A SYSTEMATIC SYNTHESIS OF THE ACADEMIC STUDIES THAT EXAMINED THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY

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1. Introduction

To date, a wide variety of definitions emphasizing different features of language have been made. According to great philosopher Plato:

> Language is an aspect of man, of nature, and of nations, the transfiguration of the world in thought, the meeting-point of the physical and mental sciences, and also the mirror in which they are reflected, present at every moment to the individual, and yet having a sort of eternal or universal nature (Jowett, 2008).

The more enhanced the communication among people has been the smaller our world has become, by this way language has been a meeting point not only in physical and spiritual sciences, as Plato emphasized, but also in every aspect of life. The new age that is called 'communication age' brought new necessities with itself. One of the most important of them was a common language which connects people from different parts of the world. Meanwhile, the process of English language conquering many areas of life, such as politics, art, sports, popular culture, and economy, has been going on slowly but surely for two centuries. Thus, the common language that people from different countries need for cooperation was presented to the service of modern people on a golden platter. Graddol (2006) states that more globalization means more use of English and more use of English means more globalization. Nevertheless, the only problem now was how to effectively teach this language to the youth, who were seen as the future minds of countries, in order not to fall behind the times. Here, linguists stepped in and began to develop theories on how to learn the language most effectively. Studies that started with the Grammar-Translation Method, which has been used in Latin and Greek teaching for centuries in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, still continue on its way by changing the winds and sands (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). It is unthinkable for language teachers to escape from this change while even languages themselves cannot escape from it.

As a matter of fact, the main reason for these changes in the English teaching tradition is the student's needs, namely what the government as the main decision-maker on education expects from them. Thus, in order to teach a foreign language, in different phases of history, different methods have been tried. Turning its direction to the West after the proclamation of the Republic, Turkey took its place in the Kachru's third circle, which Kachru (1992) calls it as the 'expanding circle', by starting to teach her students the Western languages; English, German and French instead of the Eastern languages; Arabic and Persian, with her new education law and modern schools.

Actually, speaking has been considered the most difficult part of the puzzle in skill learning by most people for many reasons. As Pinter (2006) stresses:

This is because to be able to speak fluently, we have to speak and think at the same time. As we speak, we have to monitor our output and correct any mistakes, as well as planning for what we are going to say next (p. 55).

Further studies on this subject indicate that there are many affective factors that create anxiety and prevent students from speaking English inside and outside the classroom. Anxiety is seen as a character of Neuroticism (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The increase in studies on anxiety in Turkey and in the world shows that anxiety is a notion that attracts constant attention in second language studies and this trend is not likely to change in the future. Anxiety is seen as a key component of the Neuroticism/Emotional Stability dimension of the Big Five personality model by Norman (1963) and Goldberg (1981). In addition, Gray (1982) has stated there is no doubt that anxiety is an emotion, but when one reads the abundance of studies on anxiety and the work of psychologists, one may doubt whether it is the only emotion in our thought system.

Besides, a great amount of evidence shows that high levels of language anxiety decrease the language achievement (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). When the personal experiments on SLA processes are taken into consideration with the effect of anxiety, it might be difficult to remember what has been learned since one might be disconnected from the context and get exposed to similar problems for proper communication. Instead of meeting urgent communication needs, the brain tries to handle the problems that anxiety creates. It has been determined that anxiety arising from many factors manifests itself at different levels and stages and causes people to temporarily or permanently quit their language learning (Dewaele & Thirtle, 2009).

Furthermore, anxiety has been seen a worthwhile concept to study on the L2 area especially for the last decade in Turkey with regard to its harmful consequences. In spite of the fact that anxiety is mostly mentioned with its potentially damaging consequences, some researchers claim that the overall consequence of being anxious might really be useful, especially at milder levels, since an increase in effort is an urgent response to anxiety (MacIntyre, 2002). In a different study focused on the same issues, Jean-Marc Dewaele and Peter MacIntyre's (2014) findings have revealed that low level of anxiety does not necessarily mean high level of fulfillment.

On the other hand, Horwitz et al. (1986) described the anxiety in L2 as foreign language anxiety and to measure the level of it, they also developed a 33-item, 5-point Likert-scale type instrument, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS hereafter). According to MacIntyre (1999, p. 27) anxiety is the "worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language". From this definition, it can be deduced that anxiety is a personal trait and manifests itself at various stages of language learning. Lotherington (2007) proposes some tools like print-oriented writing conventions to reduce the anxiety of the language learners who do not feel themselves ready to talk in synchronous environments. By providing a stress-free environment for practicing conversational English, such a tool helps language learners.

Accordingly, a significant increase has been observed in studies on speaking anxiety in Turkey in recent years. However, the independent evaluation of these studies, which differ in their types, objectives, participants, target groups, and academic levels despite being on the same subject, prevents us from seeing the big picture and thus obtains accurate, comprehensive and consistent information about speaking anxiety. If a systematic analysis of these studies is put forward, on the one hand it will serve as a practical resource for the relevant researchers. On the other hand, all stakeholders also will benefit from it. In the light of what is mentioned above, this study aims to conduct a systematic qualitative synthesis of the studies conducted in Turkey that examined the speaking anxiety in L2.

2. Studies Conducted on Types of Anxiety

Speaking anxiety, being one of the most important obstacles in front of foreign language learning, a considerable number of researchers have conducted studies on the subject. To investigate the phenomena from different perspectives, they have tried to understand its causes by shedding light and collecting data on speech anxiety.

In this section, the literature on foreign language speaking anxiety (hereafter it will be mentioned as FLSA) is reviewed. In the first instance, the necessary definitions related to the topic and the types of anxiety are explained. Then, the causes and effects of foreign language anxiety are discussed. Lastly, the FLSA is reviewed, with particular emphasis on its sources and recommendations for reducing it.

2.1. Anxiety

Anxiety is described in Encyclopedia Britannica as, "a feeling of dread, fear, or apprehension, often with no clear justification". According to Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud; "anxiety is the symptomatic expression of the inner emotional conflict caused when a person suppresses (from conscious awareness) experiences, feelings, or impulses that are too threatening or disturbing to live with" (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Since the second half of 20th century, anxiety has been studied by many researchers in the field of psychology intensively. Spielberger (1966) states that Sigmund Freud was the pioneer of scientists trying to understand the importance of anxiety in psychology. When Freud's definition is examined, firstly it can be understood that anxiety is a symptomatic expression. Thus, when it is expressed by a person it also consists of some symptoms. Freud differentiates them from anger, grief and sorrow by explaining these symptoms as rapid heart rate, difficulty in breathing, sweating, shuddering, vertigo, and feeling nervous, weak or tired (Freud, 1936, as cited in Spielberger, 1966). Secondly, Freud argued that these symptoms are the off-springs of inner emotional conflict. Hence, it can be said that as an abstract concept, the conflict which is experienced by a person inside his mind reflects outside as some physical concrete symptoms.

According to Geçtan (1998), anxiety occurs when the ego faces any danger or threat. These threat situations might be classified firstly as fear caused by an unsettling sensation brought

about by the knowledge of a potentially dangerous situation in the outside world. The anxious situation sourced by fear is called 'reality anxiety'. Second, there is a fear of conflicting with the moral ideals of the general population, which is called 'moral anxiety'. The third is a fear which is called 'neurotic anxiety' that is aroused when the ego loses its control over the instincts' sudden desire.

While Hall (1955) describes anxiety as the physiological reactions of the human body that are governed by the autonomic nervous system and triggered by a potential danger, Shri (2010) sees it normal, emotional, reasonable and expected response of the mind and body. Therefore, it is inevitable to experience a certain level of anxiety by people in their daily life. As a matter of fact, the level of anxiety determines our behaviors to certain situation. On the other hand, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2009) gives some kind of physical indications of anxious individuals such as shortness of breath, headache, fatigue, chest pain, increased heartbeat and sweaty palms. That's why people who experienced anxiety in the past tend to stay away from same kind of situations (Barker, 2003).

2.2. Trait, state and situation specific anxiety

Anxiety has been investigated from different perspectives by researchers for a long time. As a result of these researches, they commonly agreed to classify the types of anxiety as trait, state and situation specific anxiety. If a person tends to become anxious in every different situation, it is described as trait anxiety (Pappamihiel, 2002). Without having a specific reason, these kinds of people experience anxiety in any situation that they encounter. People who have trait anxiety or structural anxiety not only experience negative feelings such as fear and worry in almost any situation, but also they experience same feelings by explaining and reporting these situations (Gidron, 2013). Apart from this, Riasati (2011) has argued that as soon as trait anxiety is related to the learning process, this situation which might be positive at the same time prevents students from learning a language if that person cannot overcome their anxiety.

Contrary to trait anxiety, state anxiety occurs when the individual feels the situation is dangerous or threatening. Spielberger (1983) and Pappamihiel (2002) describe it as the tendency to be anxious in specific situations at a certain moment. Moreover, Riasati (2011) builds a relationship between language learners' reluctance to speaking with state anxiety and he argues that if this situation might be directed with a logical way state anxiety that individuals have might be beneficial for them. Apart from them, Keramida and Tsiplakides (2009) maintain that state anxiety is a social type of anxiety that is specific to certain situations but trait anxiety is a universal type of anxiety because it is free from any condition. In addition, Wiedemann (2015) states that changing from person to person in terms of duration, level, and repetition, every human being may have state anxiety more or less.

On the other hand, situation specific anxiety is deeply connected with specific conditions (Aida, 1994 & Young, 1991). The effects of a special situation may lead to this anxiety, that is, it occurs only in a certain condition such as giving a speech in front of the classroom (MacIntyre

& Gardner, 1991). Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986) underline that situation specific anxiety should be treated differently from the other types of anxiety and seen as a distinguishing phenomenon from other theoretical worries. On grounds that second language learning is a specific kind of condition, it has also been approached as a situation specific anxiety by some researchers (Price, 1991 & Young, 1991).

2.3. Facilitating and debilitating anxiety

Although anxiety is generally considered a mental disorder and may seem like an unwanted feeling, it can sometimes be beneficial. For instance, Alpert and Haber (1960) differentiate them as while facilitating anxiety encourages people to overcome a problem or to manage something, debilitating anxiety suppresses them from learning something new. Additionally, Scovel (1978) suggests "facilitating and hindering" anxiety types depending on the effects of anxiety on learning and performance, and thus while facilitating anxiety leads to struggle and "approach behavior", inhibitory anxiety is referred to "avoidance behavior" in new learning environments. As a result, it is the level of anxiety that determines facilitating or debilitating learning in a person. Even though the same task can be easily accomplished by a person who is moderately anxious, a highly anxious person might experience great difficulty to do it. Accordingly, Krashen (1982) in his "Affective Filter Hypothesis" maintains that some emotional variables such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety facilitate L2 acquisition. He also states that low anxiety is helpful to a great degree in succeeding in L2 acquisition for students.

According to descriptions mentioned earlier, it is expected that there is a positive and negative correlation between facilitating and debilitating anxiety in terms of performance and learning. Indeed, facilitating anxiety enhances students' performance by paying their attention to ongoing situation, and engaging them to the learning process (Kleinmann, 1977 & Scovel, 1978). Furthermore, some of the researchers have discovered that the students with facilitating anxiety show better performance than other students (Eysenck, 1979 & Kleinmann, 1977). In addition, Moyer (2008) who has compared students with facilitating anxiety and students with debilitating anxiety in his study discovered that the latter group made more errors than the former group.

Apart from this, Scovel (1991) indicates that both anxieties work in a harmony, while facilitating anxiety motivates the learner, debilitating anxiety makes the learners become aware of a new or changing issue in the learning environment. In a like manner, Horwitz et al (1986) have maintained that whether facilitating anxiety is beneficial for language learning depends on the task difficulty level and its contribution to the learning is not sufficient. In a similar way, Price (1991) stressed that while the facilitating anxiety helps the students to show a good performance during the course, this performance does not transform a better outcome at the end.

3. Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning

One of the reasons why anxiety in foreign language learning has gained popularity among scholars in recent years is that it has been viewed as an effective source behind language learning achievement, especially in skill learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Actually, Horwitz et al. (1986) are the pioneers of anxiety-related studies in foreign language learning. According to them, anxiety is caused by learners' negative feelings toward foreign language and three main sources of foreign language anxiety are fear of communication, fear of test and fear of negative evaluation. The psychological and physical symptoms that the anxious learners have are "perspiring, palpations, trembling, tenseness, and sleep disturbances". Foreign language classes are at the leading position in which anxiety is felt most intensely (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Apart from that, Woodrow (2006) has explained that learners react to anxiety in two different ways: cognitive reaction involves factors such as worrying and physiological reaction involves any emotional reflection that hinders communication significantly. It is claimed that the anxiety is deeply related to the context in second language learning such as speaking (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In line with these researchers, Young (1991) has argued that anxiety is context-specific and it has many characteristics of language learners such as personality and community that they belong to.

Even though some of the learners have great amount of knowledge about the foreign language they are learning, they experience a significant amount of difficulty to use that knowledge because of the anxiety which effects their performance in language learning. Furthermore, high level of anxiety could debilitate the learners' success in second language learning and it has been put forward by related studies in the area that there is negative correlation between SLA and high level of anxiety (Aida, 1994; Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Gardner et al., 1976; McCoy, 1976; Philips, 1992; Wilson, 2006; Woodrow, 2006).

3.1. Foreign language speaking anxiety

Speaking is a productive skill through which people convey their messages, exchange information and express their feelings by producing verbal utterances (Nunan, 2003). It can be said that the ultimate aim of language learning is producing something in that language. As a matter of fact, one of the main indications that shows a person has efficiency in that language is speaking ability. Moreover, through communication, a message can be conveyed directly. Therefore, speaking skill has gained a great deal of importance in language learning. For the same reason, students might feel anxious, since speaking demands to think and speak simultaneously (Pinter, 2006). These physical and mental processes include to pay attention to context, grammar, pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, vocabulary, syntax, self-error analysis etc. That is why, this complex system of language and socio-cultural rules may prevent learner from communicating effectively. Indeed, when Young (1991) has interviewed some of the specialists in language learning, he has discovered that speaking is the main anxiety-creating

activity and this view has been supported by other researchers (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner 1991; Wilson, 2006; Woodrow, 2006).

From a different perspective, studies have shown while anxious learners have developed a negative attitude towards foreign language classes, they remain uninterested during the lesson and more importantly they also skip the class entirely (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Philips, 1992). Moreover, FLSA may result in reluctant learners, who do not want to participate in speaking activities and the tasks that need to use communication skills (Bekleyen, 2009). Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that the anxious learners lose their interest in the lesson and they do not care about being prepared for the class. On the contrary, they wish to drop out of the class. For this reason, students who suffer from anxiety experienced difficulty in reaching and using the information in their memory. Therefore, they make great effort to deal with this problem (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

The physical symptoms of speaking anxiety reveal itself as sadness, anger, fear, a rapid heartbeat and sweating (Demir & Melanlıoğlu, 2014). From another perspective, Price (1991) states that one of the main reasons leading to speaking anxiety is error in pronunciation. Moreover, speaking also demands you to complete the task understandably in a short time. Even so, beforehand preparation and being familiar with the topic are the factors that affect speaking anxiety negatively (Ay, 2010). It can be concluded that speaking as a complex skill in language learning plays an important role in foreign language anxiety.

In a nut shell, anxiety is a symptomatic expression caused by threatening or a disturbing situation. There are three types of anxiety; trait, state and situation specific anxiety. FLSA has been categorized under the situation specific anxiety by some researchers. Although anxiety is approached mainly as a mental disorder and an unwanted feeling, to a certain degree, it might be beneficial. Anxiety is caused by learners' negative attitudes toward foreign language. Speaking anxiety is a natural phenomenon which is felt by learners in foreign language learning process. Independent of the nationality, first language, gender or other variables it is experienced by all learners to a certain degree. Finding out its reasons would be a great step to prevent its devastating effects to language learners.

With regard to its negative consequences, anxiety has been regarded as a concept worth studying among L2 researchers. Therefore, a significant increase has been observed in studies on speaking anxiety in recent years. However, since the number of qualitative studies is quite limited, their contribution to clarify the subject is not sufficient. On the other hand, the findings obtained from quantitative studies are inadequate to gain a perspective for an in depth understanding of the subject. If a deep understanding of the sources of speaking anxiety is gained and systematic analysis of it is put forward, on the one hand, it will serve as a practical resource for the relevant researchers, on the other hand all stakeholders also could benefit from it. In the light of the reasons mentioned above, this study aims to conduct a systematic

qualitative synthesis of the studies made in Turkey that examine foreign language speaking anxiety in L2.

In the light of the literature on the FLSA, our goal is to identify the characteristics of the theses conducted in Turkey about foreign language speaking anxiety. In order to gain deeper understanding and to analyze qualitative data collected from 47 researches on speaking anxiety, the systematic review method is employed to examine the studies deeply. Systematic review is used to see the findings of the original studies from different perspectives and to produce an initial synthesis of the findings to some extent in the included studies (Hanley & Winter, 2013). On the other hand, Petticrew and Roberts (2006) describe systematic review as: "At its core, a systematic review is a method of critically appraising, summarizing and attempting to reconcile the evidence" (p. 15). The review was conducted in five steps in the light of the definition by Gough et al. (2013). In the first step, a specific need is determined after the literature review. Second, the research question is formulated in terms of the method to be followed and the answers to be sought. Third, to choose the researches which are relevant to the subject, inclusion-exclusion criterion is determined and during this process a screening formation has been adapted. After that, the researches have been coded and described in maps. In the last step, a synthesis of the researches is made according to their findings in an integrative way instead of forming a list.

An inclusion-exclusion criterion is formulated to reach optimal number of studies. To narrow down the studies, firstly the keywords are determined. While searching, keeping the aim in mind, following key terms related to FLSA are used; 'anxiety', 'speaking anxiety', 'foreign language anxiety', 'foreign language speaking anxiety', 'FLSA', 'FLCAS' and 'EFL speaking anxiety.' After determining the key words, an online search at the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center official website has been conducted.

Specifically, the studies including following criteria were taken into consideration;

1. The ones that focused on English speaking anxiety,

2. MA theses or PhD. dissertations,

3. The ones conducted in Turkey,

4. The ones related to educational science,

5. The ones published between the years 2000-2022

After the first internet research, 71 publications have been found. To adopt the inclusion-exclusion criterion, full-texts of studies have been downloaded and grouped in an excel page under the certain titles such as aim, participants, methodology, data collection tools, year and so on. Regarding the criteria mentioned above, some studies have been excluded and the others have been included. After this process, the number of studies has been reduced to 47.

4. Results of the Studies Conducted on FLSA

The academic studies conducted in Turkey on FLSA that had been examined within the scope of this project consist of 47 MA theses and doctoral dissertations.

4.1. The studies examined in terms of dates

In this section, the studies' distribution of years is investigated. 47 studies which focused on FLSA have been conducted between 2000 and 2022. Graphic 1 and Table 1 show the outcomes of this distribution.

Table 1. Distribution of studies according to years

| Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2003	1	2,13
2008	1	2,13
2009	1	2,13
2011	1	2,13
2012	2	4,26
2014	5	10,64
2015	1	2,13
2016	2	4,26
2017	2	4,26
2018	6	12,77
2019	14	29,79
2020	6	12,77
2021	5	10,64
Total	47	100,00
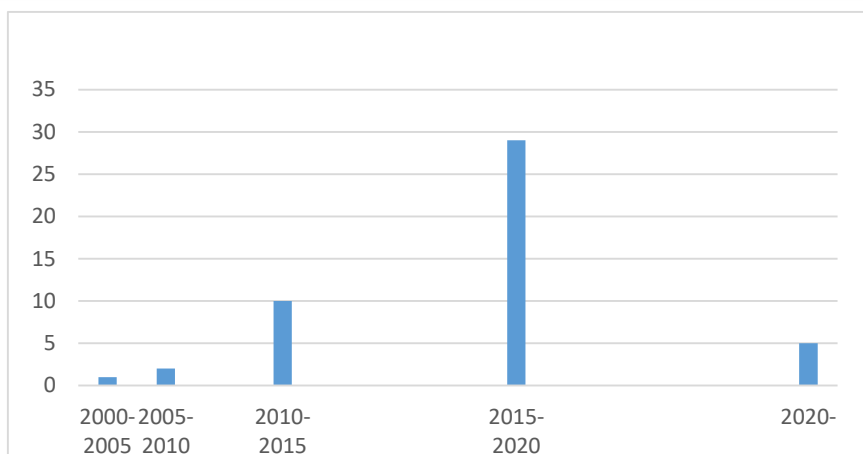
Graphic 1. Distribution of studies according to years

Table 1 and Graphic 1 display that at the beginning of the last decade, the number of the researches shows an increase and reaches its peak between 2015 and 2020. Almost %30 percent of all studies were conducted in 2019. However, between the years 2003 and 2008 the subject matter had not interested any researchers. We expect that the increase will keep its pace in the current decade.

4.2. The studies in terms of types of analysis

The results of the studies regarding types of analysis are given in Graphic 2.
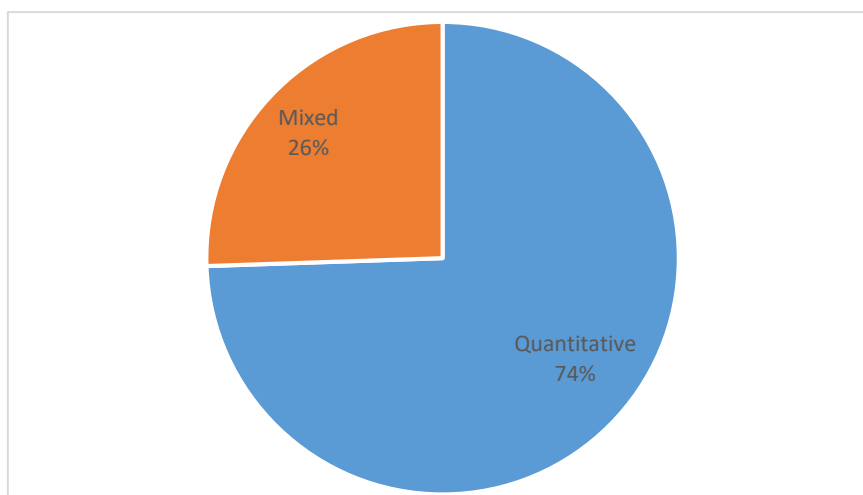
Graphic 2. Number of studies by types of analysis

As it can be seen in Graphic 2, all of the theses and dissertations which have been taken into consideration in this study have been conducted either quantitatively or mixed. Graphic 2 clearly indicates that no researcher has preferred to conduct only-qualitative type of study. While quantitative publications make up three-quarters of all research, this ratio leaves the remaining quarter to mixed studies.

4.3. The studies in terms of academic level

The studies are analyzed in terms of academic level and the findings are given in the graphic below.
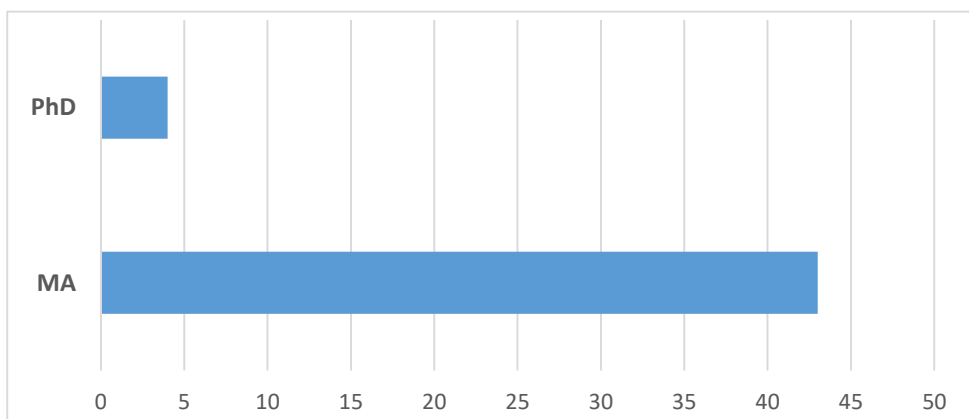

Graphic 3. Number of publication by academic level

Graphic 3 shows the number of PhD dissertations and MA theses. As the Graphic shows MA theses make up more than %90 percent of all publications. If the dates of researches are taken into consideration, it is likely that in a near future an increase in the number of both groups is likely to occur in the near future.

4.4. The studies in terms of sample

After analyzing studies in terms of sample, it was found that they are grouped under six titles. The results are given at the Graphic 4.
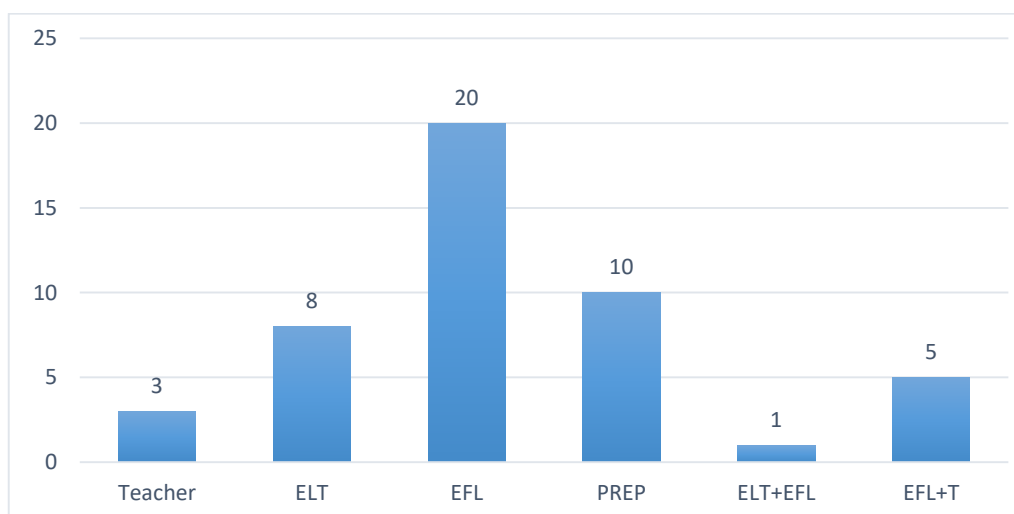

Graphic 4. Number of publications by sample

The graphic shows while a great majority of studies related to FLSA have been conducted for students, among them, English as a foreign language (EFL hereafter) students have emerged as the most studied group consisting of nearly 50% of all publications. Although it seems that there is only one publication studied with both students of English language teaching (ELT hereafter) and EFL as participants together, the number of studies including them separately as participants is significantly high. However, the studies conducted on Prep-School Students consist of 21% out of the total. Furthermore, the studies having teachers as participants draw attraction as the second least studied group.

4.5. The studies in terms of participants' level of education

In this part, the studies have been analyzed considering the participants' level of education. Graphic 5 shows the number of publications by educational level
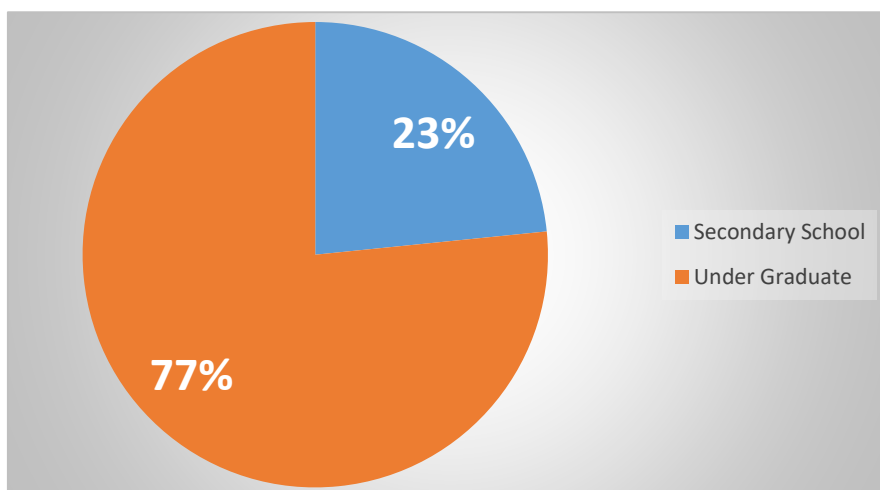
Graphic 5. Number of studies conducted according to level of education

As it can be seen in Graphic 5, the researchers focused on FLSA in secondary school and university students. No research, however, has been conducted with students who study at primary school and post-graduate. This is probably due to fact that the MA or PhD students have conducted their studies either at secondary schools or at the universities where they work at. The number of studies which employed undergraduate students is three times as high as the number of publications which include secondary school students.

4.6. The studies in terms of data collection tools

In table 2, we classify the studies in accordance with their data collection instruments.

Table 2. The studies in terms of data collection tools

| Data collection tools	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire	10	21,28
Questionnaire Interview	15	31,91
Questionnaire Semi-structured interviews	2	4,26
Questionnaire Pre and post test	2	4,26
Questionnaire Proficiency exam	1	2,13
Questionnaire Observations	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Diary	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Proficiency exam	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Report-writing tasks	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Reflective journals	2	4,26
Questionnaire Interview Pre and post test	2	4,26
Questionnaire Focus group interview Reflective journals	1	2,13
Questionnaire Discussion Assignments	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Diary Observation	1	2,13

Questionnaire Interview Proficiency exam Researcher notes	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Proficiency exam Reflective journals	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Diary Researcher notes	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interviews Analytic memos Student's reports	1	2,13
Questionnaire Interview Pre-evaluation forms Reflective journals	1	2,13
Questionnaire Self-evaluation forms Observation Classroom diaries	1	2,13
Total	47	100,00

Since one of the key terms is FLCAS, naturally all of the researches include FLCAS as a data collection tool. Nevertheless, regardless of their method, majority of researchers also used qualitative data collection instruments. The number of studies having only a questionnaire or a questionnaire and an interview consists of slightly more than %50 percent of all studies.

4.7. The studies in terms of university types

The studies have been analyzed according to where the study was conducted. Graphic 6 shows the types of universities and their percentage.
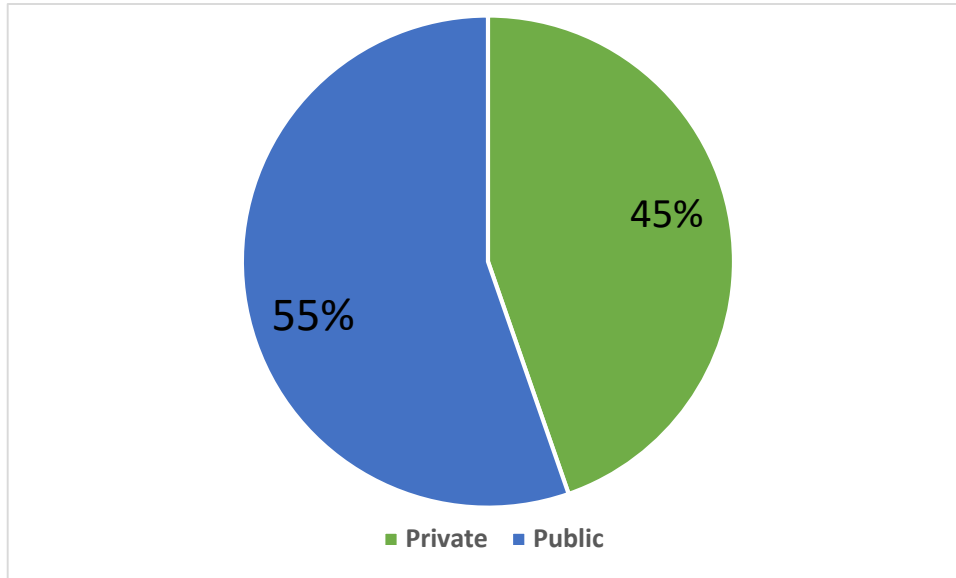

Graphic 6. Number of publication by university types

According to the Council of Higher Education, the percentage of private universities among all universities is 36,76%. However, it can be seen on Graphic 6, the percentage of publications in private schools' is 55%. While at the top of the list Bahçeşehir University takes place (with 9 studies), the universities which have more than one study are respectively Çağ University (with 5 studies), METU, Gazi University and İstanbul Aydın University (with 3 studies), Atatürk University, Balıkesir University and Başkent University (with 2 studies).

4.8. The studies focusing on aim

The studies have been analyzed according to their aims and grouped under the codes. The Graphic 7 shows the distribution of studies by their aims.
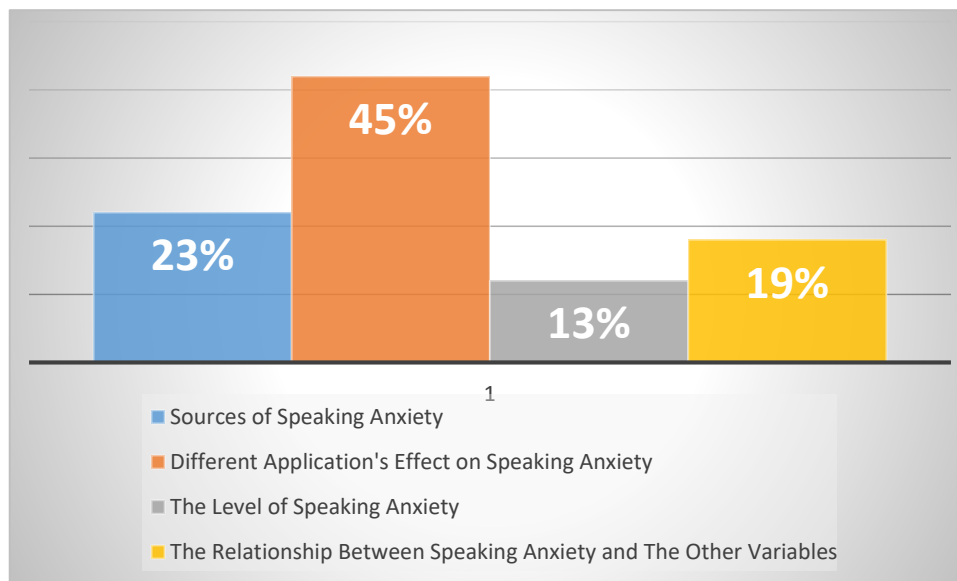
Graphic 7. Number of studies by aim

As it can be seen in Graphic 7, the studies have been collected under four main groups according to their aims. The first group consists of 45% of the total researches. This group focuses on the effects of different tools such as drama and conversation clubs on speaking anxiety. The next group focusing on to find out sources of speaking anxiety consists of 23% of the total. The third group which has 19% of all studies analyzes the relationship between speaking anxiety and different variables. The last group including the studies which determine the level of EFL learners and teachers has 13%. In this part of the systematic review, similar publications which have used different methods and participants will be examined under the same codes.

4.9. The studies focusing on the anxiety level

This group approximately consists of fifteen percent of all theses. Although the studies focus on level, most of them also include the information which relates to other categories. Thus, same studies will be mentioned under other groups. To find out the participants' anxiety level, all researchers have implemented either original version of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) or adapted versions of it. When it comes to the extent and degree of FLSA, the most widely used tool by researchers is FLCAS. Since its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is measured as .93, it can be said that its reliability is highly acceptable.

To investigate systematically, the studies have been grouped under two main categories; students and teachers. Students are also classified according to their grade level. The studies in both categories are given respectively.

Table 3. The publications focused on the anxiety level

Study	Grade Level	Participants	Anxiety Level
Korkmaz (2019)	Secondary School Students	149 5th grade students	Moderate
Zambak (2016)		250 8th grade students	
Takan (2014)		102 high school students	
Özcanlı (2021)		920 6th, 7th and 8th grade students	High
Saltan (2003)	EFL University Students	100 EFL students	Moderate
Balemir (2009)		164 prep-school + 70 first and second grade students	
Oksal (2014)		41 EFL students	
Doyman (2020)		60 prep-school students	
Öztürk (2012)		383 prep-school students	Low
Kılıç (2014)		56 EFL students	Moderate
Ülker (2021)		184 EFL students	
Zerey (2008)	ELT Students	39 ELT students	Moderate
Tanrıöver (2012)		355 ELT students	
Çölkesen (2015)		631 ELT students	
Bozok (2014)		172 ELT students	
Aksu (2018)		98 ELT students	
Akkuş (2021)		315 ELT students	Low
Karakaya (2011)	Instructors	150 Instructors	Moderate
Çokay (2014)		123 Instructors	Moderate

Table 3 indicates that the studies focused on anxiety level mostly include EFL and ELT university students as participants. Instructors, however, were the least preferred group by researchers to study. Besides, participants have been discovered mostly to be moderately anxious. While two studies have revealed their participants had low level anxiety, only one study has found that secondary school participants had high level of anxiety.

4.10. The studies focusing on comparing demographic differences

To pursue the aim of investigating the anxiety level, some studies in this group have also investigated whether there is any significant relation between demographic differences. Table 4 shows 11 studies in four category investigate this difference between the variables.

Table 4. The publications focused on comparing demographic differences

Study	Demographic differences	Result	
Balemir (2009) Tanrıöver (2012) Bozok (2014) Çölkesen (2015) Boldan (2019) Korkmaz (2019) Ülker (2021)	Male	Female	Female participants have higher level of anxiety than males.
Zambak (2016) Öztürk (2012)			Male participants have higher level of anxiety than females.
Korkmaz (2019)	Intensive foreign language classroom	Traditional classroom	Intensive foreign language classroom students are less anxious than regular classroom students.
Vural (2017)	ELL Department	ELT Department	The English speaking anxiety level of ELT students is lower than ELL students.
Yentürk (2019)	Private University	Public University	Private university students are more anxious than the public university students.

%80 percent of all studies in this category have investigated the difference between male and female participants in terms of anxiety level. Although only two studies have found that males have a higher anxiety level than females, seven of them have found vice versa. What's more; university types, department types and the curriculum types stand out as subjects which were investigated by researchers.

4.11. The studies focusing on relationship between flsa and other variables

The group focusing on relationship between FLSA and other variables consists of 20% of all the publications. This group examines the relationship between speaking anxiety and different factors such as demographic differences, internal and external causes. In the light of the research conducted by the group, table 5 explicitly depicts which studies yield statistically significant results and which ones did not in terms of speaking anxiety.

Table 5. The publications investigated the effects of variables on speaking anxiety

Study	Variable	Result	Correlation
Karakaya (2011) Çölkesen (2015) Bozok (2014)	Experience of visiting English speaking countries in advance	Statistically significant	Negative
Karakaya (2011) Çölkesen (2015) Ülker (2021) Yentürk (2019)	Starting to learn English at lower stages Spending a lot of time to teach or learn English in the past	Statistically significant	Negative
Bozok (2014)		Non-effective	
Çölkesen (2015) Korkmaz (2019) Özkan (2019)	Academic Success	Statistically significant	Negative
Korkmaz (2019)	Taking an English course out of school	Statistically significant	Negative
Zambak (2016)		Non-effective	
Karakaya (2011)	L2 learning contexts	Statistically significant	
Çölkesen (2015)	English medium of instruction	Statistically significant	Negative
Zambak (2016)	Feeling sympathy in English lesson Teacher's teaching method, Activities inside the classroom such as singing, playing, question & answer, Preparing for a test, Taking English studying to outside the class Extracurricular activities like sending e-mails in English, using social media tools, surfing on English internet pages	Statistically significant	
	English is spoken by other family members	Non-effective	
Korkmaz (2019)	Family income level	Statistically significant	Negative
Ülker (2021)	Loving English and loving studying English after class	Statistically significant	
Akkuş (2021)	Communication apprehension	Non-effective	
	Attempting to think in English Message abandonment strategies	Statistically significant	
Yentürk (2019)	Age	Non-effective	
Gürbüz (2019)	Students' attitude of oral presentations	Statistically significant	Negative

Öztürk (2012) Takan (2014) Oksal (2014)	Motivation	Statistically significant	Negative
Oksal (2014) Balemir (2009) Khalil (2018)	Proficiency level	Non-effective	
Karakaya's (2011)	Competency in listening and speaking	Statistically significant	Negative
Aksu (2018)	Grade	Non-effective	
	Oral communication strategy utilization Perceived oral proficiency	Statistically significant	Negative
Vural (2017) Özcanlı (2021)	Individual characteristic (extraversion) Foreign language speaking self-efficacy	Statistically significant	Negative
	Individual characteristic (neuroticism and agreeableness)		Positive
	Individual characteristic (conscientiousness and openness)	Non-effective	
Gerçekçioğlu (2019)	Teacher-centered lesson	Non-effective	
	Learner-centered lesson	Statistically significant	
Aldabeeb (2021)	Foreign language enjoyment	Statistically significant	Negative
Bozok's (2014)	Gender	Statistically significant	
Yentürk (2019) Aksu (2018)		Non-effective	
Öz (2017)	Mindfulness	Statistically significant	

Table 5 indicates that some of the studies focusing on the same variable have come up with different results. For instance two out of three studies focusing on gender yielded statistically non-effective result. Furthermore, the correlations between variables and FLSA are mostly negative (it is positive only in one case).

4.12. The studies focusing on the sources of speaking anxiety

After investigating all of the researches, it has been found that the sources of speaking anxiety could be analyzed under four codes; individual, curriculum, environment and instructor.

Table 6. The publications focused on the sources of speaking anxiety of learners.

Study	Source of Speaking Anxiety	Category of Source
Ataş (2014) Özdemir (2018)	Lack of self-confidence	
Saltan (2003) Tanrıöver (2012) Kılıç (2014) Çokay (2014) Ataş (2014)	The belief of mistakes The beliefs about using L1 or L2 The beliefs about language learning The beliefs about native speakers or teachers The belief of self-ability Negative self-assessment Notion of giftedness	
Çokay (2014)	Fear of interaction	
Ak (2021)	Proficiency problems	
Çokay (2014) Bozok (2014)	Mispronunciation	
Ülker (2021)	Introvert character	
Saltan (2003) Ataş (2014) Kılıç (2014) Oksal (2014) Korkmaz (2019) Bozok (2014) Özkan (2019) Ak (2021)	Fear of making mistake	Individual
Tanrıöver (2012) Çokay (2014) Bozok (2014) Özkan (2019)	Lack of vocabulary	
Bozok (2014) Kılıç (2014)	Number of grammar rules Grammar knowledge Applying the rules	
Doyman (2020)	Getting left behind	
Bozok (2014) Doyman (2020)	Perfect speech Perfectionist approach language	
Ataş (2014) Doyman (2020) Ülker 2021	Fear of being laughed	Environment
Doyman (2020) Ülker (2021)	Peer pressure	

Balemir (2009) Tanrıöver (2012) Bozok (2014) Ataş (2014) Ak (2021) Ülker (2021)	Aware of being evaluated Negative evaluation	
Balemir (2009) Tanrıöver (2012) Bozok (2014) Ataş (2014) Ak (2021) Ülker (2021)	Fear of public speaking Speaking in front of a group	
Saltan (2003) Tanrıöver (2012) Kılıç (2014) Çokay (2014) Doyman (2020)	Self-comparison to others Comparison of language classes with other classes	
Balemir (2009) Tanrıöver (2012) Kılıç (2014) Oksal (2014)	Testing procedures Oral tests	
Saltan (2003) Tanrıöver (2012) Bozok (2014) Kılıç (2014) Ataş (2014) Doyman (2020) Ülker (2021)	Activity types Topics	Curriculum
Saltan (2003) Tanrıöver (2012) Bozok (2014) Kılıç (2014) Ataş (2014) Doyman (2020) Ülker (2021)	Teacher's manners Teacher's feedback type Randomly being called on Not understanding what the teacher says Negative reactions by the teacher	Instructor

It can be concluded from Table 6 that the sources of speaking anxiety can be examined under 37 themes and 4 codes. Among themes, mostly mentioned ones are; 'fear of making mistake', 'speaking in front of a group, 'negative evaluation' and 'activity types'. The four codes are individual, environment, curriculum and instructor. The number of sources caused by curriculum and instructor were significantly less than the sources caused by individual and environment.

Table 7. The publications focused on the sources of speaking anxiety of instructors.

Study	Source of Speaking Anxiety	ategory of Source
Saltan (2003) Oksal (2014) Çokay (2014) Ataş (2014) Korkmaz (2018) Ak (2021) Ülker (2021)	Past learning experiences Being unprepared for the class Teaching experiences Lack of practice Insufficient knowledge about the subject The failure to motivate the students	Individual
	Students' unexpected questions	Environment
	Unattractive topics	Curriculum

The FLSA has also been by instructors as well as learners. Thus, some studies focused on the sources of FLSA experienced by language instructors. Table 7 reveals that the sources could be classified as 8 themes under 3 codes. Most of themes have been collected under individual sources. Interestingly, as a source of anxiety, the subject of 'unattractive topics' has been experienced not only by the learners but also by the instructors.

4.13. The studies focusing on the anxiety decreasing applications

Besides understanding the anxiety level and sources that lead to the FLSA, some studies in this area have tried to decrease the anxiety by using some tools. These studies make up the majority of anxiety research. Such studies are generally conveyed in experimental methods. The applications were investigated under two sub-categories as non-technological and technological.

4.13.1. Non-technological methods

Even though modern times have been described as the age of technology, the effect of some traditional methods in education is undeniable. Some researchers who share same idea tested these methods' impacts on FLSA. Table 8 shows these methods and their effectiveness.

Table 8. Non-technological applications' effect on FLSA.

Study	Method	Effect on Speaking Anxiety
Zerey (2008)	Original-text theater application	Decreasing
Ataş (2014) Okandan (2019 Turgut (2019) Sarıaltın (2019) Uyumaz (2020)	Drama	Decreasing
Öz (2017)	The Mindfulness Meditation-Based Intervention Program (MMCI)	Decreasing

Khalil (2018)	Using debate during English classes	Decreasing
Altın (2018)	Quantum learning model	Decreasing
Bozkurt (2019)	Role-play Story-telling techniques	Non-effective
Boldan (2019)	Speaking club	Decreasing
Aydın (2019) Gençer (2020)	NLP-based activities (Mirror, Look and Guess etc.)	Decreasing
Kırsaç (2020)	Lead-in activities (Discussion through pictures)	Decreasing

Table 8 gives us the fact that drama is used as a non-technological tool by researchers. Except for one case, all methods help to decrease participants' anxiety level. In total, 10 different non-technological tools have been tested by researchers until today. 13 of 14 studies were conveyed after 2015. It means that no matter how much technology effects our lives deeply, traditional methods will keep their value as useful applications in the classrooms in the years to come.

4.13.2. Technological methods

It is inevitable for most of the researchers to utilize technological methods to decrease FLSA of their participants. Table 9 reveals what these methods are and how they affect the FLSA.

Table 9. Technological applications' effect on FLSA.

Study	Method	Effect on Speaking Anxiety
Oksal (2014)	Cooperative learning with technology-related activities	Decreasing
Güzel (2016)	Second Life (a virtual second language learning platform)	Non-effective
Özdemir (2018)	Asynchronous Video-Recorded Speaking by Voice Thread	Decreasing
Koçer (2019)	English film activities	Non-effective
Koç (2019)	Multicultural awareness raising instruction	Decreasing
Uyumaz (2020)	Digital Videos	Decreasing
Nayir (2020)	Synchronous learning	Decreasing
Darıyemez (2020)	Flipped Classroom Model	Decreasing

It can be understood from Table 9 that technological methods do not draw researchers' attention in the field of FLSA as much as non-technological methods. While non-technological methods have been studied by 14 researchers, this number reduces to 8 when it comes to the technological methods, which also represents the number of technological tools. Moreover, six

of them managed to reduce FLSA. Thus, this result left two tools as ineffective which are Second Life (a virtual second language learning platform) and English film activities.

5. Discussion

FLSA has been extensively searched by local and foreign researchers since 1980s. While some of them have tried to understand underlying causes of it, others have come up with solutions to decrease its effect on both learners and teachers. This study aims to systematically examine the theses related to FLSA conducted in Turkey. 47 MA theses and PhD dissertations have been found related to aim of this study.

We have taken into consideration the theses which have been conducted during last two decades. The table of frequency shows that two thirds of all the theses have been conducted in last four years. The theses which have been conducted in 2019, consists of nearly one third of all theses. Even though the number tends to decrease in 2021, it is expected that FLSA will continue to be an attractive research subject for the researchers.

The researchers have three ways in front of them to conduct their studies, the findings have unearthed that they have employed only two methods; mixed and quantitative which consists of three fourth of all researches. A qualitative study might be very helpful for the researchers who especially focuses on the sources of FLSA. It may give a deeper understanding about anxiety with its qualitative data collection instruments such as interview, dairy, open ended questions. One reason why most researchers have preferred the quantitative method might be Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. Since it was developed by Horwitz et al. in 1986, it has been commonly used to determine anxiety level of participants and it gives useful figures to the researchers.

When it comes to the academic level, the MA theses outweigh PhD dissertations. There are only four PhD dissertations among all 47 studies. Nearly half of the studies have been conducted at private universities, all of the doctorate dissertations have been conducted at public universities. The reason of that might be that most of the private universities in Turkey have not PhD programs in ELT.

As a sample approximately in half of the studies, EFL learners have been used as participants while teachers remained as the least preferred group as participants. It could be caused by the mindset that mostly the students are thought the group who experienced FLSA, not the teachers. Even so, the teachers might be a precious source to understanding the sources of anxiety caused by the instructors. While some studies have preferred to study with a single group such as prep-school students others have conducted their studies with EFL learners and teachers.

The sample's education levels show that they all have come from two stages of education system; secondary school and university. It means that the students who study at other stages apart from these two stages have not participated in the FLSA studies. The reason why primary school students have not preferred as participants might be that both they are not expected to

speak in English during English classes and their anxiety level could be misleading because of their affective characteristics deeply related to their ages.

Questionnaire and interview are two mostly common data collection instruments which have been preferred by researchers. To understand the different aspects of anxiety, along with the FLCAS, several various qualitative data collection tools have been implemented. Among them; test, observation, reflective journal, researcher notes and self-reflection forms draw the attention as frequently used instruments.

Studies are divided into two classes according to the place of research; public and private universities. While they share the publication number more or less equally, most of the recent researches related to FLSA have conducted at private universities. At times, their ratio could have been increasing. As it was mentioned before, these numbers only include MA theses but through starting the PhD programs, it is expected that some of these theses will form the basis of PhD dissertations.

We have found that the studies are gathered under four main groups according to their aims. These are the studies which determine the level of EFL learners and teachers, the researches that aim to find out sources of speaking anxiety, the studies analyzing the relationship between speaking anxiety and different variables, the researches focusing on the effects of different tools such as drama and conversation clubs on speaking anxiety.

At the first category, the findings indicate that both the students and instructors have generally moderate level of speaking anxiety. Nevertheless, even if their numbers were significantly less, there are some studies whose findings indicate a contradiction with those studies. For instance, Özcanlı (2021) has found high level of FLSA in his participants, while Öztürk (2012) and Akkuş (2021) revealed that their participants have low level of FLSA. In some of the researches at this category also compare the demographic differences in terms of FLSA. 80 per cent of them focus on gender difference and great majority of them find female participants have higher level of anxiety than males. Only two studies; Öztürk (2012) and Zambak (2016) have found the opposite.

At the second group, some of the researches have unearthed that speaking anxiety and motivational orientations are negatively correlated. Moreover, there is significant relations among FLSA and personality traits, foreign language speaking self-efficacy of the participants, gender and experience of abroad, gender, grade and perceived language proficiency. However, the level of learners' language proficiency and the period of language education have not played an important role in their degree of FLSA.

The studies at the third category reveal that the sources of speaking anxiety are caused by four different variables; learner, instructor, education system and environment. 'Fear of making mistake', 'speaking in front of a group, 'negative evaluation' and 'activity types' are found as mostly FLSA creating factors for the learners. The number of sources caused by education system and instructor are significantly less than the sources caused by individual and

environment when the learners are taken into consideration. On the other hand, the studies focus on the FLSA sources experienced by instructors reveal that they suffer from eight different anxiety-creating factors in three main category.

At the last category, some techniques and methods which are used to decrease anxiety level have been identified. Among them; non-technological methods such as theater, drama, meditation etc. and technological methods such as virtual language learning programs, asynchronous video-recorded speaking programs and English films come to the fore. In particular, drama stands out as the most implemented method by researchers. Among non-technological methods, role-play and story-telling techniques were found as ineffective tools in terms of FLSA, while Second Life (a virtual second language learning platform) and English film activities were found ineffective at the other category. However, it may be too early to say certainly ineffective for the technological methods, as these methods were only implemented once, unlike traditional methods whose effectiveness has been tested several times. Another interesting point about technological methods is that no application has been implemented by no more than one researcher. This might be due to the fact that every single new day brings new developments in technology. So, the researchers have innumerable options to implement.

6. Conclusion

This study has employed the systematic review method to find out the characteristics of the theses about foreign language anxiety conducted in Turkey. Keeping the aim in mind, the research question is formulated as 'What are the characteristics of the theses about foreign language anxiety conducted in Turkey?' To reach this goal and to find out an answer to the research question, a systematic review is employed. It includes five steps; determining a specific need, formulating the research question, choosing the researches which are relevant to the subject, determining an inclusion-exclusion criterion, coding and describing the researches in maps and make a syntheses of the researches.

An inclusion-exclusion criterion is formulated to reach optimal number of studies. Firstly the keywords have been determined. After determining the key words, the studies have been searched in the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center official internet site according the following criteria; have focused on English speaking anxiety, MA theses or PhD dissertations, employed in Turkey, related to educational science, published between the years 2000-2020. After all this process, it has been found that 47 researches have focused on speaking anxiety. The studies have been investigated according to their aims, data collection tools, academic levels, samples, education levels, university types, dates and their methods.

This research provides a systematic perspective to the studies which are related to FLSA conducted in Turkey. It connects the different studies on the same concept in a single study. It shows the prospective researchers the way they might follow to conduct research on a similar subject. It shows language teachers and language learners suffering from FLSA which sources they can use in order to have a better understanding of their anxiety. In addition, it provides a

detailed picture of academic studies related to FLSA conducted in Turkish universities. It shows the deficiencies and problematic areas of the mentioned researches. Moreover, these gaps could be helpful for further researchers to bridge them with their prospective studies. Besides, the findings of the researches could light the way for the stakeholders to understand the nature of FLSA and to develop coping strategies with it.

The people who are related to the field of FLSA should read the relevant literature to understand what anxiety is and what the types of anxiety are. They also should look at the sources of FLSA which were unearthed by previous researches. After determining the sources, they should look at the instruments of FLSA which succeeded to decrease anxiety level of the participants.

As far as limitations of the research is concerned, although the subject has been studied since 1980's, the present study has merely focused on the last two decades to understand the characteristics of current researches; however, without any time limitation, the study could provide a better picture of the related field. Also, the present research focuses on only the MA theses and PhD dissertations conducted in Turkey. It could be more useful to see the articles and other academic publications published not only in Turkey but also in other countries.

Keeping the common problematic areas of the researches, following suggestions for the further researchers could be mentioned. While most of the researcher incorporated in learners to their studies, few of them studied with instructors. Nevertheless, they could be precious sources to understand the phenomena. Besides, all of the studies are conducted as quantitative or mixed data collection tools but none of them were conducted as merely qualitative method. It is known that a qualitative study could give a deeper understanding than a quantitative method. So, it might be useful to employ a qualitative method for the prospective researchers. In addition, the underlying causes of the difference between demographic variables could be studied with qualitative instruments to find out for instance why females have higher level anxiety than males. Furthermore, experimental studies could pave the prospective researcher's way to implement untried technological and non-technological methods or they can implement similar tools with different group of participants.

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