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**Araştırma Makalesi \* Research Article**

## What If I Mispronounce o Word? A Linguistic Case Study of Pronunciation Anxiety

### Ya Bir Kelimeyi Yanlış Telaffuz Edersem? Telaffuz Kaygısına İlişkin Dil Bilimsel Bir Örnek Olay İncelemesi

**Aylin YARDIMCI**

Assist. Prof. Dr., Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University,  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Translation and Interpreting  
aylinyrdmc13@hotmail.com  
Orcid ID: 0000-0003-3238-4646

**Başak Eda HANCI AZİZOĞLU**

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education,  
Department of Foreign Language Education  
edan201@yahoo.com  
Orcid ID: 0000-0001-6937-5925

**Abstract:** Foreign language anxiety is the state of feeling emotional or physical discomfort for language learners (Kralova & Mala, 2018). Language learners' anxious emotional reaction to a foreign language is often remedied by reducing and balancing the affective filter by language experts and educators (Yaoqing, 2021). From a scientific perspective, the current research indicates that pronunciation anxiety is quite common among language learners regardless of their proficiency levels (Kafes, 2018). Within the same context, this research study specifically investigates the underlying motives that cause pronunciation anxiety among highly-accomplished language learners. A speech analysis technique, an effective method of applied linguistics, is applied to analyze the underlying reasons that cause pronunciation anxiety. This linguistic study hypothesizes that Turkish EFL learners mostly experience pronunciation anxiety in the English language when they come across sounds that are not present in the Turkish language. Thus, it is significant to investigate the impact of first language interference on pronunciation anxiety levels of language learners through an effective speech analysis technique. This scientific study highlights the correlation between pronunciation anxiety and first language interference. The results indicate that there is not a direct correlation between first language interference and pronunciation anxiety; however, the participants of this study showed consistency in the fact that Turkish language learners experience pronunciation difficulty when they come across with sounds that are not present in their native language, Turkish. In parallel, other cross-linguistic interactions across other language combinations can be explored for future research studies.

**Keywords:** Applied linguistics, highly-accomplished English language learners, pronunciation anxiety, speech analysis.

**Öz:** Yabancı dil kaygısı, dil öğrenenlerin duygusal veya fiziksel rahatsızlık hissetme durumudur (Kralova ve Mala, 2018). Dil öğrenenlerin yabancı dile karşı kaygılı duygusal tepkisi, genellikle dil uzmanları ve eğitimciler tarafından duygusal filtrenin azaltılması ve dengelenmesiyle giderilir (Yaoqing, 2021). Bilimsel açıdan

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bakıldığında mevcut araştırma, dil öğrenenler arasında, yeterlilik düzeyleri ne olursa olsun, telaffuz kaygısının oldukça yaygın olduğunu göstermektedir (Kafes, 2018). Aynı bağlamda, bu araştırma çalışması özellikle yüksek düzeyde başarılı dil öğrenenler arasında telaffuz kaygısına neden olan altta yatan nedenleri araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, telaffuz kaygısına neden olan altta yatan nedenleri analiz etmek için uygulamalı dilbilimin etkili bir yöntemi olan konuşma analizi tekniği uygulanmıştır. Bu dilbilimsel çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin, Türkçede bulunmayan seslerle karşılaştıklarında çoğunlukla İngilizce dilinde telaffuz kaygısı yaşadıklarını varsaymaktadır. Bu nedenle, ana dil müdahalesinin dil öğrenenlerin telaffuz kaygı düzeyleri üzerindeki etkisinin etkili bir konuşma analizi tekniği ile araştırılması önemlidir. Bu çalışma, telaffuz kaygısı ile ana dil müdahalesi arasındaki ilişkiyi vurgulamaktadır. Sonuçlar, ana dil müdahalesi ile telaffuz kaygısı arasında doğrudan bir ilişki olmadığını göstermektedir; ancak bu çalışmanın katılımcıları, Türkçe öğrenenlerin ana dilleri olan Türkçede bulunmayan seslerle karşılaştıklarında telaffuz güçlüğü yaşadıkları konusunda tutarlılık göstermiştir. Buna paralel olarak, gelecekteki araştırma çalışmaları için diğer dil kombinasyonları ile diğer diller arası etkileşimler araştırılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uygulamalı dilbilim, yüksek düzeyde başarılı İngilizce öğrenenler, telaffuz kaygısı, konuşma analizi.

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## INTRODUCTION

Speaking in the target language is the most stressful experience according to students in foreign language classes (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014). The nature of this language domain brings along negative feelings for language learners, and pronunciation anxiety is indeed a controversial problematic issue in Turkey's language educational context. Furthermore, researchers have posited that the apprehension associated with speaking in a foreign language may stem from the inherent vulnerability language learners feel when engaging in oral communication (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Moreover, studies have underscored the pervasive influence of cultural factors on pronunciation anxiety, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of how socio-cultural aspects contribute to the apprehension experienced by Turkish language learners (Bogdanov, 2020; Yildirim, 2016). In addressing the complexity of this issue, it becomes imperative for educators to adopt comprehensive strategies that encompass both linguistic and cultural dimensions to mitigate the adverse impact of pronunciation anxiety on language acquisition.

For instance, Dikmen (2021) states that it is necessary to reduce foreign language anxiety in order to improve EFL learners' performance. To overcome these challenges within the Turkish educational context, the fear of unfavorable judgment and the self-perceived speaking skills of Turkish English learners are explored as potential sources of anxiety in oral practice. Fear of bad evaluation is identified to be a source of anxiety in the English FL classroom in the study (Subaşı, 2010). Additionally, nervous students are shown to be afraid of negative evaluations because they specifically believe they would look silly in group works which causes them to expect negative appraisal from their peers or teachers. This finding leads to a specific question on whether having low level of language proficiency could be the ultimate cause for pronunciation anxiety in the target language. Another study (Kafes, 2018) sought to investigate the variables that cause the fear of English pronunciation among pre-service EFL teachers. It was determined that participants' gender, prior English language education, perceived level of pronunciation skills, and perceived level of pronunciation anxiety had a moderate variation in the factors that create pronunciation anxiety. Therefore, language learners experience pronunciation anxiety regardless of their proficiency levels.

Within the Turkish educational context, Demircioğlu (2013) states that pronunciation has been overlooked in the English teaching process in Turkey. According to him, speaking and listening have long been neglected in the Turkish educational system by both instructors and learners. The majority of Turkish students then are able to communicate in the English language at only lower intermediate levels no matter how accomplished they are in the written English language standard tests. On the other hand, neither teachers of English nor students who want to learn English place a higher value on pronunciation because distinct articulations are unavailable in Turkish. Due to difficulties pronouncing

specific vowels and consonants that are not available in Turkish, upper intermediate and advanced levels of English are typically believed to be a step too far to become proficient speakers due to the lack of focus on the speaking domain in the English language programs and curriculums in Turkey.

Although several studies have been conducted on different aspects of foreign language anxiety, there is still a need for research on pronunciation anxiety in Turkish EFL learners. While there are numerous studies in the research that demonstrate the level of EFL speaking anxiety experienced by learners, few of them provide insight into the unique character of the phenomenon, and a thorough knowledge of it is lacking in the literature (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014). Therefore, it is significant to investigate the impact of first language interference on pronunciation anxiety levels of language learners.

## Research Question

1. What are the underlying motives that cause pronunciation anxiety among highly-accomplished language learners?

## Literature Review

Anxiety has been identified as one of the most crucial affective variables throughout the second or foreign language learning process by a large body of research over the last few decades. (Brown, 1987; Cassar et al., 2023; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Mora et al., 2023). Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is the state of feeling uneasy that creates emotional or physical discomfort among language learners (Kralova & Mala, 2018). It is also defined as a situation-specific anxiety that arises from the distinctiveness of formal foreign language study, particularly in low self-assessment of conversational abilities in that language (Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003). FLA was defined by Horwitz et. al. (1986, p.128) as "a separate complex construct of self-perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors associated to classroom language acquisition originating from the uniqueness of language learning process" in their well-known article.

In their clinical study, they collected feedback from 30 students who attended a language learning support group in university foreign language teaching lectures. They stated that foreign language anxiety should be understood as a situation-specific concern coming from the distinctiveness of formal foreign language instruction, rather than an instance of normal classroom anxiety. According to their theory, other study fields do not involve self-concept and self-expression to the same extent as foreign language studies that distinguishes the anxiety associated with foreign language acquisition from other types of intrinsic anxieties in different disciplines.

On the other hand, students with an anxiety disorder may be more likely to develop FLA; yet, it is not rare for students who excel in other courses to struggle with learning a foreign language. As a result, there must be something special about the language learning experience that causes anxiety in particular students. In parallel with this line of thinking, being a sub-component of FLA, pronunciation anxiety (PA) then can be defined as a multifaceted term that refers to nonnative speakers' feelings of struggle in oral-communication circumstances as a result of negative/low pronunciation self-perception, as well as beliefs and worries about pronunciation.

In contrast, the normal cognitive, physiologic/somatic, and behavioral symptoms of anxiety indicate its presence (Baran-Łucarz, 2014, p.453), and there are a series of determinants of pronunciation anxiety as follows: learning experiences with native-speaking teachers, study abroad experience, foreign language enjoyment and L2 willingness to communicate (Baran-Łucarz & Lee, 2021, p. 96-98). According to the research of Florence Ma (2021), it is almost evident that some students tend to be anxious when they confront native English teachers. Thompson & Lee (2014) examined the impact of abroad experience and second language competency on foreign language classroom anxiety and addressed affective outcomes after travels abroad by examining the anxiety profiles of Korean English as a foreign language (EFL) learners while taking second language (L2) proficiency into consideration.

The results of the study yielded that the subfactors of anxiety scores were linked to both abroad experience and L2 competency. English class performance anxiety diminished as the length of their stay rose.

Boudreau et. al. (2018) investigated enjoyment and anxiety in second language communication with the participation of students at the university level who speak French as a second language, and the findings indicated that the link between enjoyment and anxiety is highly dynamic, resulting in a variety of association patterns that range from negative to positive. Manipuspika (2018) investigated the association between students' language anxiety and their readiness to communicate in EFL. The study's findings revealed a substantial link between students' foreign language classroom fear and their desire to speak. Students' worries included fear of a poor evaluation, test anxiety, and communication anxiety. Furthermore, learners experienced a high degree of worry, which made it difficult for them to deal with the language learning process and led to a lack of willingness to speak. Language learners' anxious emotional reaction to a foreign language is then often remedied by reducing and balancing the affective filter by language experts and educators (Yaoqing, 2021).

Baran-Łucarz (2014) states that language anxiety has been shown in several research to negatively impact foreign language (FL) and second language learning process. Kim & Kim (2016) investigated 101 Korean EFL students' awareness of English pronunciation, their anxiety over it, and the pronunciation learning tools they use to improve their pronunciation. The findings revealed that they understand the importance of pronunciation and that segmental features cause them more anxiety than suprasegmental elements. They suggested the necessity of introducing effective pronunciation teaching techniques that can reduce pronunciation anxiety within the communicative approach to teaching pronunciation, which focuses on practicing sounds in the context of discourse beyond the word level, using activities such as songs, movies, chants, games, and dialogs.

Similarly, Szyszka (2011) attempted to examine the relationship between foreign language anxiety and self-perceived levels of pronunciation in 48 teacher training college students who are studying English as a second language and identified a negative relationship between linguistic anxiety and self-perceived English pronunciation competence. It was found that anxious teacher trainees who thought their pronunciation was poor have been reported to have higher pronunciation ability than those who reported lower levels of anxiety. Rumiyati & Seftika (2018) revealed that learners have a significant level of anxiety, which is caused by three factors: communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of bad evaluation. As a result, students' speaking abilities are affected. The findings of another study on speaking anxiety (Tien, 2018) showed that students are very concerned about the precision of their grammar use through their lack of vocabulary knowledge mismatching their perfect pronunciation desire to their meaning-making.

Surprisingly, female students tend to have more English speaking anxiety than male students, which is a gender-related issue. In terms of gender differences, the findings indicated that female participants were more likely to experience FL speaking anxiety within the context of their interlanguage system. Furthermore, non-English majors are more apprehensive about speaking English than English majors. In a similar vein, students who have studied English for a longer period of time are less concerned about speaking English in the classroom. Similarly, Eddraoui & Wirza (2020) found that the main causes of EFL speaking anxiety in young populations are pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, and fear of negative criticism. Toubot & Seng (2018) investigated the major three reasons that contribute to increased speaking anxiety among EFL learners: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence.

The results yielded that the dread of negative appraisal and communication apprehension components received the highest average, followed by low self-confidence. According to the study conducted by Mahmoodzadeh (2021), in comparison to the other two parts of their interlanguage system, the individuals were more likely to link their most FL speaking fear experienced in the classroom to their interlanguage meaning system. In terms of level differences, the findings showed that



gaining more FL knowledge does not always imply a significant reduction in FL speaking anxiety, as more proficient participants were more susceptible to anxiety-provoking factors within their interlanguage system than less proficient participants. Plailek (2021) investigated the Thai EFL students' English pronunciation problems in order to learn more about the elements affecting their pronunciation. The findings revealed that the learners' basic grasp of English pronunciation is the most significant component contributing to the problem. Teachers' instruction came next, followed by the frequency of English pronunciation. On the other hand, the disparities between the Thai and English sound systems contributed to their pronunciation difficulties.

Another research (Tenorio Alarcón & Rojas Candia, 2013) found out that language anxiety is caused by linguistic (lack of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation), psychological (loss of self-confidence), and pedagogical reasons (some classroom practices: oral activities, fear of negative evaluation). These factors made it difficult for students to communicate their messages and engage in oral production tasks. Aside from that, linguistic anxiety presented itself in a variety of psychological behaviors, including physical, verbal, and emotional replies.

## Methods

The methods employed in this case study research are interview and pre-structured speech analysis. The study takes place at the same Turkish state university, where the participants volunteered to participate in the study. The participants in this research study are Turkish public university students, who are officially pursuing their college education to become English language teachers, translators or English language literature experts. Within the format of this case study research, ten participants with similar educational background and English language proficiency levels are purposefully selected. The participants are specifically selected from the highly accomplished English language learners, whose English language proficiency is tested via an official national standard examination that verified a shared set of language proficiency skills among them as they are studying at English Language Teaching department.

In the first phase of the data collection process, the participants are asked to narrate their educational background that focuses on the milestones where they improved their English language skills. For this purpose, the participants shared their demographic data through a written questionnaire (Please see the appendix). Within this written questionnaire, the participants are asked to provide information that reveals whether they were born into households where English is spoken or not. This specific data is collected to shed light on the duration and quality of their language learning process. In the second phase of the data collection process, the participants are asked to report on the specific instances in which they experience pronunciation anxiety. The participants reported their responses through interviews and open-ended questionnaire questions (Please see the appendix).

In the last phase of the data collection process, the participants are asked to pronounce a list of specifically identified vocabulary through a questionnaire. The vocabulary list is designed by the researchers to have sounds that are partially in the Turkish language. In other words, some of the vocabulary listed in the questionnaire have sounds that are not present in the Turkish language in order to convey a comparative speech analysis. The participants are first asked to read the vocabulary list to get familiarized with the words, and then they are asked to read them aloud within the context of a pronunciation test (Please see the appendix). The purpose of this test was to analyze how these highly accomplished learners perform on the sounds that are familiar in their native language versus the sounds that are absent in the Turkish language.

A speech analysis technique, which is a commonly used research technique in applied linguistics, is employed to categorize the pronunciation of each word into phonetic segments of the international phonetic alphabet. The analysis is conducted by a linguist, who has a PhD from an applied linguistics department in the U.S. She formerly had her graduate degrees from a US universities, and she

has experience in teaching college level English. With the collection of these above mentioned data collection techniques, the data on the following criteria is determined:

- The verification on the participants' high-level English language skills
- The specific instances in which highly accomplished English language learners experience pronunciation anxiety
- The impact of first language on second language pronunciation characteristics.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **The Variability of Language Proficiency on Pronunciation Skills**

Within the format of this case study research, it has been critical to select the participants who share similar highly accomplished language skills and qualities. For this reason, a specific public university in Turkey has been selected so that the participants possess similar intellectual linguistic backgrounds. All participants are found to be born in monolingual households, where Turkish is the sole language spoken in their home environment. In other words, the parents and siblings of these participants are all monolingual Turkish speakers, which increased the validity and credibility of the collected data. This first demographic finding shows that these participants learned English as a foreign, but not as a second language. This means they did not live in environments in which English is spoken as a second language, but it is part of the school curriculum as being a foreign language.

Rather than the school environment, which provided limited exposure and a lack of extra-curricular activities for speaking practice, the research participants mostly practiced English through listening, reading and writing practices since the fourth grade as part of their public school education until they start college. Another common and shared quality is that all of the participants applied and are accepted to college for specifically getting education and training on the English Language. Thus, the data analysis for this first phase on the demographic data verified a shared common educational background for all 10 participants, and all 10 participants learned English within the school environment without any prior language exposure or educational support before except for their school education.

### **Pronunciation Anxiety Causes**

Participants describe pronunciation anxiety as a feeling of embarrassment because of an emotion related to shame, and they associate it mostly with the feeling of failure. Speaking, as the crucial domain of the language acquisition process, demands rapid thinking abilities and on-the-spot language formulation to convey the linguistic message in mind. Unlike written communication or literary texts, which allow for careful planning and editing, the act of speaking is both an immediate and spontaneous form of language use, requiring individuals to immediately process and produce language. Speaking then demands quick thinking and on-the-spot language formulation. This aligns with the idea of thinking about the process of language acquisition with well-defined speaking skills (Rajendran & Yunus, 2021).

In contrast, the participants in this research study all complained for the rote learning practices that give insufficient importance to pronunciation learning and teaching in their English language learning curriculum. Since all participants in this research study grew up in a household, where Turkish is spoken as the daily and official language, they also did not find the opportunity to practice spoken English outside the school environment. Given the situation, the lack of exposure to spoken language while learning a target language is listed as the most problematic reason that the participants listed for their number one pronunciation anxiety cause. Therefore, the most crucial finding of this research is the necessity to immerse and implement a specifically designed speaking curriculum in official language learning programs including any language-based public school curriculum.

One other theme that occurred as a crucial finding in this research study is that students experience pronunciation anxiety if they see a new vocabulary that they have not encountered before. Interestingly, all participants are aware that languages cannot be learned without making mistakes; however, they still feel anxious regarding the vocabulary that they do not own (Devries, 2012). Owning a word refers to a state of flexibility of automatically using a vocabulary in different contextual combinations without a special effort. From one perspective, unfamiliarity in the target language causes anxiety just like unknown and unfamiliar situations cause stress for other circumstances for human nature. Yet, it should be remarked that situational type of anxiety, as part of a personal trait, is quite different than the type of anxiety that is specifically about pronunciation anxiety. When considered as an individual trait, anxiety displays frequent fearful attitudes and feelings towards the unknown (Saviola et al., 2020). In parallel, one common theme that occurred in the data collection is the fact that pronunciation anxiety occurs when language learners come across with a word that they do not own.

Speaking in front of an audience in the English language adds up to the participants' fear of making mistakes, and they judge and perceive their own voice as "weird." All participants confirmed that public speech adds to the existing pronunciation anxiety and raises their anxiety level. From this perspective, another pronunciation anxiety cause listed by the participants is sounding gibberish with non-existent forms of language. Participants indicate a feeling that is away from sounding natural which could be associated with the fact that there are dissimilar intonation, pitch and stress forms between English and Turkish. This dissimilarity pushes the participants to articulate some new sounds that they have never produced before. To illustrate, students reported to be more comfortable when they are among peers, who are at similar proficiency levels. This sameness in proficiency gives them a feeling of belonging, and they expect not to be judged by for their pronunciation mistakes. On the other hand, they tend to feel anxious once they are with someone whom they believe to be more proficient in the English language than themselves. The reason is emphasized that they become self-conscious with an awareness of the fact that someone with better skills can criticize their pronunciation with their far advanced speaking skills.

The most interesting finding in this research study is the expectations of the society. Interestingly, another cause for pronunciation anxiety is determined as the society's expectations for Turkish English Language learners regardless of their proficiency.

Many writers have posited two basic needs in human beings: for separateness, independence, or "agency," on the one hand, and for closeness, interdependence, or "communion" on the other. The social arrangements, values, and psychological orientations which support the first need constitute individualism. Those which support the second constitute collectivism (Sunar, 2020, p. 393).

Turkey, with its high population of youth, is a collectivist society in which concepts of harmony, respect for traditions and consistency and trust in the social ordeal are dominantly valued (Boztilli et al., 2023). The quality of this societal aspect has been clearly observed in the participants' attitude towards how much pressure they feel when it comes to community pressure. With this idea in mind, the students can easily think that they do not have the right to make a mistake because the society's expectations from them is being near-perfect once they are accepted to a linguistically advanced college program. Without further knowledge of the linguistic components come into play, the society is most likely assuming the student in question knows it all about the English language, if a student enters a department after passing a series of competitive standard tests to be admitted to a university in Turkey to be trained as English language teachers, translators or literature experts. This is neither the collectivist society's fault nor the students' and the findings of this research study pinpoint poorly designed English teaching curriculum that lacks speech practices.

The final finding of this research study is apart from psycholinguistics reasons. The speech analysis focused on the participants' speech qualities regarding pitch, intonation and stress by considering the features of the International Phonetics Alphabet for the English Language. As a result of

the speech analysis, all the participants in this case study failed to pronounce the sounds that are not present in their native language, Turkish while they were mutually intelligible for the sounds that are both present in the English and the Turkish language. In Turkish orthography, which uses the Latin alphabet, any word can be read and pronounced with the same sound correspondence; however, the English language phonetics do not have letter to letter correspondence for pronunciation. This irregularity within the language makes the pronunciation an irregular and challenging process unlike the languages that adapted the Latin alphabet with letter and sound correspondence.

Below is the most problematic pronunciation mistakes Turkish speakers in this study encountered apart from pitch and intonation which can be a subject matter of another linguistic study:

- Almost all students failed at producing interdentals. Interdentals are produced by pulling the top of the tongue between the teeth, and since once the Turkish language does not consist of this sound, the participants used voiceless alveolar /t/ instead of interdentals [θ] and [ð] .
- Another problematic case is when the participants pronounced voiced glide /w/ in place of voiced fricative labiodental/v/ because they do not have /w/ sound in the Turkish language.

## Conclusion

Speaking skills, as the exemplification of simultaneous daily communication without the presence of literary texts, represent people's language skills faster than any other language domains (Shteiwi & Hamuda, 2016). Speaking skills indeed play a crucial role in daily communication, enabling individuals to express their thoughts, convey information, and interact effectively with others. The significance of speaking skills then is the key for any type of daily communication, and therefore cannot be disregarded from the language teaching programs and curriculums (Naumushin, 2019). In contrast, the lack of exposure to spoken language while learning a target language is listed as the reason that the participants listed for their number one anxiety cause in this study, and this signals the poor educational methods in practice that almost completely ignore the significance of speaking practices in English language education in Turkish public schools.

One significant finding is language learners have a tendency to feel anxious when they are not sure about the contextual use of a vocabulary. In this case, if a learner does not own a word with detailed comprehension skills that depend on prior experience of using that specific vocabulary, then the learner feels confusion during simultaneous speech as to which contextual use is appropriate for the conversation in question. Even though all learners in this research study are aware that anxiety can be overcome by sufficient exposure to spoken language, and mistakes made is another pathway to learning new knowledge, they cannot help having it due to a couple of educational factors listed. Such pronunciation anxiety then causes low esteem in the target language, and inability to overcome this fear brings back more anxiety and the results can be entirely avoiding to speak in the target language. Therefore, lack of exposure to spoken language has reduced these highly accomplished learners' self esteem for their abilities, talents and thereby potential achievements.

The participants of this research study confirmed that their level of speaking is not near their advanced level of reading and writing which was the basis for the tests that claimed them successful. That could be the reason internationally acclaimed language proficiency tests such as TOEFL makes speaking as one of the necessary domains to pass the test. In other words, failing to speak in the TOEFL test can be the reason to fail at the test even if the rest of the other domains of listening, reading and writing are at a satisfactory level. This Turkish way of standardized test that fails to test the speaking skills of the students reduces the importance given to speaking skills and as a result students come to language departments without the desired level of speaking skills, which in return causes them to feel more anxiety than their European peers who are subject to language tests that do not ignore one of the inseparable main domain of language learning: Speaking.



Fear of saying a cluster of sounds that has never been uttered before is also the basis for being unsure of the outcome of the pronounced words. This situation makes the act of speaking for second language learners an act that is easily avoidable by being passive listeners in overly crowded learning environments in which teacher authority has to be dominant to make the instruction work (Valizadeh, 2021). Thus, learning how to speak English effectively in the current Turkish public educational system is not currently possible, and the classroom sizes must be reduced by emphasizing the need for spoken language learning practices for desired linguistic outcomes.

Another problem is very frequent changes in the educational system without a pilot study implemented (Öztekin & Tekel, 2021). These type unstable approaches not only harm the quality of education in addition to the overcrowded learning settings, but they also impact the students' access to highly qualified language educations unlike their European peers. Music, movies and social media are among the top three list of the remedies participants use as self-learning strategies to overcome the challenges of their mispronunciation habits. Practicing self-speech has become their only current alternative solution to overcome the challenges of their pronunciation problems while being trained as an English language expert.

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## **Appendix**

### **Demographic Questions**

1. Do your parents know English? If so, do they carry a certificate or a diploma?
2. How would you define yourself as an English language learner? Are you a beginner, intermediate or a proficient language learner? Why? Why do you say that?
3. When did you start learning English? For how long have you been learning English?
4. Do you sometimes experience pronunciation anxiety? Under which circumstances? Can you give more details?

**Please read the following list of words slowly.**

Apple

Bee

Car

Dean

Easy

Fun

Girl

Hello

Iron

Joy

Lemon

Ox

Zoo

Yellow

Wonderful

Walrus

Waywardness

X-ray

Xenophobia

Xylophone

Vivid  
Vending machine  
Ventouse  
Queen  
Quantity  
Quail  
Thick  
Throw  
Thought  
Third  
Thistle  
Letter  
Leather  
Ladder

1. Please focus and think of the times that you experience “*pronunciation anxiety*.” And write a paragraph about it? Could you remember and define these experiences of instances in which you experienced “pronunciation anxiety.”

***Please use at least 7-10 complete sentences by using the following questions as a guide:***

- Have you ever experienced pronunciation anxiety?
- Can you describe your feelings in detail?
- What do you think caused your anxiety? Why do you say that?
- What was the occasion(s) that you feel pronunciation anxiety?
- Why do you think you experienced pronunciation anxiety?
- Did you take any action about your pronunciation anxiety or are you planning to take any action to overcome your pronunciation anxiety?