Predictors of foreign language speaking anxiety in a tertiary level EFL context

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to investigate tertiary-level English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' L2 speaking anxiety and its relationship with their L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation in a Turkish EFL context with a mixed-methods approach. A composite survey form was used for quantitative data, while qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Major findings indicated that the ought-to L2 self had the strongest positive link with L2 speaking anxiety, whereas other variables were correlated with L2 speaking anxiety negatively. Multiple regression analysis revealed that the ought-to L2 self was the strongest and the only positive predictor of L2 speaking anxiety. L2 motivation and the ideal L2 self followed it as two negative predictors, respectively. However, L2 WTC did not significantly impact the regression model. Based on the results, the study provided some implications for L2 learning and teaching.
Keywords: L2 speaking anxiety, L2 willingness to communicate, the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, L2 motivation

Predictores de la ansiedad al hablar un idioma extranjero en un contexto de ILE de nivel terciario

RESUMEN: Este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar la ansiedad al hablar el idioma inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en estudiantes de nivel terciario, y su relación con la disposición a comunicarse en la L2, el yo ideal y el yo deóntico L2, y la motivación en la L2 en un contexto turco de EFL mediante un enfoque de métodos mixtos. Se utilizó un formulario de encuesta compuesto para recopilar datos cuantitativos, mientras que los datos cualitativos se recopilaron mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas. Los principales hallazgos indicaron que el yo deóntico L2 tenía la conexión positiva más fuerte con la ansiedad al hablar en la L2, mientras que las demás variables se correlacionaban negativamente con la ansiedad al hablar en la L2. El análisis de regresión múltiple mostró que el yo deóntico L2 fue el predictor más fuerte y el único predictor positivo de la ansiedad al hablar en la L2. La motivación en la L2 y el yo ideal en la L2 le siguieron como dos predictores negativos, respectivamente. Sin embargo, la disposición a comunicarse en la L2 no tuvo un impacto significativo en el modelo de regresión. El estudio proporcionó algunas implicaciones para el aprendizaje y la enseñanza del L2 basadas en los resultados obtenidos.
Palabras clave: Ansiedad al hablar en L2, disposición a comunicarse en L2, el yo ideal en L2, el yo que se debería ser en L2, motivación en L2

1. INTRODUCTION

Among four skills, improving speaking is generally thought to be the ultimate goal of a learner because it is considered one of the most essential indicators of language competency. The rationale behind this perception may arise from its function in daily communication. Foreign language use is associated with speaking ability as learners want to communicate with others and express themselves by speaking a foreign language (Luoma, 2004). Therefore, communication and speaking have an indispensable role in foreign language learning.

Speaking skill is also regarded as one of the most challenging skills during language learning. Learners' desire to speak a target language for communication causes them to be anxious about the challenges they encounter naturally (Luoma, 2004). It is more common to see learners being anxious in speaking activities as getting into focus provokes the learners' anxiety levels (Melouah, 2013). However, they need to overcome L2 speaking anxiety to be successful in language learning (Chaokongjakra, 2013), as a lower anxiety level accompanies a better and more effective learning process (Sato, 2003). Many scholars have studied this common issue from different perspectives (Basic, 2011; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014; Putri & Marlina, 2019). Furthermore, prior research has explored L2 anxiety and its links with some psychological factors (e.g., Papi, 2010; Peng, 2015). However, there is a dearth of research into the links between L2 speaking anxiety and other psychological factors. Based on this research gap, the current study aims to explore the links between L2 speaking anxiety and several psychological factors, including L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), a widespread issue in language learning, can be explained as a specific array of emotions, self-perceptions, and actions concerning L2 learning and instruction that originate from the distinctive nature of language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Unwillingness to participate in lessons and a tendency to avoid negative evaluations are considered the general characteristics of learners with FLA (Oxford, 2015). However, Dörnyei (2005) mentioned that FLA might also facilitate learners' language development. All four skills might be affected by FLA, but speaking is considered the principal skill that might reflect the level of learners, and improving it is vital in foreign language education. Activities based on speaking cause further anxiety (Kriangkrai & Siriluck, 2012), and speaking is generally associated with anxiety because learners are required to process the input and produce their ideas without much preparation instantly (Bailey, 2003).

Many scholars have investigated the factors underlying L2 speaking anxiety in different contexts. Empirical evidence has been uncovered for some factors: fear of negative evaluation (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009), perfectionism (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), talking to native speakers (Woodrow, 2006), having adverse prior experiences (Basic, 2011), inadequate language proficiency (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014). However, there are also many different psychological factors affecting learners' L2 speaking anxiety levels, and an investigation into these factors might contribute to the understanding of this issue.

Communication and language learning seem closely intertwined, as productive use of the language is required for developing L2 competency (Yashima, 2012). Accordingly, L2 WTC, identified as learners' preparedness to participate in a dialogue with other people using an L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998), is of great importance in language learning. A high level of L2 knowledge does not guarantee effective communication in an L2 as there are other factors affecting the learners. Thus, the main objective of L2 learners should be to develop their L2 competence while triggering the L2 WTC (Denies et al., 2015). Furthermore, while speaking, highly anxious learners tend to have a low degree of L2 WTC (Sun & Teng, 2021; Yashima, 2002).

L2 motivation, generally associated with a dynamic and complex nature, is one of the individual differences predicting achievement or failure in language education (Dörnyei, 1994). Motivated learners can be highly proficient in an L2 without considering their cognitive features, although intelligent learners can fail as they are unmotivated to learn an L2 (Dörnyei, 2001). Learners with high motivation tend to be less anxious, while highly anxious learners in speaking activities are prone to be less motivated to use the target language (Liu & Huang, 2011; Luo, 2018). L2 motivation was regarded as a critical concept in this study because it functions as both a preliminary power and a maintaining force affecting the whole L2 learning process (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007).

The ideal L2 self, regarded as the core dimension of the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) developed by Dörnyei (2009), indicates the L2-specific image a learner would like to achieve. When individuals want to speak an L2 fluently, imagining themselves as fluent L2 speakers functions as an effective motivator for reducing the disparity between the actual self and the ideal image (Papi, 2010). Learners with a vivid ideal self-image are more willing to join L2 learning activities than learners without that kind of self-image (Dörnyei, 2014). Thus, the ideal L2 self appears to be crucial in the L2 learning process. The second element of L2MSS, the ought-to L2 self, is originally associated with the qualities learners need to possess to fulfill others' expectations or prevent possible unfavorable outcomes (Dörnyei, 2009). Learners having an L2-related intention to satisfy the expectations of a third person may be stimulated by the ought-to L2 self (Papi, 2010). It also has an essential influence on L2 motivation although to a lesser extent compared to the ideal L2 self. When learners have the ought-to L2 self at high levels, they tend to experience a high level of L2 anxiety, and this may lead to an unwillingness to improve their L2 (Papi, 2010). L2 learning experience, the third facet of the L2MSS, is related to learner attitudes and the evaluations of learners' immediate learning environment with some motives, such as the curriculum, teacher, and peers; however, it was not included in the current study due to feasibility concerns related to data collection.

L2 speaking anxiety has been an intriguing issue for many scholars because speaking is acknowledged as the most demanding skill triggering anxiety among others (Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015). Especially the reasons behind L2 speaking anxiety have been studied by various researchers (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Gan, 2012; Subaşı, 2010; Woodrow, 2006). Some scholars have focused on using different strategies to enhance speaking skill while reducing L2 speaking anxiety (Liu, 2018; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Öztürk, 2021; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). In addition, different scholars investigated the relationship between L2 speaking anxiety and achievement (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014; Tridinanti, 2018). However,

there has been less prior evidence for L2 speaking anxiety and its predictors from a psychological perspective. Therefore, exploring the factors, such as L2 WTC, L2 motivation, and ideal and ought-to L2 selves, might provide further insights into L2 speaking anxiety.

3. THE CURRENT STUDY

The studies examined so far have revealed that the psychological factors impacting learners' L2 speaking anxiety during the language learning process have not been sufficiently investigated to the knowledge of the researchers, and this is yet to be discovered. The current study intends to examine tertiary-level Turkish EFL learners' English-speaking anxiety and its relationship with their L2 WTC, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation. The research questions below were generated:

1. What are the perceived levels of students' L2 speaking anxiety, L2 willingness to communicate, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation?
2. What are the perceived characteristics of students' L2 speaking anxiety, L2 willingness to communicate, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation?
3. Is there a relationship between students' L2 speaking anxiety, L2 willingness to communicate, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation?
4. Among the factors of L2 willingness to communicate, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation, what are the best predictors of L2 speaking anxiety?

3.1. Setting and participants

The current study was carried out at the English Preparatory School of a university in Türkiye, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is utilized while grouping learners based on their language levels. There are five different levels: elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, and pre-faculty levels. The academic year includes four modules, each lasting eight weeks in this school. Students receive 25 hours of instruction specified for four language skills, and the school offers 4-5 hours for Self-Organized Environment (SOLE) lessons and project lessons as it adopts collaborative learning strategies in general.

The study was conducted with 232 EFL learners from different departments utilizing convenience sampling to collect the quantitative data. To collect qualitative data, 12 students were chosen through purposive sampling, considering learners from different anxiety levels. Following the quantitative data collection, we negotiated with all the instructors related to the students' performances in classroom activities as part of which they were individually required to speak the target language. Grouping students into three as 'low anxious', 'mid-anxious', and 'high anxious' based on negotiation, we conducted interviews with the students from these three groups to ensure the feasibility of data collection in the first period of online education during pandemic.

3.2. Instruments

This study started with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis in line with the explanatory sequential design. In this design, the first stage promotes a general answer to the research problem with quantitative data collection while the second stage, consisting of qualitative data collection helps to expand the general picture (Creswell, 2012). In the quantitative data collection phase, a composite survey instrument including 83 items was utilized in addition to demographic information questions. The L2 WTC scale involved a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (almost never willing) to 5 (almost always willing), while the rest of the scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). We utilized the translated items to ensure the comprehensibility of the instrument upon receiving approval from all the investigators who used them in previous studies. The scales and the alpha values computed with the current study data are presented below.

- L2 speaking anxiety: 18 items by Horwitz et al. (1986) (α = .94).
- WTC inside the classroom: 27 items from the L2 WTC Scale (MacIntyre et al., 2001) (α = .91).
- L2 motivation: 18 items from a questionnaire developed by Al-Shehri (2009) (α = .92).
- The ideal L2 self: 10 items from one of the subscales of the questionnaire developed by Taguchi et al. (2009) (α = .90).
- The ought-to L2 self: 10 items from another subscale of the questionnaire developed by Taguchi et al. (2009) (α = .88).

Subsequently, the qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews including ten questions. After preparing two questions for each variable, we finalized them upon getting expert opinion to ensure in depth analysis of learners' ideas related to variables.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

After ethical approval, the survey instrument was applied for approximately 15 minutes during one of the lessons. The data were subjected to statistical analysis using IBM SPSS 21. Before running standard multiple regression, correlation coefficients were inspected in line with Plonsky and Ghanbar's (2018) recommendations. All the assumption checks were completed before computing correlation coefficients (i.e., assumptions of linearity, normality, and absence of outliers) and implementing standard multiple regression analysis (i.e., assumption checks about sample size, multicollinearity, and singularity, outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and independence of residuals). Upon seeing that all the assumptions were satisfied, data analysis went on with computing Pearson's correlation coefficients and a standard multiple regression analysis. The total L2 speaking anxiety score was entered as the dependent variable, while the total scores of the other four factors were entered as independent variables. The qualitative data were subjected to content analysis utilizing Nvivo 11. During the analysis, the data were coded by two coders. Recurrent patterns were described, and various themes were developed.

4. RESULTS

The first research question sought an answer for the perceived levels of students' L2 speaking anxiety, L2 WTC, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation. Therefore, descriptive statistics were employed for each variable, and the results are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Results of Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	SD
L2 Speaking Anxiety	232	2.70	.81
L2 WTC	232	3.26	.66
Ideal L2 Self	232	3.92	.76
Ought-to L2 Self	232	3.04	.99
L2 Motivation	232	3.77	.67

The second research question aimed to examine the perceived characteristics of students' L2 speaking anxiety, L2 WTC, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation. During the content analysis of the qualitative data, several themes and sub-themes were generated based on the recurrent factors.

Table 2. *The Themes and Sub-Themes Based on the Perceived Characteristics of Students' L2 Speaking Anxiety*

Themes and Sub-themes	n
Causes	12
Perceived incompetencies	8
Fear of making mistakes	6
Interlocutor attitude	6
Effects	12
Class participation	6
Language development	3
Strategies to cope with it	5
Learning from mistakes	2
Studying hard	2
Positive thinking	1

Initially, most of the participants stated that they experienced L2 speaking anxiety to a large extent although its level changed from time to time. Regarding L2 speaking anxiety, three main themes were developed: causes, effects, and strategies to cope with. Following the quantitative results, most participants presented their perceived incompetencies, fear of making mistakes, and interlocutor attitude as major underlying reasons for L2 speaking anxiety as follows.

> *"I felt very anxious when I started learning English as I knew nothing. I started to learn English from scratch this year. I did not know anything except for saying my name in English. Also, I could say my age, and all my knowledge about English was that. This made me feel anxious. Knowing nothing... I knew that I was incompetent."* (ST1)

"I feel anxious while speaking English because it is a language I don't know. There are many difficulties with this language. For example, I have trouble learning the vocabulary I don't know. Also, pronouncing these words while speaking is another difficulty for me." (ST3)

"The perception that my friends around me and the people in my group have a better level of English causes me to feel shyer and fall behind." (ST1)

As for the effects, learners generally stated how L2 speaking anxiety had affected their class participation and language development adversely as follows:

"I think feeling anxious while speaking English affects me negatively because this decreases my participation rates, and the less I participate in lessons, the less I can improve my language ability." (ST9)

"Of course, feeling anxious while speaking affects me very negatively. In the end, English is a language that improves as you speak, and I feel more unwilling because of this anxiety. This affects my development adversely." (ST5)

Regarding the interview transcripts about L2 WTC, two main themes were formed through content analysis: increasing and decreasing factors. Learners explained increasing factors as the things making them more willing to learn and speak English while reporting various factors decreasing their WTC in English. Firstly, many participants mentioned their L2-related life goals, such as living abroad, traveling, and watching movies as a noticeable factor in increasing their L2 WTC. L2 learning environment was another salient characteristic of their L2 WTC, and many interviewees reported interlocutor effects, topic interest, and opportunities to participate in class activities as the factors increasing their L2 WTC. Interviewees also verbalized opportunities to improve themselves as another increasing factor, and they expressed how eager they were to use English in their work, education, and private lives. Also, participants expressed many decreasing factors, such as the interlocutor effect, lack of competence, and fear of failure.

The ideal L2 selves of the interviewees converged on two major themes: causes and effects. While the first theme referred to the motives for their imagined selves as English speakers, the second theme was related to the impacts of these imagined selves on the learners. Based on the interviews, learners generally imagined themselves as proficient English speakers at work and in their social and educational lives. They also emphasized how essential English was to maintain their lives as they dreamed of. The other theme developed depending on the learners' ideal L2 selves was effects. Almost all interviewees agreed that picturing themselves as competent users of English affected them positively and contributed to their language competencies, especially their vocabulary knowledge.

Two themes related to the interviewees' ought-to L2 selves were L2-related expectations and the effects of others' opinions. In line with the findings for the ideal L2 self, interviewees generally reported that they were expected to be competent English speakers who efficiently communicated with foreign people, had a good job, and developed themselves personally. Considering the second emergent theme, some learners mentioned the encouraging effects of others' opinions, although many interviewees were labeled as neutral in this sense. However, these expectations also negatively impacted some learners in contrast with their ideal L2 selves as some students experienced stress because of other people's expectations.

Lastly, two major themes, promoting and impeding factors, were developed regarding L2 motivation. Social life was labeled as a salient characteristic of promoting factors related to L2 motivation. Following these factors, such as communicating with foreign people, many interviewees mentioned their motivation to utilize English in their professional lives. In addition, many interviewees described some impeding factors internally and externally. Internal factors included a lack of language competency, impatience, and the desire to allocate time for hobbies and interests, while external factors involved peer effect, monotonous lessons, and homework.

The third research question intended to reveal the relationships between L2 speaking anxiety, L2 WTC, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated with the finalized quantitative data as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. *Pearson Correlation Coefficients*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. L2 Speaking Anxiety	1				
2. L2 WTC	-.301**	1			
3. Ideal L2 Self	-.278**	.444**	1		
4. Ought-to L2 Self	.388**	.016	.069	1	
5. L2 Motivation	-.272**	.645**	.497**	.172**	1

**Significant at the .01 level.

Pearson correlation coefficients revealed that all variables significantly correlated with L2 speaking anxiety. The ought-to L2 self had the strongest correlation with L2 speaking anxiety and showed a moderate positive correlation. Following this, a negative correlation between L2 WTC and L2 speaking anxiety was found at a moderate level. Correlations of the other variables with L2 speaking anxiety were weaker. Both ideal L2 self and L2 motivation showed weak negative correlations with L2 speaking anxiety.

Finally, the standard multiple regression analysis was utilized to uncover whether the learners' L2 WTC, ideal and ought-to L2 selves, and L2 motivation predicted their L2 speaking anxiety. L2 speaking anxiety was kept as the dependent variable while the other psychological variables were the independent variables in this process. The results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. *Multiple Regression Analysis and Coefficients*

Model	Coefficients				
	Variables	B	β	t	Sig.
L2 speaking anxiety	L2 WTC	-.089	-.109	-1.465	.144
	Ideal L2 self	-.309	-.162	-2.494	.013
	Ought-to L2 self	.641	.435	7.645	.000
	L2 motivation	-.236	-.196	-2.513	.013

The full model including ideal and ought-to L2 selves and L2 motivation as significant predictors and L2 WTC as a nonsignificant predictor accounted for 30% of the variance in students' L2 speaking anxiety (F = 24.31, p < .01). Among three significant predictors, ought-to L2 self was found to be the strongest and the only positive predictor of L2 speaking anxiety. Two negative predictors, namely L2 motivation and the ideal L2 self, followed it, respectively. L2 motivation was found to be the second strongest predictor of L2 speaking anxiety with a negative contribution. As the third predictor, the ideal L2 self also made a significant unique contribution to explaining L2 speaking anxiety negatively. However, L2 WTC did not make a statistically significant contribution to the regression model of L2 speaking anxiety.

5. Discussion

Based on the results, students' L2 speaking anxiety appeared to be at a moderate level in line with many previous studies (Çağatay, 2015; Tridinanti, 2018). This study also examined the perceived characteristics of learners' L2 speaking anxiety through qualitative analysis. Corroborating the earlier studies, L2 speaking anxiety was examined in three different aspects, including causes, effects, and strategies to cope with it. Learners generally associated their L2 speaking anxiety with their perceived incompetencies (He, 2013; Subaşı, 2010). Other distinctive causes of L2 speaking anxiety were stated as fear of making mistakes (He, 2013) and interlocutor attitude (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Woodrow, 2006). Learners also indicated how their class participation and language development were affected negatively because of L2 speaking anxiety, in agreement with previous literature (Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015). As for the strategies to cope with L2 speaking anxiety, learners highlighted the importance of increasing awareness related to learning from mistakes and developing positive perspectives corresponding to many earlier studies (Lee, 2014; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Öztürk, 2021). Thus, it can be stated that learners sought a remedy in themselves.

Perceived levels of participants' L2 WTC were found to be at a medium level, corresponding to the earlier literature (Bursali & Öz, 2017; Başöz, 2018), and the current study described L2 WTC in two aspects: increasing factors and decreasing factors. Although many previous studies demonstrated the L2 learning environment as the most determining factor explaining L2 WTC (Başöz, 2018; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), L2-related life goals were found as the most salient aspect of learners' L2 WTC (Lee & Lee, 2020; MacIntyre & Wang, 2021). This result might derive from the touristic location of the learning environment as the learners in this study could communicate with foreign people every season. Regarding the decreasing factors, such as the interlocutor effect, lack of competence, and fear of failure, the current study corroborated previous studies (Altıner, 2017; Cao & Philp, 2006).

The ideal L2 self is reputed to be a strong driving force in foreign language education because learners want to reduce the disparity between the actual and ideal self (Dörnyei, 2009). This study confirmed many studies in the literature that learners had a rather high level of ideal L2 selves (Demir Ayaz, 2016; Papi, 2010). Accordingly, students can imagine themselves positively in their future lives. They generally associated their imagined self-images with their future professional and social lives (Altıner, 2017; Kim, 2009). Additionally, their ideal L2 selves might positively impact learners' language development as they try

to improve their language competencies to realize their dreams. These results aligned with those of Dörnyei (2009) and Papi (2010), keeping in mind the promotion focus related to the ideal L2 self. Learners having their ideal L2 selves at high levels are prone to adapt their desires to the learning environment, and therefore, L2 anxiety levels of learners may decrease (Peng, 2015).

The ought-to L2 self is also of vital importance because of its prevention focus, and ought-to L2 self affects learners negatively if it is at a high level unlike the positive effects of the ideal L2 self (Dörnyei, 2009). In this study, perceived levels of learners' ought-to L2 selves appeared moderate, aligning with the relevant literature (Jang & Lee, 2019; Papi, 2010). Learners with high levels of ought-to L2 selves tend to be more anxious during language learning, as Papi (2010) also stated. Regarding the qualitative data, learners expressed other people's expectations related to work and social life, corroborating earlier research (Islam et al., 2020). Although some learners are not affected by these expectations, others mentioned not only positive but also negative impacts of the ought-to L2 self on themselves (Ali et al., 2021). While it might function as a driving force for some learners, others may be discouraged because of the pressure these expectations put on them.

L2 motivation is considered a critical factor in foreign language education because it is both the initiator and the mover of the long-term language learning process. Furthermore, it might be hard to maintain this process for learners with low levels of L2 motivation regardless of their language levels (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). In the current study, learners were revealed to have L2 motivation at a rather high level, consistent with previous studies (Kim & Kim, 2012; Kormos & Csizér, 2008). Perceived characteristics of learners' L2 motivation were revealed in two aspects: promoting factors and impeding factors. Learners generally expressed social life (Öztürk, 2012) and professional life (Nawaz et al., 2015) as the initial motivators. As for the impeding factors, the most apparent demotivators were the interlocutor effect and insufficient language competency (Lee, 2001). In addition to these external factors, learners highlighted some internal demotivators, such as a lack of time for hobbies, homework, and repetitive lessons. It seems quite apprehensible, considering the unstable nature of L2 motivation.

Subsequently, the relationships between L2 speaking anxiety and other variables were investigated in this study. All the variables showed significant correlations with L2 speaking anxiety depending on the results. The strongest correlation appeared between the ought-to L2 self and L2 speaking anxiety, and this relationship might be explained by the prevention focus of the ought-to L2 self (Dörnyei, 2009) or fear of negative evaluation, a component of FLA (Horwitz et al., 1986). Learners might avoid speaking the target language because they are afraid of negative evaluation by others (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Secondly, L2 WTC and L2 speaking anxiety were observed to be negatively correlated at a significant level, quite in line with previous studies (Denies et al., 2015; Lee & Lee, 2020). Learners with low levels of L2 WTC tend to participate in speaking activities less. This might be justified by communication apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986; Pearson et al., 2011). L2 speaking anxiety and the ideal L2 self had a negative correlation, to a weaker extent, corresponding to the relevant literature (Papi, 2010; Peng, 2015). Due to the promotion focus of the ideal L2 self in language education (Dörnyei, 2009), lack of ideal L2 self might increase L2 speaking anxiety, and learners with low levels of ideal L2 selves might be more prone

to feel uneasy while speaking. Lastly, L2 speaking anxiety and L2 motivation showed a weaker negative relationship (Liu & Huang, 2011; Luo, 2018). Having a low level of L2 motivation might affect learners' L2 speaking anxiety negatively. It might be considered that the balance between L2 speaking anxiety and L2 motivation is necessary to maintain the language learning process as high motivation and low anxiety were stated as necessary factors for the learning environment (Brown et al., 2001).

The ultimate purpose of the present study was to delve into the predictors of L2 speaking anxiety, and the results of standard multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the ought-to L2 self, L2 motivation, and the ideal L2 self were found as significant predictors of L2 speaking anxiety while L2 WTC did not contribute to the predicted model. The ought-to L2 self was the strongest and only positive predictor of L2 speaking anxiety, in line with Peng (2015). However, the ought-to L2 self was not a factor in explaining L2 speaking anxiety in a Taiwanese study (Yang, 2012). This inconsistency might result from differences in research contexts or internalization of other people's opinions. In this study, the collectivist characteristics of Turkish culture might have affected the learners (Yetim, 2003). L2 motivation appeared to be the second strongest predictor of L2 speaking anxiety, which contributed to the prediction negatively, in parallel with previous literature (Chung & Leung, 2016; Luo, 2018). Learners with extremely high or low L2 motivation were likely to experience L2 speaking anxiety. The unstable nature of L2 motivation might explain this. However, it is essential to maintain the longitudinal language learning process. The ideal L2 self was demonstrated as the last significant predictor of L2 speaking anxiety, accounting for it negatively, which is consistent with the study of Papi (2010) and Peng (2015). It can be concluded that learners who have problems imagining themselves as competent users of English might also have high levels of L2 speaking anxiety. Although the ideal L2 self contributed to the model positively in Yang's (2012) study, it might derive from the difference between participants as they were undergraduate students studying Applied English in that study. However, L2 WTC did not contribute to the explanation of L2 speaking anxiety significantly despite the negative correlation between them. This result can be justified by the reciprocal relationship between these two variables. In other words, L2 speaking anxiety might have a predictive power on L2 WTC. This idea corresponds to the study conducted by Peng (2015) as L2 anxiety is predicted the most by L2 WTC based on the results of her study.

6. CONCLUSION

The current study was a response to a lack of research addressing predictors of L2 speaking anxiety from a psychological view in foreign language education. FLA has been studied from different perspectives both in the Turkish EFL context and in other language teaching contexts around the world. However, there is still a research gap related to L2 speaking anxiety in particular although speaking is acknowledged as provoking anxiety more when compared to other language skills. Therefore, the current study intended to contribute to the relevant literature by probing into some psychological factors predicting L2 speaking anxiety to decrease its detrimental effects on learners during the language learning. The results have demonstrated that the ought-to L2 self was found to be the strongest and only

positive predictor of L2 speaking anxiety. Following this, L2 motivation and the ideal L2 self contributed to the regression model negatively although L2 WTC did not contribute to the model.

Despite the precautions taken, this study has its limitations. Initially, all the answers were presumed to reflect the participants' real opinions, and data triangulation was utilized to minimize the social desirability effect and disadvantages of self-report data. Also, the study was not able to capture the dynamic nature of factors like motivation and anxiety with a trait-centered view because of its cross-sectional characteristics. However, it might be enlightening to carry out longitudinal studies, including reflective journals and different psychological variables to deal with this limitation. Also, this study might be replicated with participants from different backgrounds as the results may change. Finally, it was possible to find out to what extent the variables selected for the present study explained L2 speaking anxiety based on the results of multiple regression. However, it might be possible to provide a deeper understanding of L2 speaking anxiety if structural equation modeling (SEM) is utilized in further research as it might help explore multivariate causal relationships among all variables.

As L2 speaking anxiety is not something that always affects language development negatively, it is crucial to find some ways to benefit from the facilitating effect of L2 speaking anxiety. Therefore, it is possible to make some pedagogical implications. First, dealing with the adverse effects of ought-to L2 self might be possible by increasing learners' awareness about their needs and setting clear goals. This is where the ideal L2 self gets involved. Learners are required to be aware of their dreams, hopes and desires more to increase their motivation. Visionary training would be a powerful technique to reduce the differences between the actual and desired selves. Based on the results of studies by Mackay (2015) and Magid (2011), visionary training helped learners strengthen their ideal L2 selves. Likewise, some extracurricular activities based on learners' interests or online tools might be designed because many students cannot use the language outside school. Lastly, training might be included in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs to increase teachers' awareness related to possible selves. Thus, teachers might focus on enhancing learners' possible selves and help them more.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

8. REFERENCES

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