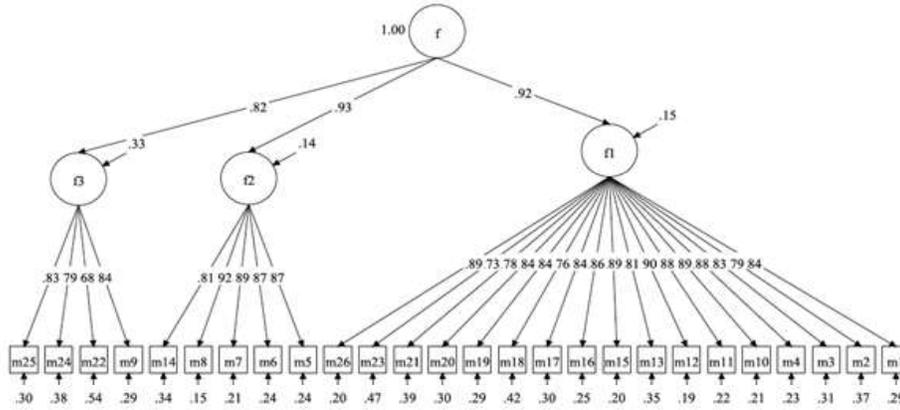
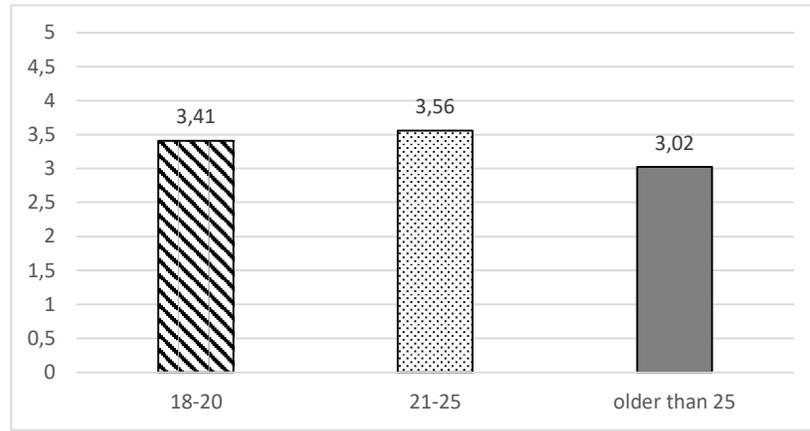


Figure 1 shows the factor distributions, item loads, and error variances obtained from confirmatory factor analysis. When the distribution of the items to the factors and the relations between the factors were examined, it was confirmed that the scale had a 3-factor structure and a second-level general factor structure. When the loadings of the factors at the first level to the general factor at the second level were examined, it was found that 0.92 was obtained for the first factor, 0.93 for the second factor, and 0.82 for the third factor. Accordingly, it can be stated that the relations between the factors at the first level

and the general factor at the second level are strong and that these factors are good representatives of the general factor.

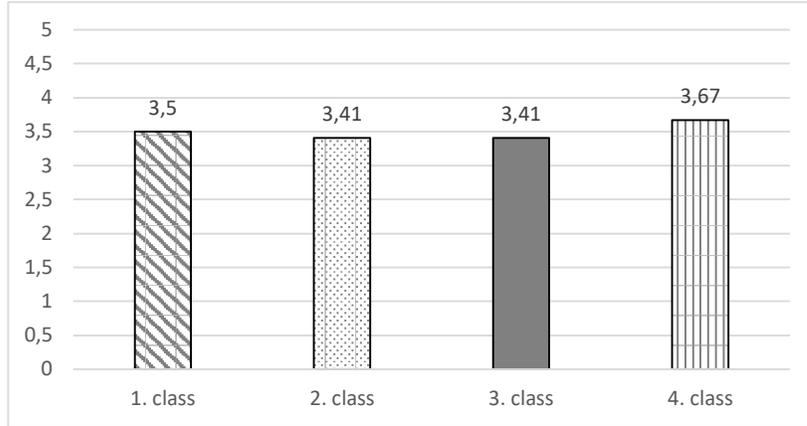
An Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine the participants' German-speaking anxiety according to various variables. Before ANOVA and T-Test were performed, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance of the sample group were examined, and it was observed that some data did not have a normal distribution and that homogeneity of variance was not achieved in some variables. When the ANOVA sample size is more than 12, the normality assumptions are likely to be violated, and when it is greater than five, the homogeneity assumptions are likely to be violated (Clinch & Keselman, 1982; Tan, 1982; Tomarken & Serlin, 1986). In this study, Independent Sample T-Test and ANOVA were run because the sample was larger than 12 and the assumptions were largely met.

Figure 2. *German Speaking Anxiety Scores According to Age Variable*



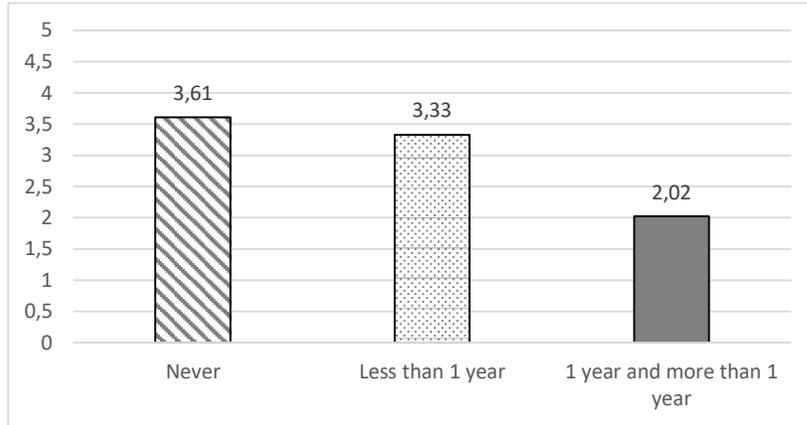
If p value equals 0.05 ($p = \text{eigenvalue}$), the difference between groups is significant; otherwise, it is insignificant. While there is no significant difference between the 18–20 age group and the 21–25 age group, there is a significant difference between these two groups and the over 25 age group. This implies that the group over the age of 25 has less German-speaking anxiety than other groups. This finding confirmed the following hypothesis: "As the participants' age increases, their worry about speaking German reduces." It was considered that as students' ages increase, so does their language learning duration and experience, and so their foreign language speaking anxiety reduces with age.

Figure 3. German Speaking Anxiety Scores by Grade Level



According to the findings, there was no significant relationship between the participants' class levels and their German-speaking anxiety. As a result, we may conclude that grade level has no bearing on anxiety in German speakers ($p > 0.05$). In this context, it was expected that as the participants' grade level rises, their time spent studying a foreign language increase, as does their level of speaking anxiety. In this case, however, it appears that this idea cannot be confirmed. This finding is consistent with Boldan's (2019) findings, which found that participants' German-speaking anxiety did not differ significantly according to their grade levels. This finding suggests that the situation is fundamentally problematic and needs further investigation.

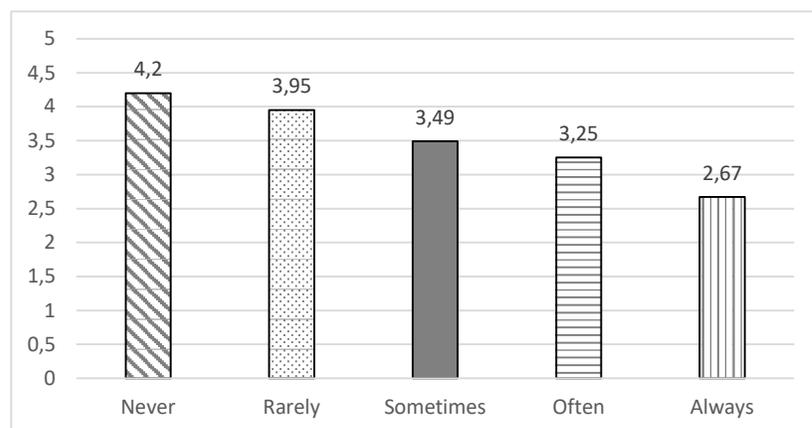
Figure 4. German Speaking Anxiety Score Averages According to the Duration of Presence in Countries where the Official Language is German



According to the findings, there is a significant relationship between the participants' German-speaking anxiety levels and the length of time they spent in countries where German is the official language ($p < 0.05$). This means that the participants' concern about speaking German changes depending on how long they have lived in countries where German is the official language. As the duration of the participants' stay in countries where the official language is German increases, the participants' anxiety about speaking German decreases. The German-speaking anxiety of participants who have never visited these countries and have only been there for less than a year is much higher than the German-speaking anxiety of participants who have visited these locations for more than a year. The German-speaking

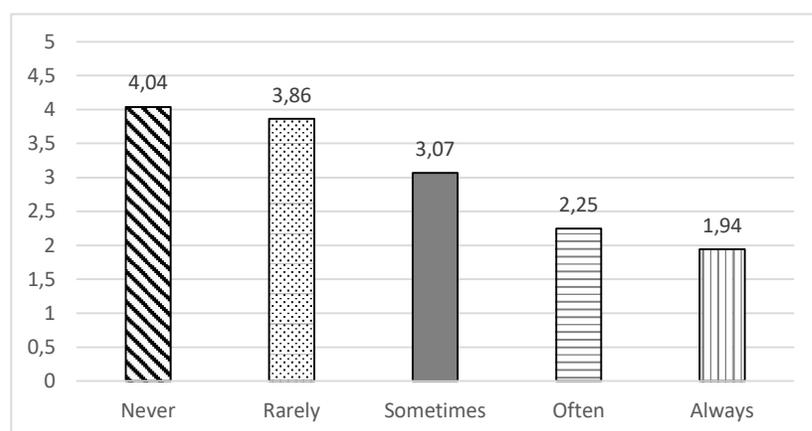
anxiety of participants who have never visited these countries is higher than that of those who have visited these countries for less than a year. If learners spend time in a country where the language is spoken, speaking anxiety appears to be minimized. In the study conducted by Yılmaz and Sakarya Maden (2016), it was determined that the participants who have been in Germany for a long time have less anxiety in the process of learning German, which supports the research hypothesis and finding.

Figure 5. *The Relationship Between Participants' Frequency of Using German in Class (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and German Speaking Anxiety*



The anxiety of students decreases when the medium of instruction in class is mostly German. The impact of the skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading on speaking anxiety are highlighted. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four main interactive skills in language development (Bozorgian, 2012). These skills should not be taught separately in language education; rather, they should be taught in an integrated way, and teachers should consider the four skills as a part of both written and spoken language (Babae & Yahya, 2014).

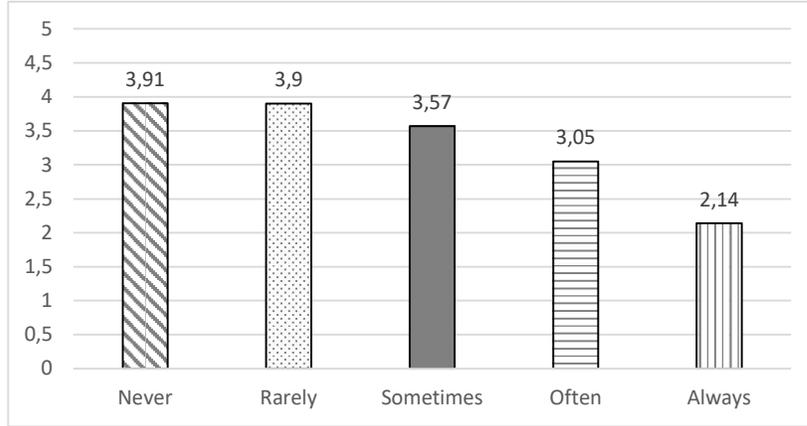
Figure 6. *The Relationship Between the Frequency of Using German Outside of Class (speaking, writing) and German Speaking Anxiety*



The participants' German-speaking anxiety varies significantly depending on how often they use German outside of class ($p > 0.05$). The participants' German-speaking anxiety lessens as the frequency

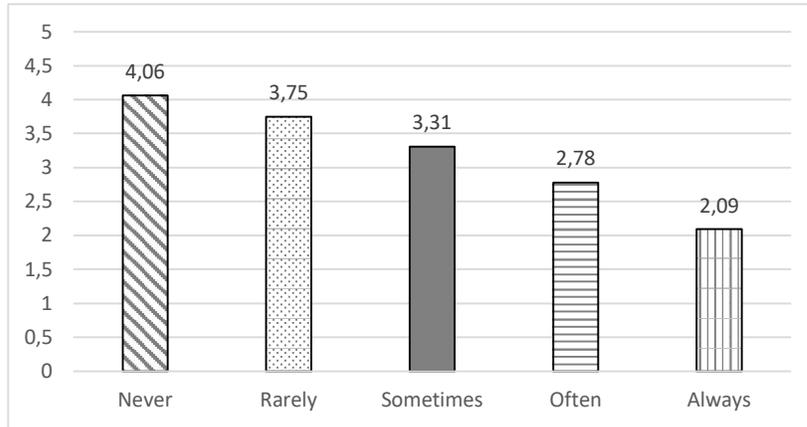
of using German outside of the classroom increases. The findings demonstrate the impact of active German language use outside of the classroom on foreign language speaking skills.

Figure 7. *The Relationship Between the Frequency of Listening and Watching in German Outside of Class (TV, TV series, music, etc.) and German Speaking Anxiety*



The frequency of listening to and watching in German outside of class (TV, TV series, music, etc.) has a significant impact on the participants' German-speaking anxiety ($p > 0.05$). The participants' German-speaking anxiety lessens as the frequency of listening to and watching in German outside of the classroom increases. According to Bozorgian (2012), listening abilities have a favorable effect on other talents. Rost (1994) indicated that listening is a very effective technique for increasing speaking abilities because listening is an interactive tool for the learner and it plays a significant part in enhancing speaking skills. As listening and speaking skills are intertwined, these two skills should be acquired interactively.

Figure 8. *The Relationship Between the Frequency of Reading in German Outside of Class and German Speaking Anxiety of the Participants*



The frequency of reading in German outside of class has a significant impact on the participants' German-speaking anxiety ($p > 0.05$). The participants' German-speaking anxiety lessens as the frequency of reading in German outside of the classroom increases. According to Demir's (2017)

research, time spent on reading has a positive effect on speaking skills. There is a linear relationship between reading and speaking anxiety, as confirmed by the findings.

Findings I

When we look at the quantitative part of the study, we can see that the participants' German-speaking anxieties vary significantly depending on their age, length of time spent in a German-speaking country, frequency of using German in and out of the classroom, and, in this case, frequency of listening, watching, and reading in German outside the classroom. The fear of speaking German reduces as the participants' age, the length of their stay in countries where German is the official language, and the frequency with which they use German outside and inside the classroom increases. Furthermore, the anxiety about speaking German decreased as the frequency of listening, watching, and reading German outside of the classroom rose. The hypotheses were determined to include these results. The participants' German-speaking anxiety does not differ significantly according to their class level, which is noteworthy.

The participants were asked open-ended and multiple-choice questions in the second stage of the quantitative research, such as when they had the most difficulty with grammar while speaking German and the impact of grammar on speaking anxiety, which is the study's main problem. The majority (71.1%) stated speaking was the most challenging of the four basic skills, followed by 14.1 percent for listening, 12.7 percent for writing, and 2.1 percent for reading. The participants provided similar responses for the points where they had the most difficulties while speaking German, such as grammar, sentence formation, vocabulary, subject matter, and pronunciation. These challenging points in grammar consisted of the following language structures: Subjunctive, Relative Clauses, Subordinate Clauses, Passive, Tenses, and Participle II (Konjunktiv, Relativsätze, Nebensätze, Passiv, Zeitformen, and Partizip II). While speaking German, 43% of the participants stated that they had difficulties in Past perfect tense (Plusquamperfekt), 23.9% in Past tense (Präteritum), 21.1% in future II tense, and 8.5% in Perfect, and others in present tense and future I. The most challenging parts of speaking German, according to 43.7 percent of participants, were using verbs, 24.6 percent using adjuvants, and 16.2 percent using adverbs. In terms of sentence structures, 96.5 percent of participants said they struggled with long sentences, while 85.2 percent struggled with inverted sentences. The qualitative stage of the study was designed in accordance with the quantitative study findings.

Qualitative Research

The phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods, was adopted. Phenomenology design is a qualitative research method in which individuals convey their experiences of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Giorgi, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research data are collected using a semi-structured interview. In semi-structured interviews, the questions are prepared in advance, but during the interview, the questions can be expressed flexibly, the order of the questions may alter, and the answers may vary according to the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, s. 110).

In this part of the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

- What are the participants' views on speaking German?
- How do the participants feel when speaking German?
- Which language structures do the participants have the most difficulty with?

The sample size of qualitative research varies according to the design used. The phenomenology design requires three to ten people (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this direction, within the framework of the data obtained from the quantitative part of the research, five participants were randomly selected from the cohort with high German-speaking anxiety and included in the qualitative data collection stage.

The participants' perspectives regarding speaking German in the oral interview were obtained in the first stage of the qualitative research. Five open-ended questions were posed to the participants in this phase, allowing them to express themselves freely. Based on the responses they gave in the questionnaire, the participants were asked to compose sentences in the grammatical structures, Subjunctive, past perfect and future II (Konjunktiv, Plusquamperfekt, Futur II), that they had the greatest difficulty with in speaking German. The answers given by the participants in the tests were recorded with the consent of the participants, and the analysis was conducted by the researchers by transcribing these recordings. At the end of the oral interview, six open-ended questions were asked with a semi-structured interview form in order to gather qualitative data and to determine the participants' feelings about speaking German and their views on the factors they had the most difficulty with. The questions in the interview form were created based on the general experience of the participants' views on speaking German and by scanning the relevant literature. The responses provided by the participants in the tests were recorded with their permission, and the researchers conducted the analysis after transcribing the recordings. Six open-ended questions were asked at the end of the oral interview with a semi-structured interview form in order to collect qualitative data and determine the participants' opinions about speaking German and their perspectives on the elements they found most difficult. The interview questions were developed based on the participants' overall experience with speaking German and a review of the relevant literature. The researcher ensured that the questions were neither leading or complex, and that the participants could clearly express themselves. A draft form of questions was produced and analyzed by two experts in the field to examine the clarity of the questions and their suitability for the goal. After making the necessary changes, the final version of the questions was prepared. On the basis of the concept of confidentiality, participants were informed that their data would only be used for scientific purposes. Interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis.

The responses gathered from the participants were analyzed through content analysis in the study that examined their perspectives on speaking German. The researchers read and coded the responses given by the participants in the oral interview and semi-structured interview. Codes with similar features were categorized together. The researchers re-evaluated the categories they had generated, and themes were formed based on the links among the categories. As a result, the research offered a rich description.

Findings II

This section of the study focuses on obtaining a better understanding of the student's state of mind while learning a foreign language, rather than obtaining some conclusive evidence for their ability to speak German. As a result, it is important to emphasize that the research findings are limited to the students that took part in the study. The opinions of the students who took part in the study were divided into three. When the responses of the participants were scrutinized concerning their feelings when speaking German, it was discovered that the majority of them expressed their sentiments using a lot of anxiety-related expressions, including tension, dread, excitement, and shame.

During the research direct quotations from students were used in order to present the results under the mentioned three headings. The responses of the students who answered in a consistent and similar

manner were (grouped) categorized under one of these same headings. Therefore, this study did not incorporate all of the participants' responses but only the relevant statements of the participants.

P1. I felt nervousness, fear of doing something wrong, and shame. I feel nervous about my lack of knowledge of German.

P2. I was a little excited and a little nervous because I did not know the topics of the questions.

P3. Normally I'm a relaxed person, but when I was recording, I got excited. The last part was difficult because I was excited. I can't think of anything on the subject.

Different replies emerged when the factors that the participants had difficulties speaking German were explored. These answers were gathered under 3 sub-themes: individual factors; external factors and grammar, which confirmed the quantitative research findings.

Individual Factors

The majority of the participants described their difficulties speaking German as needing to respond quickly and improvise. Furthermore, one participant remarked that it was difficult not to receive feedback from the other person regarding their proper or incorrect use of language.

P1. Understanding the questions and feeling as if I have to answer them in a short time and giving an impromptu answer immediately.

P4. Since I was not informed about the subject of the questions to be moderated, I could not provide good enough answers at some points.

P3. I had to think fast, and I was really excited because of the recording.

P2. It was a little challenging not to get any feedback from the other party that we answered correctly or incorrectly.

The participants claimed that their inability to think in German was the cause of their difficulties in certain issues while speaking German, and that they formulated the expression in Turkish in their mind before speaking.

P1. In questions 4 and 5, I had difficulty in the part about climate because I couldn't make up my mind in Turkish without being prepared, and I was expected to answer in a language that I don't know exactly as I feel nervous about my lack of knowledge of German.

P2. I had a harder time commenting on climate change than others because even speaking in Turkish on this subject is more complicated than other questions.

P3. I am a fast-speaking person. But I can't think in German at the same time. So when I talk about a general topic, I have to think.

Individual factors in the areas where participants have trouble speaking German are grouped into two sub-categories, according to their comments being unprepared and needing to think rapidly, and not being able to think in German.

External Factors

The findings revealed that some individuals believe they must be flawless when speaking German and are concerned about how they are perceived by others. They said they were worried about what people would think of them if they spoke German and that they felt under pressure.

P1. It's like I had to be perfect because it's a language that's out of my comfort zone, which I didn't fully master. The fear of what people will think when it's the other way around makes people forget what they already know. Social pressure is the most challenging factor.

P2. The possibility that if I answer wrong, others will think that I am not a good and successful student.

Grammar

The past tense and Subjunctive were mentioned as linguistic constructs that the participants struggled with. The reason for this is that they did not discuss these concerns or utilize these grammar rules very frequently. One participant mentioned that they worked primarily through writing and did not communicate much in German.

P1. It's the past tense because the verbs that need to be known grammatically, remembering that they are regular or irregular, making sentences with conjunctions, it was hard to imagine what the sentence order would be like at that time, I guess I had a hard time since I work by writing and never speak.

P2. topic, I had difficulty exemplifying Subjunctive 1 and 2 since my grammar studies are more about future, past, and present tense.

Furthermore, the ability to convey oneself to others when speaking is emphasized as being more important than grammar rules.

P4. I didn't feel like I had a problem with grammar because I don't see grammar as a problem. Since I think that languages are a means of communication, the important thing for me is not which verb I use and how I conjugate that verb, but whether the other person can understand me or not.

Factors That Facilitate Speaking German

When the participants' strategies for speaking German are investigated, it is clear that they each benefit from different methods. The participants indicated that they exclusively spoke using words and giving examples, and that they completed sentences by thinking word-for-word.

S2. To speak on a word-by-word basis without considering grammatical issues too much.

S3. I will give an example of the subject. So I feel calmer.

S1. I tried to think of it word for word and create sentences based on it, and paused to gain time.

S4. Since I think that languages are a means of communication, the important thing for me is not which verb I use and how I conjugate that verb, but whether the other person can understand me or not.

Results and Conclusion

The impact of grammar on speaking anxiety was highlighted in this study in the department that provides education and training in German as a foreign language. Some of the studies that have been published so far on speaking anxiety in a foreign language are Shabani (2012), Al-Khasawneh (2016), Gopang, Bughio and Pathan (2015) and Naudhani, Wu and Naudhani (2018). The common thread running through these studies is that they all emphasize the rise in learners' speaking anxiety when it comes to foreign languages. They emphasize that individual and social factors may contribute to these concerns. Rahmat (2019) went a step further and attempted to clarify the issue using the concept of fear rather than anxiety, implying that if fear is not overcome, people will become trapped in a vicious cycle and even fear the lesson. In light of these studies, the effects of various variables were considered in the first part of the study, and German speaking concerns were raised in general. The effect of grammar on the participants' speaking anxiety was investigated. A questionnaire was used to collect data on variables such as age, class level, length of stay in a country where German is the official language, listening to German in and out of the classroom, and watching and reading in German. According to their responses, subjunctive mood, relative clauses, subordinate clauses, passive, past perfect tense (Plusquamperfekt), and future II tense were the grammatical subjects they were most concerned about when speaking German as a foreign language. In terms of sentence structures, 96.5% of participants reported difficulty with long sentences and 85.2% with inverted sentences. It aimed to discover the relationship between various variables and grammar by taking into account various variables. At this point, we can say that various variables have a direct impact on grammar.

When the responses were examined, it was discovered that there were differences in grammar form and content, particularly in their mother tongue, among the grammar topics that cause anxiety. In addition, they feel safe in straight and short sentences, which corresponds to the A2 Level, according to the Common European Framework. From this perspective, the participants are attempting to learn and use their mother tongue by associating it with grammar topics. In the qualitative research stage, five questions were asked of the participants in the form of oral interviews, in accordance with the findings of the quantitative research. To prevent the answers from being memorized, the participants were only given the number of questions and grammar topics ahead of time, but not the content of these five questions.

The results of the oral interview generally match those of the quantitative research. An in-depth analysis of the participants' German speaking anxiety was conducted in this section of the study. As a result, there were a limited number of participants. The participants in the oral interview attempted to form short sentences. It was discovered that the longer the sentence, the higher the anxiety level of the participants and the higher the error rate. They confused the vocabulary and grammar subjects more as well. Similarly, they avoided subjunctive mood sentences, relative clauses, subordinate clauses, passive, past perfect, and futur II titles, or they wanted to change the subject immediately after their sentence. A participant who has no experience abroad tends to make sentences with the past at the point of past perfect (Plusquamperfekt), which is a grammar subject that is not in their mother tongue. It was discovered that the impact of grammar on speaking anxiety in German as a foreign language has increased significantly, particularly in grammar issues that are not in their mother tongue.

The findings from the qualitative data of the research grouped the participants' opinions on speaking German into three themes: the students' feelings while speaking German, the points they have difficulty speaking German, and the factors that facilitate speaking German. The reasons for the participants' difficulty speaking German are divided into three sub-themes: individual factors, grammar, and external factors. Looking at the first theme, it is clear that the participants express their anxiety about speaking German through expressions of tension, fear, excitement, and shame. This backs up the findings from the first part of the study about the participants' German-speaking anxiety. Individual factors related to the second theme included being unprepared; responding quickly; not receiving feedback from the other person; not being able to think in German; and a desire to translate from Turkish. The external factors were perfection, what people thought of them, and how they felt pressured, whereas the grammatical factors included the fact that they did not use certain grammar rules excessively, that they always studied by writing, and that they did not use much grammar while speaking. This data emphasizes the significance of grammar and speaking skills, which is the study's goal. Finally, the participants stated that they do not consider grammar rules to be helpful when speaking German. Based on these data, it was discovered how effective grammar knowledge is in speaking skills and how a lack of grammar creates a deficiency in speaking skills. Grammar education should be prioritized and a solid grammar foundation should be established in order to fully utilize basic skills in foreign language education, particularly speaking skills. Furthermore, in order to develop speaking skills, four major language skills should be acquired as a whole, because speaking skills are not fully realized or the language anxiety level increases when the other skills are not used sufficiently in foreign language education.

References

- Al-Khasawneh, F. M. (2016). Investigating foreign language learning anxiety: A case of Saudi undergraduate EFL learners. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 12(1), 137-148.
- Andrade M & Williams, K. (2009) Foreign language anxiety in Japanese EFL university classes: physical, emotional, expressive and verbal reactions. *Sophia Junior College Faculty Journal* 29, 1-24.
- Babae, R. & Yahya, W. R. B. W. (2014). Significance of literature in foreign language teaching. *International Education Studies*, 7(4), 80-85.
- Boldan, M. N. (2019). *A study on foreign language speaking anxiety of pre-service ELT teachers*. Master Thesis, Balıkesir University, Social Sciences Institute, Balıkesir.
- Bozorgian, H. (2012). The relationship between listening and other language skills in international English language testing system. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(4), 657-663.
- Browne, M.W. & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In Bollen, K.A. & Long, J.S. (Ed.) *Testing structural equation models* (s. 136-162). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Clinch, J.J. & Keselman, H.J. (1982). Parametric alternatives to the analysis of variance. *Journal of Educational Statistics*, 7(3), 207-214.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell J. D. (2018). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Demir, S. (2017). An evaluation of oral language: The relationship between listening, speaking and self-efficacy. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(9), 1457-1467
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Eysenck, M. W. (1992). *Anxiety: The cognitive perspective*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Foss, K. A. & Reitzel, A. C. (1988). A relational model for managing second language anxiety. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22(3), 437-454.

- Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Gölpınar, Ş., Hamzadayı, E. & Bayat, N. (2018). Konuşma kaygı düzeyi ile konuşma başarımı arasındaki ilişki. *Dil Eğitimi ve Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 4(2), 75-85.
- Gopang, I. B., Bughio, F. A. & Pathan, H. (2015). Investigating foreign language learning anxiety among students learning English in a public sector university, Pakistan. *The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science*, Vol 3(4), pp 27-387.
- Hooper, D., Coughlan, J. & Mullen, M. R. (2008). Equation modelling: Guidelines for determining model fit. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 6(1), 53-60.
- Hu, L. T. & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55.
- Hussy, W., Schreier, M. & Echterhoff, G. (2013). *Forschungsmethoden in Psychologie und sozialwissenschaften-für Bachelor*. Springer-Verlag.
- Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W. & Stick, S. L. (2006). Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field methods*, 18(1), 3-20.
- Knappertsbusch, F., Langfeldt, B. & Kelle, U. (2021). Mixed-Methods and Multimethod Research. In *Soziologie-Sociology in the German-Speaking World* (pp. 261-272). De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- Lance, C. E., Butts, M. M. & Michels, L. C. (2006). The sources of four commonly reported cutoff criteria: What did they really say?. *Organizational research methods*, 9(2), 202-220.
- Leary, M. R. (2001). Social anxiety as an early warning system: A refinement and extension of the self-presentation theory of social anxiety. In S. G. Hofmann & P. M. DiBartolo (Eds.), *From social anxiety to social phobia: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 321-334). Allyn & Bacon.
- Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Naudhani, M, Wu, Z. & Naudhani, S. (2018). Exploring the factors of foreign language anxiety among Chinese undergraduate English majors and non-English major. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(5), 142-150.
- Nerlicki, K. (2011). *Lernerreflexionen im Blickpunkt. Polnische Germanistikstudentenüber ihre fremdsprachlichen Lern- und Kommunikationserfahrungen*. Hamburg: Dr. Kovac Verlag.
- Peters, J. H. & Dörfler, T. (2014). *Abschlussarbeiten in der Psychologie und den Sozialwissenschaften: Planen, Durchführen und Auswerten*. Pearson.
- Rahmat, N. H. (2019). Cycle of fear in learning: The case for three language skills. *American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(1), 151-162.
- Rost, M. (1994). *Introducing listening*. London: Penguin Group.
- Şahin Toptaş, A. & Koçak, M. (2021). Almanca konuşma kaygısı ölçeği: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik analizi. *Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi*, 8(2), 711-724.
- Schlenker, B. R. & Leary, M. R. (1982). Social anxiety and self-presentation: A conceptualization model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 92(3), 641-669. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.92.3.641>
- Shabani, M. B. (2012). Levels and sources of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among Iranian efl learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(1), 2378-2838.
- Spitzer, M. (2002). *Lernen: Gehirnforschung und die Schule des Lebens, Korrigierter Nachdruck 2003*. Heidelberg, Berlin: Akad. Verlag.
- Strohner, H. (2006). *Kommunikation: kognitive Grundlagen und praktische Anwendungen*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht Verlag.

- Tan, W. Y. (1982). Sampling distributions and robustness of t, F and variance ratio in two samples and ANOVA models with respect to departure from normality. *Communications in Statistics: Theory and Methods*, 11(7), 731-750.
- Tomarken, A. J. & Serlin, R. C. (1986). Comparison of ANOVA alternatives under variance heterogeneity and specific noncentrality structures. *Psychological Bulletin*, 99(1), 90-99.
- Tutula, A. (2006). *Language Anxiety and classroom dynamics: A study of the adult beginner*. Bielsko-Biala, Poland: Wydawnictwo ATH.
- Yılmaz, D. & Sakarya Maden, S. (2016). Dil öğrenim sürecinde Almanca öğretmen adaylarının kaygı tutumlarına ilişkin bir araştırma. *Trakya Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(2), 201-211.