



An Investigation on English Speaking Anxiety among EFL Vocational and Technical High School Students ¹

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Abstract

The current study was carried out to determine which factors affect EFL vocational and technical high school students' English-speaking anxiety and to make them self-evaluate their foreign language speaking anxiety, which affects their foreign language learning. For this purpose, vocational and technical high school students' English-speaking anxiety and its relationship with the variables of gender, grade level, education level of parents and family income were investigated. To this end, the current study was designed in line with the general survey model. The population of the research consists of 387 students, who are in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade levels at three vocational and technical Anatolian high schools in a city in the Marmara Region in the 2019- 2020 academic year. A "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researchers and the "EFL Speaking Anxiety Scale" prepared by Hortwitz, Hortwitz & Cope (1986) and adapted to Turkish by Öztürk (2012) were used as the data collection tools in the current study. The results of the study revealed that while vocational and technical high school students' English-speaking anxiety did not vary significantly depending on their grade level, parents' education level, family income, but varied significantly by gender. Accordingly, it was concluded that the female students studying at vocational and technical high schools have more English-speaking anxiety than the male students. Implications arising from these findings were also explained.64770

Keywords

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Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğrenen Mesleki ve Teknik Lise Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Konuşma Kaygıları Üzerine Bir İnceleme ⁴

Özet

Araştırma yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen Mesleki ve Teknik Lise öğrencilerinin yabancı dil öğrenmelerini etkileyen yabancı dil konuşma kaygılarına yönelik bir öz değerlendirme yapmalarını ve İngilizce konuşma kaygılarını hangi faktörlerin etkilediğini belirleme amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Meslek lisesi öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşma kaygıları ile cinsiyetleri, sınıf düzeyleri, anne ve baba eğitim düzeyleri, aile gelir durumları değişkenleri arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Bu amaçla araştırma genel tarama modeli bir araştırmadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini 2019-2020 eğitim öğretim yılında Marmara Bölgesindeki bir şehirde bulunan üç meslek lisesinde 9., 10.,11. ve 12. sınıfta öğrenim gören 387 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada kullanılan veri toplama araçları olarak araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan 'Kişisel Bilgi Formu' ve Hortwitz, Hortwitz ve Cope (1986) tarafından geliştirilen ve Öztürk (2012) tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlaması yapılan EFL Speaking Anxiety - İngilizce Konuşma Kaygısı Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçları, Meslek Lisesi öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşma kaygıları sınıf düzeylerine, anne ve baba eğitim düzeylerine, aile gelir durumlarına göre anlamlı bir farklılık göstermezken cinsiyetlerine göre anlamlı farklılık göstermekte olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu bulgulardan kaynaklanan çıkarımlar da açıklanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

İngilizce konuşma kaygısı
Mesleki ve teknik lise
Yabancı dil konuşma kaygısı
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Introduction

Communication is the most important goal in learning a foreign language, and being able to speak a foreign language correctly, comprehensibly and effectively in this process is a very important target. Since English is Lingua Franca (common language), every individual needs English in order to communicate well at the international level. As stated in the 2018 English Curriculum, the economic, political and social development of today's Turkish society is highly dependent on Turkish citizens' ability to communicate effectively at the international level and their English proficiency (MEB, 2018). English has become a need for cultural exchange or information exchange to start and continue between different cultures. In this context, having the ability to speak effectively has become the most important element of learning English as a foreign language. Since learning to speak a second language or a foreign language can initiate a period of change and innovation in any individual's life, those who learn English as a target language tend to view their speaking skill as an important criterion for success (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012).

Bygate (1987, p.67) states that language learners should improve their skills of conversation and mutual understanding. Being successful in conversation involves understanding when and how it is your or other person's turn to speak, when to explain and change a topic, invite someone to speak, and knowing how to keep the conversation going and how to close it. One of the most important goal of foreign language teaching is to enable students to speak the language they are learning effectively, fluently and clearly.

Speaking, one of the four basic language skills in English teaching, is a productive language skill that focuses on how students establish and use communication in English (Richard, 2008). As a thinking and communication tool that allows communication between people and is an integral part of the human self, language has four basic skills called listening, speaking, reading and writing and the one which is most frequently used is the speaking skill (Kozikoğlu & Kanat, 2018). Students use a variety of methods in the classroom environment to improve their English speaking skill; they describe vocabulary cards, participate in drama and group activities and discussions and make presentations.

Unlike the receptive skills like reading and listening, speaking requires writing and speaking as productive skills. Since developing speaking skill is a challenging task, it can sometimes affect the student negatively and create a high level of anxiety in the student. We can better illustrate this with some sample student statements;

"I always feel tense when I speak English."

"I feel bad, wondering why I can't speak English very well."

"My English is not good enough; I cannot express myself very well."

"Sometimes, I feel like stupid, some people look at me like looking at a strange person because that strange person can't speak English well." (Tanveer, 2007, p.1).

There are factors that negatively affect English speaking skill, and various studies have been conducted on these factors up to now. Long & Porter (1985, p.208) stated that the biggest problem faced by students who learn languages is that they cannot use the target language practically. Juhana (2012) studied the factors that prevent the development of students' speaking skills in a foreign language. According to the result of the study, it was found that these factors are psychological factors such as

shyness, fear of making mistake, anxiety, lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation. Among these, anxiety has a significant effect on speaking ability.

In the Turkish Language Association (TDK), anxiety is defined as sadness and thoughts to be worried. In addition, anxiety is a state of arousal that accompanies physiological, emotional and mental changes that individuals experience in response to a stimulus (Taş, 2006). Anxiety, with its structure intertwined with self-esteem, shyness, and risk-taking, plays an important affective role in second language acquisition (Brown, 2000). According to Scovel (1978), anxiety is associated with feelings of restlessness, disappointment, self-doubt, fear or concern (as cited in Brown, 2000). Recent studies in the literature on foreign language speaking anxiety identify anxiety with foreign language learning and also define language learning anxiety as feelings of tension and worry arising from speaking, listening and learning a foreign language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p.284).

Language learning is a complex process that includes the basic steps of the affective domain, which are as important as the basic steps of the cognitive domain. Affective variables related to human emotions and feelings include certain personal characteristics such as self-confidence, introversion, and empathy (Brown, 2000). Studies on the relationship between foreign language learning and affective factors generally focus on many personal factors such as self-confidence, risk-taking, extraversion, motivation and anxiety (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013). These factors can have positive or negative effects on the foreign language learning process. One of the factors that have a negative impact is anxiety (Balemir, 2009). Anxiety prevents some people from succeeding in science and math. In addition, some people find it stressful to learn a foreign language in the classroom environment due to anxiety (Hortwitz, Hortwitz & Cope, 1986, p.125). In addition, Williams and Andrade (2008) emphasized that anxiety is a kind of barrier that prevents students from being active and successful in the learning environment.

One of the clearest indicators of how competent a person is in any language is speaking, which is a natural means of communication. The development of speaking skills depends on the extent to which the learner can live that language. Learners who are introduced to the use of the target language in real life can be made more comfortable in communicating in this language (Koçer, 2019). In this context, it can be said that exposure to English outside the school is an important privilege. In this regard, if the student uses the foreign language in his/her daily life outside the school, English can become his/her first or second language. Hanbay (2013, p.9) stated that one of the problems faced today in foreign language teaching is the time constraint and that what is meant by the concept of time is the time of contact the child establishes with the foreign language he/she is learning. As in our country, where English is not the mother tongue, students who cannot use English outside of limited course hours see English as a foreign language, not a second language. Students who use English as a foreign language need to make much more effort to improve their speaking skills than students who use English as their first or second language. Therefore, students who use English as a foreign language have anxiety, lack of motivation, alienation, reluctance to participate, and prejudices against both themselves and their teaching environments. Since English, which is learned as a foreign language, is not integrated into daily life, students have always questioned why it should be learned and continue to question.

Today, students are faced with some basic problems related to English learning and use in schools or in their lives after school. They especially complain about not being able to speak. The quality of foreign language teaching, lack of motivation, low self-efficacy belief, shyness, fear of mistakes are factors that affect foreign language learning and use. Another factor is speaking anxiety (Öztürk, 2012).

Foreign language speaking anxiety has been researched by many linguists from past to present and continues to be investigated. In this context, there are many studies on the subject. Since the 1980s, foreign language anxiety has been discussed by many researchers such as Hortwitz et al., (1986), and these researchers concluded that anxiety is an important factor affecting students' speaking skills. In particular, anxious students learning a foreign language describe speaking in the target language as the most frightening language skill. They also state that they feel stressed when it is their turn to speak in the classroom (Wörde, 2003). Generally, English teachers are aware of the phenomenon called foreign language speaking anxiety. However, it is rather difficult to determine whether a student's reluctance to speak in the target language is due to a lack of motivation or an increased degree of anxiety (İnceçay & Yalçın, 2013). Hortwitz et al., (1986), emphasized the importance of student behaviours such as reluctance to speak and being silent until fluent speech in the target language at the increasing anxiety level of the student. The reason for this silence of the student may be due to the fear of making mistakes and, consequently, the teacher's correcting the mistakes of his/her classmates.

According to Öztürk (2012), there are many factors that cause speaking anxiety. From among these factors, speaking in the target language is the situation that causes the most speaking anxiety. According to students, speaking activities requiring them to speak in front of the whole class are among the factors that cause the most anxiety. Fear of making mistakes, peer influence, educational system, negative experiences, student's personality traits and affective factors are other factors that affect the student's speaking anxiety. Aydın (2001, p.42) stated that the fact that a foreign language teacher is seen as an expert by students also increases speaking anxiety in English classes. As a result, instead of improving their communication skills, students see speaking in front of the classroom as a threat and remain silent. People who have difficulty speaking in a group are likely to have more difficulty speaking foreign languages in foreign language classes or lessons where they have limited control over their speaking activities and their speech is constantly corrected (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Speaking anxiety is seen as the reason for students' poor performance, failure and lack of motivation in English lessons.

Another study (Hortwitz & Gregersen, 2002) investigating the role of anxiety in speaking skills in foreign languages has focused on the relationship between foreign language learning and perfectionism. This study focused on the reactions of anxious and non-anxious students to their speaking performances. At the end of the study, it was observed that anxious and non-anxious students differed in terms of personal performance, procrastination, fear of making mistakes and fear of being evaluated. Demir Gençer (2020) examined the effect of activities based on Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) on speech anxiety of foreign language learners. As a result of the study, it was observed that the participants had moderate speaking anxiety before the application, but after the implementation of the NLP-based activities to the participants and the participants were informed about these practices, it was observed that their speaking anxiety decreased. Another study (El Sharkawy, 2019) investigated the factors that cause speaking anxiety in students learning English in four sections (language proficiency perception, comparison and competition with others, exam anxiety, and anxiety of making mistakes in English classes). The study showed that students with low personal language proficiency perception feel insecure about speaking English. Thus, it was concluded that being confident and comfortable are important factors in speaking a foreign language. In addition, the study also showed that students started to think that it is natural to make mistakes in the process of learning a foreign language and to believe that they are better than others. Regarding foreign language exam anxiety, a small group of students stated that they had exam anxiety due to attention deficit.

Another researcher, Özkan (2019) aimed to investigate 1) whether there is a relationship between students' English achievement levels and foreign language anxiety levels 2) the main causes of English-speaking anxiety in classrooms 3) whether demographic variables affect students' anxiety levels 4) the basic causes of foreign language anxiety and foreign language speaking anxiety on the basis of the students' opinions. The results of this study showed that variables such as "gender" and "department" of the students had no positive or negative effect on their foreign language anxiety levels. On the other hand, a significant correlation was found between the students' language proficiency levels and foreign language anxiety levels. Finally, the main causes of foreign language speaking anxiety were determined as fear of making mistakes (especially pronunciation mistakes), lack of vocabulary and the teacher's attitudes. Yılmaz (2019) examined the causes of high school students' anxiety about speaking the foreign language in English lessons in relation to different variables. In the study, no significant difference was observed as a result of the implementation of the English-speaking anxiety scale. In addition, the students' views on their classes and English speaking anxiety were compared using the same scale. Thus, it was concluded that the 10th grade students have different views about English speaking anxiety than the 9th and 11th grade students.

Another study, (Tüm & Kunt, 2013) examined the language anxiety that pre-service teachers experienced when speaking English. The results of the study revealed that the pre-service English teachers who were approaching the end of their undergraduate education experienced a certain level of anxiety. In addition, the negative effects of foreign language anxiety experienced by the pre-service teachers were found to be more explicit in two separate areas of speaking (obeying grammar rules and applying speaking skills). Another study (Turanlı, 2007) aimed to determine the factors affecting the participation of students who were learning English in lessons and the extent of these factors' effect level. As a result of the study, it was found that the students did not attach importance to their relative situation in the classroom but did not favour the competitive environment that could create a negative atmosphere. Another study (Sevim & Gedik, 2014) examined the speaking anxiety of secondary school students according to various variables. As a result of the study, the secondary school students' speaking anxiety was found to be not varying significantly depending on grade level and school type yet to be varying significantly depending on gender and attitude towards the lesson.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to investigate vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety, which is one of the factors affecting learning a foreign language. It also aims to ascertain the possible differences in the level of English-speaking anxiety, in terms of different variables, namely gender, grade level, mother's education level, father's education level and the income level of the family. In this study, a "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researchers and the "EFL Speaking Anxiety Scale" prepared by Hortwitz et al., (1986) and adapted to Turkish by Öztürk (2012) were used as the data collection tools. In this regard, the main purpose of the current study is to investigate vocational high school students' foreign language speaking anxiety, which is one of the factors affecting learning a foreign language, in terms of different variables.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the current study is to investigate vocational high school students' English speaking anxiety in terms of some variables.

The research questions of the current study are as follows:

- 1) Does vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety vary depending on gender?

- 2) Does vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety vary depending on grade level?
- 3) Does vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety vary depending on mother's education level?
- 4) Does vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety vary depending on father's education level?
- 5) Does vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety vary depending on the income level of the family?

Method

Research Design

The current study is a quantitative study aiming to investigate the English-speaking anxiety of the vocational high school students. Quantitative research can be defined as a type of research that presents phenomena and events in an observable, measurable and numerically expressible way. The aim is to measure the social behaviour of individuals objectively through observation, experiment and test and explain them with numerical data (Durak, 2011). Quantitative research has advantages such as collecting large amounts of data, having a focal point, allowing the researcher to be in control, and easily comparing the data (Mil, 2007).

Participants

The population of the study is comprised of 5 vocational and technical Anatolian high schools located in the Darıca district of the city of Kocaeli in the Marmara Region. In the selection of the sample, the convenience sampling method was used. The sample of the study consists of 387 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students attending three vocational and technical Anatolian high schools in the Marmara Region in the 2019-2020 school year.

Data Collection

The first data collection tool used in the current study is a personal information form developed by the researchers.

The second data collection tool used in the current study is the "EFL Speaking Anxiety Scale" developed by Hortwitz et al., (1986) and adapted to Turkish by Öztürk (2012). The scale consists of 18 items developed to measure vocational and technical Anatolian high school students' English speaking anxiety. The scale is a five-point Likert scale scored as follows: 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree. In the reliability study of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be .93.

Data Analysis

The English-Speaking Anxiety Scale to be administered to the vocational and technical Anatolian high school 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders was converted into a Google Form and then it was administered to the students. The data of the 387 students who precisely completed their forms were used for the analyses. In the analysis of the collected data, SPSS program package was used.

Findings

Table 1. Results of the Independent Samples t-test Conducted to Determine whether the Scores Taken from the English Speaking Anxiety Scale Vary Significantly depending on Gender

English Speaking Anxiety Scale	Gender	N	\bar{X}	ss	sd	T	p
Self-confidence Sub-dimension	Female	122	3.83	0.84	369	11.262	0.031
	Male	249	2.66	0.98			

When the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether the mean scores taken from the English-Speaking Anxiety Scale vary significantly depending on gender were examined in Table 1., the difference between the mean scores of the male and female students was found to be significant. The female students' English-speaking anxiety was found to be higher than that of the male students.

Table 2. Results of the One-way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Conducted to Determine whether the Scores Taken from the English Speaking Anxiety Scale Vary Significantly depending on Grade Level

English Speaking Anxiety Scale	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Grade Level	Between-groups	69.167	69	1.002	0.837	0.812
	Within-groups	360.483	301	1.198		
	Total	429.650	370			

In Table 2., the results of the one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety varies significantly depending on grade level are presented. As can be seen in the table, the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety does not vary significantly depending on grade level ($p > .05$).

Table 3. Results of the One-way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Conducted to Determine whether the Scores Taken from the English-Speaking Anxiety Scale Vary Significantly depending on Mother's Education Level

English Speaking Anxiety Scale	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Mother's Education Level	Between-groups	64.328	69	0.932	0.845	0.799
	Within-groups	332.227	301	1.104		
	Total	396.555	370			

In Table 3., the results of the one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety varies significantly depending on mother's education level are presented. As can be seen in the table, the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety does not vary significantly depending on grade level ($p > .05$).

Table 4. Results of the One-way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Conducted to Determine whether the Scores Taken from the English-Speaking Anxiety Scale Vary Significantly depending on Father's Education Level

English Speaking Anxiety Scale	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Father's Education Level	Between-groups	55.115	69	0.799	0.925	0.643
	Within-groups	259.818	301	0.863		
	Total	314.933	370			

In Table 4., the results of the one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety varies significantly depending on father's education level are presented. As can be seen in the table, the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety does not vary significantly depending on father's education level ($p > .05$).

Table 5. Results of the One-way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Conducted to Determine whether the Scores Taken from the English-Speaking Anxiety Scale Vary Significantly depending on the Income Level of the Family

English Speaking Anxiety Scale	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Family Income Level	Between-Groups	24.952	69	0.362	0.768	0.907
	Within-Groups	141.792	301	0.471		
	Total	166.744	370			

In Table 5., the results of the one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety varies significantly depending on the income level of the family are presented. As can be seen in the table, the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety does not vary significantly depending on grade level ($p > .05$).

Conclusion

In this section, the results of the current study are compared with the other research results in the literature and then interpreted. When the studies in the literature are examined based on these results, there are many studies in the literature conducted on English speaking anxiety.

In the current study, English speaking anxiety that affects the speaking skills of vocational high school students was examined in terms of different variables. The results of study have revealed that while the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety does not vary significantly depending on grade level, mother's and father's education level and the income level of the family, it varies significantly by gender. The female students were found to have significantly higher English-speaking anxiety than the male students.

In some of the studies on foreign language speaking anxiety in the literature, it was also found that foreign language speaking anxiety varies significantly depending on gender (Levitt, 1980; Gregersen & Hortwitz, 2002; Huang, 2004; Wilson, 2006; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Balemir, 2009; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2012; Sevim & Gedik, 2014; Kozikoğlu, 2018). Öztürk (2012) concluded that the female students had more motivation to learn in the classroom atmosphere than the male students, but their anxiety of speaking a foreign language was also higher. Similar to the results of this research, Kozikoğlu (2018) concluded that the female students' anxiety about speaking English was higher than the male students. Kozikoğlu (2018) associated this result with the fact that the female students cared more about being successful in English lesson than the male students and felt more anxious about the possibility of failure. In addition, the result of the research on the English-speaking anxiety of Vocational High School students concurs with the result reported by Huang (2004) investigating the relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and certain variables such as age and gender. Huang (2004) also concluded that the female participants had more foreign language anxiety than the male participants. Huang (2004) associated this result with the cultural characteristics of Taiwan society, where female individuals have more fear of negative evaluation than male individuals. We can attribute higher

foreign language speaking anxiety of female learners to their higher tendency towards self-criticism of their speaking skills and comparing themselves with other learners more than male students. Comparing oneself with others causes the learner to feel more anxious and competitive (Aydın, 1999). Female students' exhibiting more competitive behaviours can be associated with their emphasis on participating in the lesson more and accordingly their demands to be more successful. In addition, in the current study, we can attribute the higher English-speaking anxiety level of the female students studying at vocational high schools to the fact that the number of male students is much higher than the number of female students in classrooms. As a result, these factors cause female students to have more speaking anxiety, to experience more anxiety in speaking exams, and to do more self-criticism towards their speaking skills.

As a result of their research, Sevim & Gedik (2014) concluded that students' speaking anxiety does not vary significantly by grade level and school type but varies significantly by gender and attitude towards the course. They revealed that the male students experienced more speaking anxiety than the female students. Sevim & Gedik (2014) attributed this result to the constructivist learning approach adopted in primary education especially after 2005, and to the effectiveness of modern education trends brought about by this approach. In addition, they emphasized that in the traditional society and traditional education, all the taboos that restrict the existence of girls in traditional education are broken one by one, and as the taboos are broken, the self-confidence of female students increases, and their self-expression skills improve. Likewise, Levitt (1980) stated that male students have higher levels of speaking anxiety because they look at their speaking skills through the eyes of others, although this situation is not experienced among female students. Thus, the results of these studies in the literature do not concur with the result of the current study. In some other studies on the subject however not significant correlation was found between foreign language speaking anxiety and gender (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Wang, 2004).

In the current study, the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety was found to be not varying significantly depending on their grade level. Kozikoğlu (2018) also found that the high school students' foreign language anxiety did not vary significantly depending on their grade level. Thus, this result of the current study focused on the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety complies with the result reported by Kozikoğlu (2018), who investigated the extent to which the high school students' English speaking anxiety and attitudes towards English predicted their level of participation in lessons. However, Yılmaz (2019), who aimed to reveal the English-speaking anxiety levels of high school students together with its accompanying reasons, concluded that the 10th grade students have a higher level of English speaking anxiety than the 9th and 11th grade students. This finding contradicts with the finding of the current study.

The vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety was found to be not varying significantly depending on mother and father's education level. This finding of the study is supported by Kavruk & Deniz (2015), who reported that the students' foreign language speaking anxiety did not vary significantly depending on mother and father's education level, but it varied depending on mother's education level in the sub-dimension of being speaker-focused. In this connection, while the speaking anxiety of the students whose mothers are university graduates was found to be the lowest, the speaking anxiety of the students whose mothers are primary school graduates was found to be the highest. According to Kavruk & Deniz (2015), mothers are more effective on children who are in their growth and adolescence period.

Another finding of the current study is that the vocational high school students' English-speaking anxiety does not vary significantly depending on the income level of the family. This finding is similar to the finding reported by Kavruk & Deniz (2015). Investigating the state of anxiety, which is the affective dimension of speaking skill, among middle school students in terms of different variables, Kavruk & Deniz (2015) concluded that the students' speaking anxiety did not vary significantly depending on the income level of the family. In addition, they attributed the reason for this result to the fact that the level of income alone does not affect the individual's speaking anxiety, since financial means and possibilities are related to the individual and his/her environment rather than speaking anxiety. This finding concurs with the finding of the current study. On the other hand, Korkmaz (2015) concluded that as the family income level of the students increased, their self-confidence increased and their English-speaking anxiety decreased. Korkmaz (2015) suggested that if students do not have a high family income level, they should be supported by the government in order to ensure equality with other students. In this connection, the finding of this study is parallel to the finding of the current study.

In light of the results of the current study, various suggestions can be made for researchers and practitioners to reduce students' foreign language speaking anxiety.

- 1) Pre-service and in-service training can be given to foreign language teachers on what methods and techniques should be applied to reduce students' English-speaking anxiety.
- 2) Collaboration can be established with school psychologists to solve the problems of students who have speaking anxiety.
- 3) In further research on speaking anxiety, variables such as group work, individual work, native English teacher, non-native English teacher can be investigated in addition to the variables in the current study.
- 4) The current study was conducted solely to investigate the causes of English-speaking anxiety from students' perspectives. Future research could be undertaken to examine both English teachers' perspectives on the causes of foreign language English speaking anxiety and to compare them with students' perspectives.

In-depth research can be done using qualitative research techniques to investigate students' English-speaking anxiety.

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