



Research

DOI: 10.7822/omuefd.1435207

OMU Journal of Faculty of Education

2024, 43 (1), xxx-xxx

Action research: Increasing Turkish EFL Learners' Speaking Self-Efficacy in English Online Sessions

Eylem Araştırması: İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Türk Öğrencilerin Çevrim İçi İngilizce Oturumlarında Konuşma Öz Yeterliliğinin Artırılması

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Received: 11.02.2024

Reviewed: 26.06.2024

Online Yayınlanma Tarihi: 30.06.2024

Ethics Committee Approval

Ethics committee approval was received for the research from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University with the decision number 2024-88 dated 26.01.2024.

Bu çalışmanın ana amacı, İngilizce çevrim içi oturumları sırasında öğrencilerin konuşma öz yeterliliğinin, motivasyonunun ve katılımının kritik rolünü araştırmaktır. Ayrıca bu araştırma, öğrenciler arasında düşük öz yeterlik, konuşma kaygısı ve düşük motivasyon gibi hedef dilde etkili iletişimi engelleyebilecek zorlukların ele alınmasına yönelik yeni bir bakış açısı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, dil eğitimcileri ve araştırmalarına ana dili İngilizce olmayan kişilerle etkileşimi dil öğrenme ortamlarına dahil etmenin potansiyel faydalarını keşfetmeleri için değerli bir başlangıç noktası sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışmada kullanılan eylem araştırması tasarımı, Bandura (1994) tarafından önerilen öz-yeterlik kaynaklarına dayanmaktadır. Bu araştırma öğrencilerin İngilizce

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Arslanbay, G. and Buyukahiska, D. (2024). Action Research: Increasing Turkish EFL Learners' Speaking Self-Efficacy in English Online Sessions. *Ondokuz Mayıs University Journal of Faculty of Education*, xx(x), xxx-xxx. DOI: 10.7822/omuefd.....

yeterlilik düzeyinin orta seviye (B1) olduğu Zorunlu Hazırlık Grubu Dinleme ve Konuşma oturumlarında başarılı bir şekilde yürütülmüştür. Zorunlu hazırlık sınıflarında Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce (EFL) öğrenen öğrencilerin öncelikli hedefi İngilizce dil becerilerine hâkim olmaktır. Bu yeterlilik, öğrencilerin karşılaşacakları çok sayıda metinle etkili bir şekilde ilgilenmelerine, makaleler yazmalarına ve en önemlisi sözlü iletişim kurmalarına ve ilgili fakültelere geçiş yaptıktan sonra hedef dilde sunumlar yapmalarına olanak tanıdığı için çok önemlidir. Oturumlara Mısır, Kore, Avustralya, İran ve Etiyopya'dan beş konuk konuşmacı davet edilmiştir. Araştırma prosedürü, aktif öğrenci katılımını ve her konuk konuşmacıya geri bildirim sağlamayı mümkün kılan odak grup tartışmalarını içermektedir, böylece öğrencilerin konuşma öz yeterlilikleri gelişmiş ve motivasyonları artmıştır. Bu yaklaşım sayesinde öğrenciler gerçek zamanlı dil performansı fırsatlarını yakalayabilmişlerdir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, bu oturumlara yabancıların katılımı öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşma öz yeterlilikleri ve genel performansları üzerinde olumlu bir etki yaratmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları, yabancı konuk konuşmacıların entegrasyonunun, İngilizce çevrim içi oturumlarda öğrenciler arasındaki konuşma kaygısı, düşük öz yeterlik ve düşük motivasyon gibi zorlukların üstesinden gelinmesinde etkili olduğu fikrini desteklemektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Konuşma öz yeterliliği, Motivasyon, Çevrim içi İngilizce oturumları, Eylem araştırması.*

Published: 30.06.2024

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the critical role of students' speaking self-efficacy, motivation and engagement during English online sessions. Additionally, the current research aims to provide a fresh perspective on addressing challenges such as low self-efficacy, speaking anxiety, and low motivation among the students, which may hinder effective communication in the target language. This study provides a valuable starting point for language educators and researchers to explore the potential benefits of incorporating interaction with non-native speakers in language learning settings. The action research design employed in this study, guided by the identified sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1994). The research was successfully carried out in a Compulsory Preparatory Group in Listening & Speaking sessions, where students' proficiency level in English was pre-intermediate (B1). The primary goal of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in compulsory prep classes is to achieve mastery of English language skills. This proficiency is crucial as it enables the students to effectively engage with the extensive number of texts they will encounter, write essays, and, most importantly, communicate orally and deliver presentations in the target language once they transition to their respective faculties. Five guest-speakers from Egypt, Korea, Australia, Iran and Ethiopia were invited to join the sessions. The research procedure incorporates focus group discussions, enabling active student participation and feedback provision on each guest speaker, thereby promoting the development of speaking self-efficacy and boosting students' motivation. Through this approach, students were exposed to essential opportunities for real-time language performance. The participation of foreigners in these sessions had a positive impact on students' English speaking self-efficacy and their overall performance. The findings of this research support the idea that integrating foreign guest-speakers effectively address challenges such as speaking anxiety, low self-efficacy, and low motivation among students in English online sessions.

Keywords: *Speaking self-efficacy, Motivation, Online English sessions, Action research*

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of English instruction, the primary duty of educators is to facilitate the acquisition of foundational language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This undertaking is designed to elevate learners' overall communicative proficiency, in harmony with the overarching objective of promoting effective communication, as posited by Brown (2000). Furthermore, Brown advocates for the integration of a communicative framework in the instruction of these skills, underscoring the significance of adopting a whole language approach and emphasizing the practical application of language in authentic real-life scenarios. Within the context of fundamental skills, this study particularly centres on speaking, recognizing its paramount significance in classroom interactions and underscoring its pivotal role. Proficiency in speaking serves as an indicator of mastery in standard English. This is evident in the Corpus of Contemporary American English, where the word speaking is prominently associated with the term English (695) at the top of the collocations list (English-corpora: Coca, n.d.).

Presently, the learning of any foreign language has undergone continuous transformations, and teaching the generation of digital natives adds an additional layer of complexity to the educational landscape. Additionally, fostering students' motivation, lowering their speaking anxiety increasing self-efficacy (SE) become even harder for language teachers. Some scholars (Gürsoy & Karaca, 2018) hold the view that those aspects are classic problems among Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Adept proficiency in speaking is crucial for effective communication, underscoring the importance of discerning students' current level and offering tailored support and guidance to help them progress (Dawes, 2008).

Moreover, the recent investigation acknowledged a decline in students' academic motivation during the COVID-19 period (Zaccoletti et al., 2020). The spring term in 2023, the education in Türkiye shifted to online learning again shortly after the pandemic, due to the occurrence of an earthquake, which potentially led to additional disruption and a discouraging impact on students' motivation. Students also shared that the sudden changes in their learning environment, the lack of face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers, and the overall uncertainty and stress caused depression and significantly affected their motivation and their eagerness to be involved in sessions.

Therefore, the current study emphasizes the importance of taking an action to support and enhance students' motivation and their SE, foster meaningful connections and engagement in virtual classrooms, and promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment. Recognizing the impact of external circumstances on students' motivation guide educators in developing targeted interventions to help students regain and maintain their motivation and their beliefs during challenging times.

Bandura's insights on Self-Efficacy and Beliefs in Speaking

The belief that individuals can perform well in specific tasks is known as efficacy beliefs. It serves as an internal motivator and contributes to their overall success. "Efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave" (Bandura, 1993, p. 118). Individuals with a strong sense of SE, as highlighted by Dörnyei (2009, p. 200), do not lose their motivation even in the face of failure. Likewise, Mills (2014) stressed the importance of SE, emphasizing that students with high confidence in their academic abilities show lower anxiety, increased perseverance, heightened dedication, flexible learning strategies, and greater intrinsic interest in academic tasks. However, not all students possess the intrinsic ability to self-motivate and cultivate a robust belief in their capabilities. Hence, external support becomes imperative. To achieve this, educators and researchers must comprehend the evolution of SE and identify the factors attributed to this change. Actively seeking opportunities to facilitate this understanding is key. Moreover, the study highlights that an external push is pivotal for fostering a positive learning environment, providing students with essential tools, and, most importantly, creating opportunities to build strong SE. Furthermore, SE is described as "an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the necessary actions to achieve desired goals" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

Bandura (1994) suggests that individuals' confidence in their abilities can be shaped by four main sources. The current study will further analyze the results of the experiment with respect to Bandura's (1994) conceptual theoretical framework based on students' SE in speaking, which has principle sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and affective state (see Figure 1).

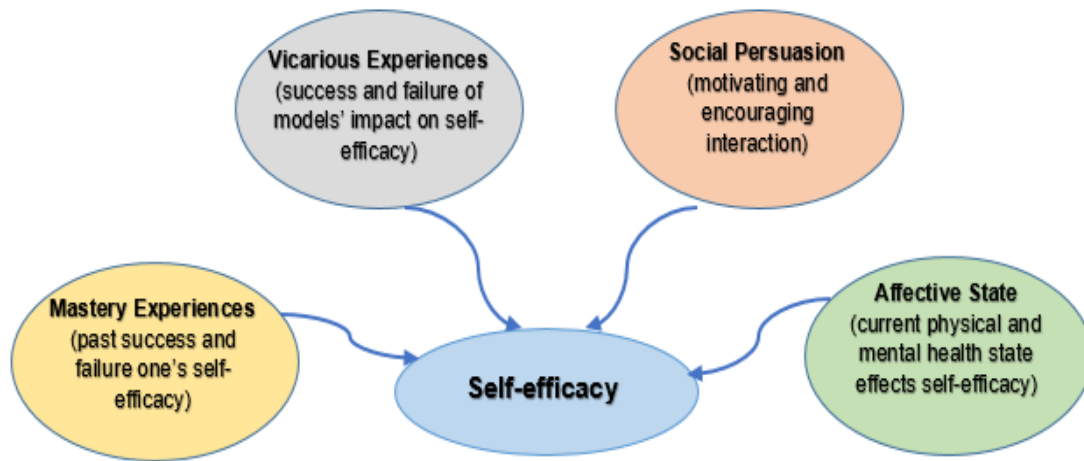


Figure 1.

Principle sources of SE (adopted from Bandura, 1994)

One of the most effective approaches to cultivate a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences which refers to personal achievements and successful experiences in a specific domain, which help individuals develop confidence in their abilities (Bandura, 1994). It is important for individuals to experience both successes and setbacks, as setbacks can teach valuable lessons about the need for sustained effort in achieving success. Consequently, a section of the focus group discussion questions was designed to align with the participants' backgrounds which allowed the students to share past successes and failures they faced since the first time they were introduced to the English language. Additionally, it served as an ice-breaker at the beginning of the discussions.

Another source influencing SE beliefs is vicarious experiences, as outlined by Bandura (1994). Vicarious experiences involve the observation and learning from others who have excelled in similar situations, inspiring and motivating individuals to believe in their capabilities. In line with this concept, students were assigned the task of gathering information about the countries of upcoming guest speakers and submitting question-response Google Forms. This preparation aimed to provide them with knowledge and readiness to engage effectively with the guests during their interactions. Such proactive measures served as a significant inspiration for students, fostering a sense of motivation and preparedness for the upcoming sessions.

The third source of strengthening SE beliefs is social persuasion (Bandura, 1994). Social persuasion involves the impact of verbal and nonverbal messages from others, such as encouragement and support, which can influence one's SE beliefs. In light of this concept, the current experiment was designed to strengthen students' beliefs in their comprehension and speaking abilities through encounters with the foreign guest-speakers.

The final source influencing SE is an affective state, encompassing the emotional and physiological responses individuals undergo while engaging in a task. These responses can significantly impact their perception of their abilities. "In activities involving strength and stamina, individuals often interpret feelings of fatigue, aches, and pains as signs of physical debility" (Bandura, 1994, p. 3). Consequently, the fourth method for enhancing self-efficacy involves minimizing stress responses and ameliorating negative emotional tendencies (Bandura, 1994). Learning a new language is undeniably challenging and can evoke a range of emotions, including anxiety, embarrassment, and a sense of failure. Such feelings are particularly common when confronted with difficulties in pronunciation or fluency. However, it is crucial for students to understand that making mistakes and encountering obstacles are natural components of the learning journey. This perspective is reinforced by insights from foreign guest speakers.

Preliminary Studies on Self-efficacy

Numerous researchers have investigated the impact of SE across various domains. Studies have explored the influence of mathematics self-efficacy on individuals' interests (Lent et al., 1993; Pajares &

Miller, 1994) and the positive association between SE and academic achievement (Rahemi, 2007; Doordinejad & Afshar, 2014). Additionally, Zhao and colleagues (2024) investigated children's SE concerning cheating behaviour and the correlation between self-efficacy and academic dishonesty among students (Zhao, Li, Ke & Lee, 2022) have further enriched the understanding. In EFL contexts, researchers explored the connection between college students' SE and their English learning achievement (Ghoonsoly et al., 2012). This investigation revealed a positive correlation between the two factors. Additionally, other studies established a link between high SE and competence in language learning tasks, as indicated by Rahimi and Abedini (2009), Farjami and Amerian (2013), and Ghonsooly and Elahi (2010). Sharing a similar viewpoint, Ocak and Olur (2018) highlighted that individuals who accomplish tasks tend to exhibit higher levels of SE.

Further examinations delved into SE as a cognitive self-construct, specifically evaluating individuals' abilities to perform specific tasks, particularly in language-related contexts (Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007). Concurrently, Pajares (1996) explored the role of learners' cognitive appraisals in shaping SE beliefs. Moreover, Mohammed (2021) emphasized the crucial responsibility of teachers in fostering and nurturing SE among their students.

Scholars also highlight the instrumental role of student SE in determining speaking performance, arguing for a notable positive connection between SE and speaking performance (Dodds, 2011). Bandura (1986), Graham and Weiner (1996), and Mills (2004) have examined SE concerning academic performance, motivation, and self-regulation. Additionally, SE impacts individuals' efforts, persistence in overcoming obstacles, resilience in the face of failure, and even their experience of depression in certain circumstances (Bandura, 1997). Individuals with anxiety tend to exhibit fear and avoidance behaviours that can hinder their performance not only in general life situations but also in academic settings.

To this end, the findings suggest that despite facing setbacks or obstacles, individuals with high levels of SE persist in maintaining their confidence in their abilities and demonstrate unwavering determination to accomplish their goals (Muñoz, 2021). These experts explain students who possess SE awareness exhibit higher levels of competence in speaking tasks, leading to positive impacts.

Self-efficacy and Motivation

Over an extended period, the scholarly community has consistently acknowledged a substantial correlation between self-efficacy (SE) and motivation. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the prevalence of research on self-efficacy, there exists a notable gap warranting further exploration in this domain, underscoring the imperative for additional scholarly investigation. Therefore, the present study aims to closely investigate the correlation between self-efficacy in speaking and motivation. This relationship holds paramount importance in the personal growth and goal achievement of students in their journey to learn the target language. Notably, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2003) underscore its impact on behavioural outcomes, cognitive processes, and motivational engagement. In line with social cognitive theory, Shunk (2003) highlights the significance of self-efficacy, illustrating its influence on achievement through various factors.

Previous studies have demonstrated that motivation enhances individuals' effectiveness, enabling them to better utilize their abilities and talents while experiencing increased satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Academic motivation, integral to students' beliefs about their academic skills, plays a vital role in propelling their efforts to succeed (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Essentially, motivation entails being inspired to take action and actively pursue goals (Brewer & Burgess, 2005).

Moreover, sustaining academic motivation necessitates a heightened level of self-efficacy among students. Building on this notion, Dörnyei (2003) asserts that motivation should be construed as a blended concept, embodying an internal quality shaped by external influences. According to Dörnyei (2001), a motivated individual is the one who invests effort, demonstrates persistence and focus on the task, possesses goals, desires, and aspirations, feel pleasure during the activity, receives reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, attributes outcomes to success or failure, experiences arousal, and employs strategies to facilitate goal attainment. Indeed, motivated learners are a dream for every teacher. These students are "willing to work hard, add their own goals to those of the classroom, focus their attention on the tasks at hand, persevere through challenges, do not need continuous

encouragement, and may even stimulate others in the classroom, promoting collaborative learning possess desirable qualities that greatly contribute to the learning environment" (Gilakjani et al., 2012). The motivation of language learners can vary and even change throughout a single classroom activity. Hence, as underscored by Dörnyei (2003), accessing motivation is vital for language teachers, given that motivation stands as one of the pivotal factors driving success in language learning.

The main of the study is to enhance the speaking self-efficacy (SSE) of B1-level EFL learners in Compulsory Preparatory Classes. To achieve this, one of the aims of the paper is to provide a conceptual theoretical framework based on Bandura's (1994) principles. The framework analyses the sources of SE in speaking, which include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective state. The proposed solution to enhance SSE is to invite foreign guest-speakers to participate in online English sessions. This approach aims to encourage students to speak more confidently, overcome speaking barriers, and challenge their assumptions about speaking in real-life situations. An action research design was employed in anticipation that the involvement of foreigners in the sessions would positively influence students' English SSE and enhance their performance. SE, known for its influence on decisions, effort, and persistence, draws from personal accomplishments and vicarious experiences.

In summary, guided by the foundational sources identified by Bandura (1994), this study aimed to investigate and address the following research questions:

RQ1: What strategies can be implemented to enhance EFL learners' SSE in online English sessions?

RQ2: How can learners be motivated to actively interact and participate in online English sessions?

RQ3: To what extent does communication with foreigners in online English sessions contribute to the enhancement and development of students' SSE and their motivation?

RQ4: What approaches can be used to challenge students' misconceptions about speaking English and support them in developing a positive perception of speaking?

METHOD

From the variety of methods for assessing SSE, action research method was employed in this case study. Action research offers a notable advantage in allowing practitioners to reflect on ongoing events and make timely adjustments. It enables educators to react to their initial interpretations of data and actively support student learning throughout the process. This "real-time engagement and responsiveness contribute to the effectiveness of action research in educational settings" (Curtis et al., 2010, p. 37).

The whole idea of the current experiment was designed by adapting the action research cycle procedure used by scholars such as Mertler (2012), Mills (2011), Sagor (2011), and Stringer (2008). For Pelton (2010) the term "action" in action research refers to the activities carried out by teaching professionals in the classroom. This includes tasks such as "creating a conducive learning environment, engaging with students, designing lesson plans, assigning homework, and encompassing various routine teaching responsibilities" (Pelton, 2010, p. 4).

Furthermore, there are the features of action research that Koshy (2005) identifies as: "it involves researching your own practice – it is not about people out there; is emergent; is participatory; constructs theory from practice; is situation-based; can be useful in real problem-solving; deals with individuals or groups with a common purpose of improving practice; is about improvement; involves analysis, reflection and evaluation; facilitates changes through enquiry" (Koshy, 2005, p. 10).

The main advantage of the action research method was the flexibility and accessibility it provided. The teacher-researcher utilized the teacher log model and conducted focus group discussions with semi-structured interviews. Throughout the experiment, the research questions were modified, and some of them were adapted for the focus group discussions. The teacher-researcher was facing challenges of insufficient attendance and lack of motivation among students in online English sessions. The research adopted a student-centred approach and utilized purposive sampling. It was conducted among Turkish EFL learners at one of the state universities in Turkey's Black Sea Region, during English online sessions. This class was chosen among others due to its easy accessibility and close proximity to the researcher (Given, 2008). The initial sample consisted of 23 students from the group although actively participated 18 students. For the purpose of anonymity, students participating in the research study will be cited as Participant 1, Participant 2, and etc., here and after.

Five English language speakers, origin from Egypt, Korea, Australia, Ethiopia and Iran were invited to participate in the English online sessions and each debate yielded distinct outcomes despite the consistent research design. The presence of foreign guest speakers was an effective strategy to expose the students to authentic English and different accents (*lingua franca*). The underlying assumption is that presently, non-native speakers constitute around 80% of the worldwide English-speaking population, according to Jenkins (2007). In the realm of communication, the primary focus for these speakers is 'not formal correctness but functional effectiveness' (Hülmbauer et al., 2008, p. 28). The students' responses serve as evidence that interacting with native and proficient English speakers has a positive impact on the development of learners' listening and speaking skills. They specifically mentioned Soo-Min from Korea as an example of someone with imperfect English but still being understandable, which boosted their confidence. Additionally, the participants realized that having a perfect pronunciation is not essential as they embraced their Turkish accent. They found reassurance in their ability to communicate effectively and understand guest speakers with different accents. These experiences highlight the value of real-life language examples in enhancing language skills.

The focus group discussion setting with semi-structured interviews lasted for three hours. The pilot interview consisted of 16 open-ended questions divided into three parts: student background (including their age when first introduced to English and how they feel about speaking English with a foreigner), before and after the experiment (assessing the extent to which the experiment helped create a positive perception of speaking and increased their SSE), and finally, the student's attitude towards online sessions (see Appendix 1).

To gather students' questions prior to meeting with foreign guests, the teacher-researcher utilized a question-response Google Forms format, as illustrated below (see Figure 2).

Adı	Durum
CEMRE DILA ÇELİK	Teslim edildi (Geç tamamlanmış)
BERK PINAR YAZICI	Teslim edildi (Geç tamamlanmış)
MERVE TÜRKER	Teslim edildi (Geç tamamlanmış)
ÖZNER KESKİK	Teslim edildi
SİMAYE ERDEN	Teslim edildi
ŞEVVAL ÖZTÜRK	Teslim edildi
YUSUF KÖŞKER	Teslim edildi (Geç tamamlanmış)
Alınanlar	
BERK CEYHAN	Teslim edilm...

Adı	Durum
CEMRE DILA ÇELİK	Eş yok (Geç teslim edildi)
BERK PINAR YAZICI	Eş yok (Geç teslim edildi)
MERVE TÜRKER	Eş yok (Geç teslim edildi)
ÖZNER KESKİK	Eş yok (Teslim edildi)
SİMAYE ERDEN	Eş yok (Teslim edildi)
ŞEVVAL ÖZTÜRK	Eş yok (Teslim edildi)
YUSUF KÖŞKER	Eş yok (Geç teslim edildi)
BERK CEYHAN	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
BERK PINAR YAZICI	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
ENES BERRAY ÇAĞIN	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
HANVA NUR KARLAHUS	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
KIBRIS HÜPÜKARACA	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
LETİLA PAZAR	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
MERHET ÇEBTÜRK	Eş yok (Teslim edilmemiş)
MERVE YILDIZ	
MURAT OSMAN ÇALIŞKAN	
NURSELI UYAR	
SATIŞMAŞ UMUT BAŞER	
SERDAR COŞKUN	
YUNUS ERPEK SİMŞEK	
ZENEP BRİZA BALCI	

Figure 2.

Question-response via Google Forms

Students were given information about the speakers' backgrounds in advance, allowing them time to prepare and research about their countries. The Instructor included "Fun / interesting facts about the countries" using Google Slides during the session to keep the discussions going (see Figure3).

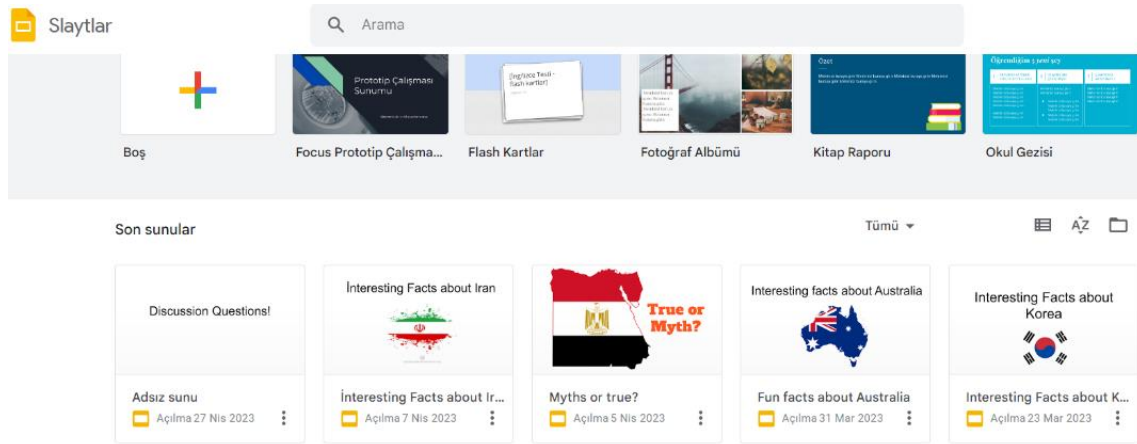


Figure 3.

Presentations via Google Slide

In the current experiment, teacher logs were utilized to analyse data collected during online English sessions and the impact of guest speakers on student learning. The teacher-researcher took notes and gathered feedback from students after guest speakers leave the session. It allowed to gather real-time data on online session discussions. The notes were used to document changes made to teaching practices, track the impact of those changes on student learning, and identify patterns in student behavior and learning over time.

The data collected from interviews was transcribed via Transana 4.0., which falls under a category of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). This procedure then involved breaking down large media files into smaller units, afterwards annotating and coding these smaller units using keywords, which made it easier to investigate the phenomena represented by the data (Lewins & Silver, 2007).

Procedure

The current experiment's structure drew inspiration from the application of the action research cycle method employed by many scholars (Mertler, 2012; Mills, 2011; Sagor, 2011; Stringer, 2008). A notable characteristic of action research lies in its cyclical nature. It commences with a research question, and concludes with the application of the gained knowledge, thereby prompting new research questions and initiating a subsequent cycle of investigation (see Figure 4).

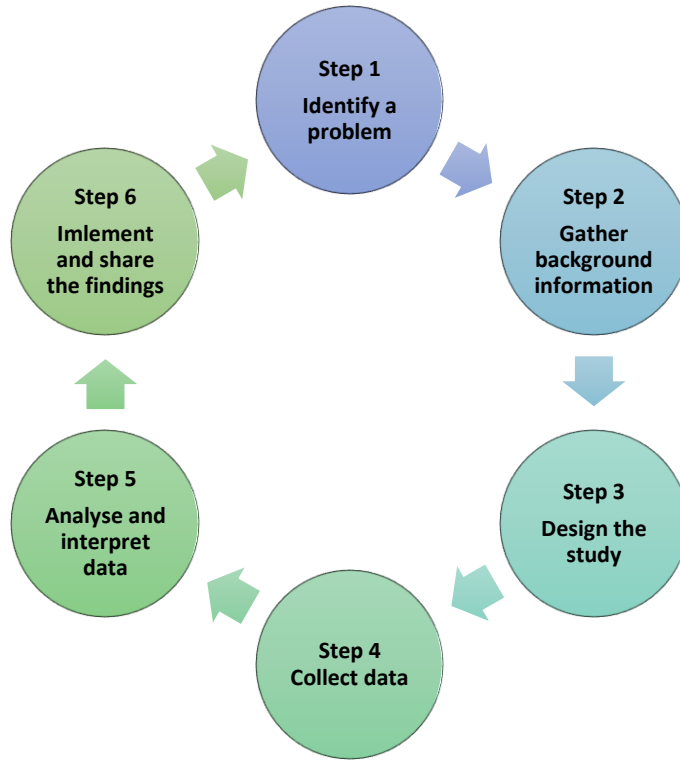


Figure 4.

The Six Cyclical Steps of Action Research

Using the six cyclical steps of action research as a guide, the teacher-researcher formulated the study model, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1.

The design of the study model implemented in the session.

Steps	Activities Done
Identify a Problem	<p><i>Needs Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examined students' requirements and identified areas for improvement. <p><i>Problem Prioritization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiled a list of issues, ranking them by urgency. • Identified and prioritized "insufficient attendance and lack of motivation among students in online English sessions" as the primary concern. <p><i>Root Cause Investigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explored potential factors contributing to the identified problem. <p><i>Research Focus Refinement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified "low self-efficacy" as the primary factor contributing to the problem, refining the research focus. • Developed research questions to guide further inquiry.

Gather Background Information	<p><i>Literature Review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted a comprehensive literature review, focusing on keywords like action research, speaking self-efficacy, teacher's log, motivation, Word Englishes or Lingua Franca.
Design the Study	<p><i>Participant Involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved 18 EFL students of Compulsory English Online classes and 5 invited foreigners (guest speakers) Engaged students in preparing questions for guest speakers via Google Forms. Collaboratively gathered "Fun/interesting facts" about each country (English Instructor's and students' intervention) <p><i>Timeline and Ethical Consideration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a 5-week timeline for the study. Addressed ethical considerations, obtaining permission and consent forms from participants.
Collect Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chose qualitative research method, including focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and teacher's logs.
Analyse and Interpret Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded and transcribed data from focus group discussions. Implemented teacher logs containing reflective and descriptive information. Recorded insights and observations to enrich the qualitative data collection process.
Implement and Share the Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathered students' feedback after each session. Facilitated opinions sharing and debates after sessions.

Ethics Committee Approval

Ethics committee approval was received for this study from the Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Humanities Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Approval Date: 26.01.2024

Ethics Document's Number: 2024-88

FINDINGS

In addressing RQ1 and RQ2, this study delved into strategies aimed at augmenting Turkish EFL learners' SSE and motivation during online English sessions. The findings indicate that leveraging learners' curiosity is an effective approach. Throughout the sessions, the teacher-researcher maintained consistent communication via a WhatsApp group, fostering interaction with the participants. The utilization of Google Forms served as another effective tool prompting learners to articulate questions and submit them. This increased their curiosity and active participation in the sessions. Notably, the implementation of these strategies led to a discernible improvement in student's attendance, underscoring the positive impact of curiosity on SSE.

P2: I think it was good to know beforehand we will have a guest, otherwise we would ask basic questions like: hello, how are? What is the capital city of Iran or Korea? We had deep conversations, I searched and learned that Koreans use English names, so I could ask Soo-Min about it. Also I didn't know much about Iran too, but when I searched I could prepare creative and good questions. We could ask their experiences, otherwise we would just search on Google.

The screenshots obtained from the online sessions provide tangible evidence that a considerable number of students voluntarily turned on their cameras, signifying their engagement and interest (see Figure 5). This observation is indicative of the students' awareness, respect, and curiosity towards the sessions. The visual representation serves to underscore the notion that these sessions cultivate an environment in which students are actively involved and contribute to the discussions.

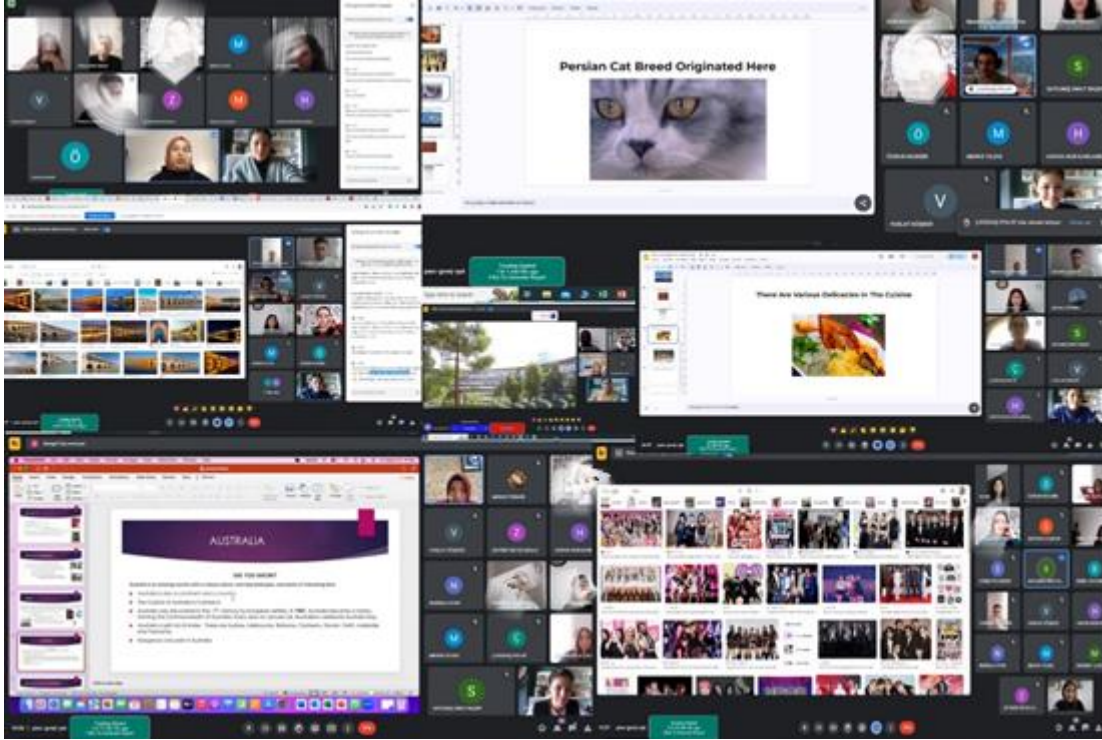


Figure 5.

Screenshots obtained from Online English Session with the guest – speakers.

Furthermore, the study revealed a significant enhancement and development of students' SSE through communication with foreigners. Students' experiences highlighted that engaging with guest-speakers contributed to building their confidence by emphasizing the acceptability of making mistakes and conveying the understanding that effective communication transcends perfect pronunciation. These interactions offered practical language application, motivating students to enhance their English proficiency.

P1: I became more confident in speaking. When our first guest joined the session, I was nervous: what if I can't understand or I can't speak? But after listening to the guest speaking for two hours, I generally understood everything, and I felt relaxed, because our guest was so polite and she was saying it is ok you can make a mistake...

P3 shared her experience of feeling more at ease in communication, even if she didn't speak perfectly. Understanding Soo-Min, despite her imperfect English, boosted P3's confidence and made her feel more positive about her own language abilities.

P3: I was a little more comfortable because I realized even if I don't speak perfectly I can somehow understand that person. For example, Soo-Min from Korea, could not speak perfect English but I was able to understand her. And it made me feel better.

P4's observation regarding not requiring perfect pronunciation due to her Turkish accent was a significant realization. The interactions with guests who had different accents demonstrated that effective communication is possible regardless of accents or pronunciation differences.

P4: I realized that I don't need to have a good pronunciation because I have Turkish accent, and I except it...

Overall, the findings affirm the effectiveness of strategies rooted in mastery experiences such as curiosity-driven learning and vicarious experiences like interacting with guest speakers, in enhancing EFL learners' SSE and motivation in online English sessions. Addressing RQ3 and RQ4 in line with the principle sources of SE (Bandura, 1994), the findings emphasize the impact of communication with foreigners and the approaches employed to challenge students' misconceptions about speaking English.

Concerning RQ3, the investigation found that engaging in communication with foreigners during online English sessions notably contributes to the enhancement and development of students' SSE. As per students' feedback, interacting with guest speakers from diverse countries served as a motivation to improve their English proficiency, driven by a desire to connect with individuals who share similar interests and hobbies. This vicarious experience illustrated the real-world application of English for meaningful communication, fostering increased confidence and a more positive outlook on speaking.

P1: you (teacher) invited people from different countries and I thought I should improve my English because I love meeting new and different people, it was nice and if I have the same interests and hobbies as that person I need the language to communicate, so I need to improve my English to meet good people.

Regarding RQ4, the study underscored the importance of providing clear directions and guidance to confront students' misconceptions about speaking English and assist them in cultivating a positive perception. Sharing information about guest speakers in advance helped students prepare thoughtful questions, leading to deeper conversations and cultural exploration. This mastery experience empowered students to challenge their preconceptions and participate in more meaningful exchanges, ultimately reshaping their perspective on speaking

P2: I think it was good to know beforehand we will have a guest, otherwise we would ask basic questions.... We had deep conversations.... I searched I could prepare creative and good questions. ...

In summary, these responses support the assertion that students benefit from direction and targeted guidance to confront their misconceptions about speaking English and create a positive perception of speaking target language. Through exposure to authentic interactions with guest speakers and provision of clear instructions and expectations, educators can assist students in developing a more positive attitude toward speaking English. This encouragement, in turn, motivate students to engage in more profound conversations and explore cultural nuances.

Focus Group Discussions

During the focus group discussions, participants were initially prompted with personal background questions as an icebreaker, aimed at establishing rapport and laying the groundwork for discussions about guest speakers and SSE. Varied views emerged regarding voluntarily English study among the participants. P1 expressed unwavering enthusiasm, recounting a transformative experience, while P2 and P3 emphasized the benefits of early exposure to English through formal education. Conversely, P4 and P5 expressed personal dislike for early language acquisition. These diverse perspectives shed light on participants' experiences and attitudes towards learning English.

When discussing the place that the English language takes in their lives and their motivation to learn, participants highlighted both personal and professional development. P1, for instance, reflected on her decade-long journey with English, connecting with friends globally, the ability to enjoy media without subtitles, and developing cultural awareness as key aspects. Many participants acknowledged the future benefits of English proficiency, especially in a globalized work environment, with a specific focus on the tech industry. P6 highlighted English as a universal language for cross-cultural communication, expressing a desire to explore other countries.

Participants described a spectrum of emotions when speaking English with a foreigner, ranging from nervousness and shyness to growing confidence. They acknowledged the normality of making mistakes and emphasized on the crucial role of a supportive and non-judgmental environment facilitated by the teacher and lessons.

P5: I think too much: At first I say what if I make a mistake? I think what he or she will think about me, but after a while I calm down and keep speaking.

P1: I tell myself, he or she is lucky to be a native speaker, he didn't do anything to learn it, he was born there. She can't speak Turkish, so it depends on the place you were born. I will not be sad if I can't speak good English but I try to improve.

P4: I except the fact that I am not a native speaker and that I can make mistakes. I was a little nervous last year, but you (teacher) and our lessons made me more confident, I want to thank you for that.

P6: I generally feel nervous and shy, because I am scared to say wrong words. I know it is normal but still I fell nervous.

P2: If he or she is an English teacher I feel nervous, but with other people I feel more relaxed, I don't know why!

P3: In first time I can be nervous or shy, but then I imagine if a foreigner would start learning Turkish and he would try to speak to me, I would say how cute is it. Sometimes mistakes can help to learn and improve, that is why I accept that fact.

It was somewhat interesting to receive students responses on camera usage in online sessions. Perspectives varied among students, with some feeling confident and at ease, promoting them to speak more often and turn on their cameras. However, personal factors such as being in pajamas or privacy concerns acted as hindrances to camera usage for some. Some students expressed a preference for online speaking due to the comfort and a sense of safety at home, along with the ability to quickly search for unfamiliar words or concepts. Nevertheless, one student highlighted the absence of face-to-face interaction as a deterrent to fully engaging in the online learning environment.

Subsequently, the discussions transitioned to soliciting students' feedback about each guest speaker. The students' responses reflected the anticipated outcomes of the action research study, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of the guest speakers and their impact on the students' learning experience. The general feedback provided is outlined below.

Aisha from Egypt

Students appreciated Aisha's fluency in English, her positive attitude, and her insights about her country. Aisha's message about embracing mistakes resonated with the students, inspiring them in their own language learning journey.

P1: At first I thought she will speak with Egyptian accent but she speaks with American accent, she seemed to be a positive person and I want to be as positive as her.

P3: As she said it is ok to make mistakes, I accept the fact that I am not a native speaker, I can make a mistake and can learn from my mistakes.

P6: She is a really positive person, I realized the importance of learning English in early age and it affects the accent. She has a very good accent and she is very fluent in English.

Aisha's presentation provided valuable information about Egypt, dispelling myths and misconceptions about the country, particularly regarding the Pharaohs and Pyramids. The students learned about Egyptian culture, history, and landmarks, gaining a more accurate understanding. Aisha's presentation stimulated cultural exploration and ignited a desire among the students to learn more about different countries and their unique attributes.

P5: She speaks very fluent, I was shocked. I learnt many things about her country, Aisha attracted my attention so I would like to visit Egypt.

Soo-Min from Korea

The feedback suggests that interacting with Soo-Min positively influenced the students. They were inspired by her rapid progress in speaking English, motivated by her language-learning journey, and encouraged by her confidence. The students recognized the continuous nature of language learning and found encouragement and relatability in Soo-Min's experiences. Additionally, the participants were pleasantly surprised by Soo-Min's personality, which contradicted their initial assumptions. Interacting with Soo-Min challenged their biases and underscored the importance of accepting individuals for who

they are, rather than relying on cultural stereotypes. This experience with Soo-Min imparted valuable lessons to the students in cultural understanding and dispelling stereotypes.

During the session with Soo-Min, the students exhibited a keen interest in Korean cosmetics and beauty products that contribute to Koreans' youthful and beautiful appearance. They were captivated by skincare routines, specific products, and beauty secrets practiced by Koreans. Their curiosity stemmed from their admiration for the Korean culture's emphasis on skincare and their enthusiasm to learn and incorporate similar practices into their own routines.

Leila from Australia

Most students while discussions admired the projects Leila conducted with her students, such as the Erasmus project and *Katika*, considering them fortunate. Despite being nervous to speak with a native speaker with a British accent, they found Leila's speech understandable as she spoke slowly. Students agreed with Leila's observation that Turkish students repeatedly learn the same topics each year, like Present Simple. The P1 attributed this to the pressure placed on Turkish children by their parents, which affects their English language learning progress.

Students were inspired by Leila's excellent English-speaking skills, which made students believe that anyone, can learn English with dedication and hard work. P6 found Leila's insights about the high life standards in Australia intriguing, and she expressed a touch of envy towards the quality of life in the country.

Farid from Iran

P4 expressed admiration for the guest speaker's exceptional English skills, emphasizing the surprisingly good pronunciation. She contrasted this with her past experiences with Turkish English teachers, noting the difference in pronunciation strength.

P3 valued the opportunity to learn about Iran from the guest speaker, finding the information shared to be different and intriguing. The majority of students expressed gratitude for Farid's openness to share his life experiences and responding their questions about the regime in Iran. His honesty was deemed refreshing, and the opportunity to gain insights into his personal experiences was highly appreciated by the students.

Kaleb from Ethiopia

The students were captivated by the opportunity to discover numerous fascinating facets of Ethiopia, as they had limited prior knowledge about the country. They expressed that although watching documentaries or videos on platforms like Discovery channel or YouTube provides some information, the chance to directly learn from a native of the country was genuinely remarkable. Kaleb shared a wealth of information, delving into details about the African Union, which encompasses all 54 or 55 African countries. Additionally, he provided insights into religion and language in Ethiopia. The students also discovered both similarities and differences between Ethiopian cuisine compared to Turkish cuisine, enhancing their cultural understanding.

Teacher Logs

The Teacher Logs and Notes, derived from the English Instructor's sessions and focus group discussions, revealed significant findings that contribute to enhancing students' SSE and assist the teacher in identifying areas of improvement.

Excerpt from the teacher-researcher's Log:

Not perfect but still try to get there!

In the initial phase, I recognized the critical need to consistently reinforce the idea that students possess proficiency in English. Encouraging them to actively participate and consistently providing positive feedback became a main point. Additionally, I identified the significance of emphasizing the correct pronunciation of target words, recognizing its role in boosting students' confidence in their spoken language.

The essence of effective speaking lies in consistent practice.

Through interactions with foreigners, my students witnessed that effective communication is still possible with proper

part of the learning process; it was very obvious how students got encouraged and embraced their Turkish accent.

Reassuring students that making mistakes is a natural part of the language-learning journey is crucial.

The exposure to non-native foreign speakers played a vital role in reinforcing a sense of belonging and normalizing students' language abilities, and a sense of presence in online sessions. Students momentarily forgot the virtual setting, immersing themselves in the conversations and spontaneously posing questions to guest speakers. This observation underscores their genuine engagement and enthusiasm for learning from diverse cultural perspectives.

Personal Reflection

It is imperative to underscore the importance of continuous improvement, acknowledging that language skills, like any other, are never flawless. Encouraging students to strive for ongoing progress in their language abilities is essential. Individualizing the learning process is key, providing students with the freedom to engage with English based on their preferences and strengths, without imposing rigid standards or restrictions.

Additionally, fostering a mindset of continuous improvement can contribute to cultivating a growth mindset among students, steering clear of fixed mindset restrictions.

Why are they still silent?

There are still students who remain silent, and I believe that personalized approaches are necessary to address this issue. I should take into account their specific interests, provide additional support, and explore alternative teaching strategies to encourage their engagement and active participation. Some students may have a goal-oriented mindset, focusing on passing the final exam rather than having a genuine desire for language proficiency.

Speaker Q&A Overview

The summary of the questions posed to guest speakers is provided below, and the detailed list of questions is available in Appendix 2. This comprehensive approach aligns with the goal of fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment that addresses the unique needs and motivations of each student.

To Aisha, a considerable number of questions revolved around the Pyramids and Pharaohs, indicating student's fascination with ancient Egyptian history and landmarks. This reflects a keen interest in exploring the cultural heritage and historical significance associated with Egypt.

Concerning Soo-Min, the questions predominantly focused on skincare and beauty products. This indicates students' curiosity about different cultural approaches to personal care, emphasizing a broader interest in understanding diverse cultural practices and beauty standards.

Regarding Leila, students expressed curiosity about job opportunities in Australia and sought insights into the attitudes of Australians toward Turkish individuals residing there. This highlights a particular interest among students in exploring topics related to migration and cultural integration.

Concerning Farid, there was a noticeable curiosity about the regime in Iran and the perspectives of Iranians toward the Turkish people. This reflects students' interest in political systems and intercultural relations, demonstrating a desire to understand the geopolitical landscape.

In the case of Kaleb, questions predominantly focused on places to visit in Ethiopia, as well as inquiries about his culture and language. This underscores students' eagerness to learn about diverse cultures, travel destinations, and gain insights into the cultural richness of Ethiopia.

These key findings demonstrate the supportive and inclusive approach employed by the English instructor to motivate and inspire students on their language-learning journey. Moreover, the valuable insights derived from the log can serve as guidance for other educators aiming to enhance students' SSE.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It is evident that creating an optimal learning environment for students to acquire a target language requires the teacher's commitment to engaging in experimental pedagogical approaches. As Schunk (1995) illuminates, the interplay between individual and environmental elements, encompassing instructional and social influences, and their consequences on self-efficacy, learning, motivation, and achievement.

Recognizing the significance of speaking as the primary means of language production is acknowledged, as supported by Swain (1995). The cultivation of speaking skills, paired with the development of self-efficacy, holds substantial importance in motivating students and instilling confidence in their performance. In line with this perspective, Paradewari (2017) suggests that an efficacious student often excels in speaking, influencing their motivation, learning, and overall academic performance. Furthermore, building on Schunk's preliminary work on self-efficacy (2003), the study observed that students with higher self-efficacy demonstrated a greater willingness to participate in activities, exert more effort in completing assignments, and exhibit more resilience when facing challenges. This is consistent with the extensive body of literature underscoring the significant impact of self-efficacy on academic engagement (Rahemi, 2007; Doordinejad & Afshar, 2014; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007; Linnenbrink&Pintrich, 2003; Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The study addresses a gap in the literature by examining the effectiveness of curiosity-driven learning and guest speaker interaction in enhancing SSE and motivation among Turkish EFL learners in online settings. By providing empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of these strategies, the findings contribute to filling this gap and advancing knowledge in the field of language education. Previous literature underscores the efficacy of curiosity-driven learning in boosting student motivation and involvement (Deci & Ryan, 1985), while studies on language learning emphasize the pivotal role of interaction with both native and non-native speakers in fostering speaking proficiency and confidence (Swain, 1985; Gass & Varonis, 1994). Leveraging learners' curiosity emerged as a powerful approach, with consistent communication and interaction through platforms like WhatsApp and Google Forms effectively engaging participants. Notably, these strategies resulted in a noticeable improvement in student attendance, highlighting curiosity's positive impact on Student Speaking Efficacy (SSE). Maintaining regular communication, reminding students about upcoming guest speakers, and facilitating post-session discussions and evaluations emphasized the positive influence these interactions had on students.

The findings of the study suggests that the integration of foreign guest-speakers can successfully tackle challenges like speaking anxiety, low SE, and diminished motivation in students. Moreover, engaging directly with individuals from foreign countries has played a crucial role in transforming negative perceptions and instigating shifts in students' viewpoints. The exposure to various accents (lingua franca) and communication styles during these interactions has assisted students in overcoming their fear of making mistakes and recognizing that effective communication is attainable even with non-native English speakers. This has contributed to a notable improvement in students' SSE, acceptance of making mistakes, and confidence in their language abilities. The findings also draw on the importance of clear directions and guidance in reshaping students' perspective on speaking English. Sharing information about guest speakers in advance helped students prepare thoughtful questions, leading to deeper conversations and cultural exploration.

While the findings support the positive impact of curiosity-driven learning and guest speaker interaction on SSE and motivation, alternative explanations should be considered. For example, individual differences in learner characteristics and prior language learning experiences may influence the effectiveness of these strategies. Future research could explore these factors in more depth to provide a comprehensive understanding of their effects on language learning outcomes. Moreover, the current study was carried out within a specific context, targeting learners at the pre-intermediate proficiency level (B1), and may not be fully generalizable to other contexts or proficiency levels. Further research is necessary to investigate the long-term effects of integrating foreign guest-speakers on students' motivation, SSE, and overall language learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of addressing student-centered needs and prioritizing student empowerment within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments

(Bandura & Adams, 1977). Bandura's (1997, 2006) conceptualization of self-efficacy (SE) emerges as a critical determinant in students' academic progress and motivation. Students with robust SE beliefs demonstrate heightened levels of effort, persistence, and goal orientation, as elucidated by Dörnyei (2009). Drawing on Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997), the findings suggest that mastery experiences and vicarious experiences play a crucial role in shaping students' SSE and motivation. Interaction with guest speakers provides students with opportunities for both mastery experiences (e.g., practicing speaking with non-native speakers) and vicarious experiences (e.g., observing others' language-learning journeys), thus influencing their self-efficacy beliefs and motivation.

The action research design which was employed in the investigation offers a notable advantage in allowing practitioners to reflect on ongoing events and make timely adjustments (Curtis et al., 2010). The findings suggest that the action research design and the teacher's reflective log have served as a self-reflective tool that supports ongoing professional development and promotes continuous improvement in teaching practices. The term "action" in action research refers to the activities carried out by teaching professionals in the classroom, encompassing various routine teaching responsibilities (Pelton, 2010). Action research, as identified by Koshy (2005), involves researching one's own practice, constructing theory from practice, and facilitating improvement through analysis, reflection, and evaluation. Throughout the study, the main advantage of the action research method was its flexibility and accessibility. The teacher-researcher utilized the teacher log model and conducted focus group discussions with semi-structured interviews to gather data. This real-time engagement and responsiveness contribute to the effectiveness of action research in educational settings (Curtis et al., 2010). The current research design facilitated modifications to the research questions, ensuring alignment with the evolving needs of the study. Specifically, some questions were adapted for the focus group discussions, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of the research topics and enhancing the depth of the data collected.

Nevertheless, as indicated by research findings, it is crucial to recognize that adopting such an approach entails inherent risks for both teachers and students. The unique challenges confronted by teachers during the transition to online teaching have been highlighted in the recent literature (Hodges et al., 2020; Manca et al., 2021; Suri, 2021). These challenges encompass technological barriers, pedagogical adaptation, and the emotional strain associated with teaching in crisis situations. Hu et al. (2020) have further expressed concerns regarding the challenges encountered in both online and traditional learning environments, emphasizing the potential impact of online instructional materials on teachers' professional knowledge and teaching methods. This implies that such experiments are especially suitable for educators characterized by traits such as open-mindedness, creativity, and a strong motivation to inspire their students. Additionally, engaging in such experiments enables teachers to confront successfully and dispel their students' negative language perceptions, ultimately aiding them in cultivating a more optimistic perspective and enhanced confidence in their language abilities.

Despite these challenges and limitations, the findings from these studies carry significant implications for theory, practice, and future research in the field of language education. The strategies employed in the study, such as utilizing online tools, incorporating multimedia elements, and creating a supportive learning environment, can be adapted and implemented by other teachers. By showcasing the positive outcomes and student experiences, the study provides a model for language teachers to explore creative approaches and foster student motivation, SSE, and a growth mindset within their contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the participants for their valuable contributions and enthusiastic involvement, which have played a key role in shaping the overall endeavor.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors of the article within the scope of the study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Design of Study: AST(%50), SY(%50)

Data Acquisition: AST(%100)

Data Analysis: AST(%50), SY(%50)

Writing Up: AST(%50), SY(%50)

Submission and Revision: AST(%50), SY(%50)

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Appendix 1

Title: ACTION RESEARCH: INCREASING TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING SELF-EFFICACY IN ENGLISH ONLINE SESSIONS.

Date:

Time:

Place: Online via Google Meet

Interviewer: English Instructor, Goshnag ARSLANBAY

Interviewee: _____

Student’s Background

1. What is your name?
2. How old were you when you were first introduced to English Language?
3. Would you study English even if it was not required at school?
4. What place does English take in your life? Why do you keep learning English?
5. What helps you stay motivated to keep learning English?
6. What do you do to improve your speaking skills?
7. Can you describe how does it feel to speak English with a foreigner?
8. How confident do you feel yourself while speaking English in English online Sessions?

Before and After Experiment

9. Can you compare your speaking self-efficacy before and after participating in the current experiment?
10. Did it help you to reconsider your attitude towards English Language after meeting our guests from other countries?
11. In your opinion did the experiment help you create a positive perception of speaking and increased your speaking self-efficacy?
12. Did your English Teacher help you to increase your speaking self-efficacy? How?

Student’s Attitude towards Online Sessions

13. How often do you speak in online sessions?
14. Do you turn your camera on? Why or why not?
15. Why do you think students don’t turn their cameras on in online sessions? What might be the reasons?
16. What do you think should teacher do to encourage students to participate in English Speaking Online Sessions?

Appendix 2. Students’ Questions to the Guest-Speakers.

What questions would you like to ask to Soyen, from Korea?
If she is in Turkey, she asks why she came.
Why have birth rates in Korea decrease so much lately?
How did Korea develop itself so much in the field of technology?
Are Korean and Turkish cultures similar?
Do you like korean foods?
If you don't mind the question I want to ask is how would you interpret the cultural structure of korea compared to the patriarchy of china? Because china is a country that we know with patriarchal
How do so many people live in Korea, how do they maintain order?
Skin care is very popular in your country so which brand is the most popular?

