Speech anxiety in guidance and psychological counselling department students

Hatice Altunkaya*, Department of Turkish Education, Faculty of Education, Adnan Menderes University, Aydin 09000, Turkey

Abstract

The objective of the present study is to reveal the effect of the activity-based oral presentation course on the speech anxiety of Guidance and Psychological Counselling Department students. In the quantitative study conducted with a single group pre-test–post-test model, the data were collected with 'Speech Anxiety Scale for Pre-Service Teachers.' Based on the analysis conducted on the sub-dimensions of the above-mentioned scale, it was determined that students' post-test psychological state scores ($\bar{x} = 3.976$) were higher than pre-test psychological state scores ($\bar{x} = 3.527$), post-test physiological symptoms scores ($\bar{x} = 4.034$) were higher than pre-test physiological symptoms scores ($\bar{x} = 3.791$), post-test anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.744$) were higher than pre-test anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.323$) and post-test speech anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.957$) were higher than pre-test speech anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.569$). Based on this determination, several recommendations were made for the oral expression course.

Keywords: Oral expression, speech, speech anxiety, activity-based instruction.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Hatice Altunkaya,** Department of Turkish Education, Faculty of Education, Adnan Menderes University, Aydin 09000, Turkey. *E-mail address:* hatice.altunkaya@adu.edu.tr / Tel.: 0256-218-20-00
** This study is an extension of the report presented in the International Association of Social Science in Kuşadası on 1-3 February 2018.

1. Introduction

As a social living being, an individual has the opportunity to express her or his feelings, thoughts and desires to others through speech. Speech is a tool for expressing thoughts through the meaningful associations created by the sounds of the language. In the literature, there are several different definitions of speech such as 'a reflection of mental development, personality formation and social relations' (Sever, 2011, p. 22), 'a tool that links an individual's inner world with the outer world' (Korkmaz, 2005, p. 663) and 'the ability of an individual to communicate ideas and views that are intrinsic or obtained by the individual through experiences and the individual's desires and emotions for a specific reason' (Congur, 1995, p. 42).

Anxiety is a state of fear, and anxiety includes emotions such as focusing on negativities without an actual threat, experiencing contradictions, uncertainty and lack of support. Presence of these feelings in an individual who needs to address a group of people is called speech.

Verbal skills are physical since they are produced by the speech organs, cognitive since the speaker needs to decide which sounds should be produced and how meaningful the outcome would be, physical, psychological due to the emotions that occur during the act and social since they require communications. Achievement of this complex process depends on the harmonious collaboration of all physical, cognitive, emotional and social skills. Speech anxiety in the affective dimension of this process is an intensive emotional state that is characterised by symptoms such as avoiding talking in front of others, fast heart rate, flushing of the face, stuttering, stomach cramps, losing breath, trilling and sweating. This emotional state is one of the factors that prevent the success of speech. Harb, Eng, Zaider and Heimberg (2003) stated that individuals with high anxiety levels cannot communicate well with other people. 'The most common consequence of speech anxiety is to avoid talking' (McCroskey, 1997). Various studies (Melanlioglu & Demir, 2013; Sevim & Gedik, 2014; Yaman & Sofuoglu, 2013) revealed that individuals with high speech anxiety are afraid that their speech would be criticised when they need to speak. Katranci and Kusdemir (2015) conducted a study with a total of 212 teacher candidates, out of which 43 were in computer education and instructional technology programme, 40 were in pre-school teacher programme, 65 were in guidance and psychological counselling programme and 64 were in the science teacher education programme. In the study, the effects of the applications implemented in the oral expression course on speech anxiety of teacher candidates were examined and it was determined that the speech anxiety level of teacher candidates decreased at the end of the study. In the applied section of the study, the lecturers instructed oral expression topics and related studies were assigned as homework in certain weeks, and in certain others, they were conducted as classroom activities.

In studies conducted on speech skills of pre-service teachers, the findings demonstrated that they experienced problems due to vocal, tonal and pronunciation mistakes, psychological problems (inability to speak to an audience and inability to conduct one-on-one conversations), hesitant speech, inability to apply grammar rules, lack of information, inability to focus on speaking, physical and social problems (Akkaya, 2012), diction disorders, speech with oral characteristics, ineffective speech, disarticulation, inadequate vocabulary, inability to model, insufficient reading, peregrenism, using slang, inability to use body language, speech anxiety, lack of self-esteem (Varisoglu, 2012) and the fact that language skills were the most significant problem they experienced when speaking Turkish (Ayan, Katranci & Melanlioglu, 2014).

According to Tobias (1979), anxiety can put a mental block on three levels of cognitive performance: input, process and output. In other words, anxiety can cause concerns about being disliked, fear of failure and performance procedures. Students with high speech anxiety cannot succeed in any academic or social task.

Kant (2000) argued that the oral participants in the instruction process attract more positive interest. He also suggested that these behaviour force passive and silent students into a position where they experience problems in attracting attention in the class, and since they rarely demonstrate

their knowledge, they are observed as unintelligent and even their intelligence is not lower than others, they learn less due to their lack of participation in the class.

Reinard (2001) stated that students with a high level of speech anxiety are often passive and uninterested in the topic, silent, unwilling in the class and lack participation in the classroom.

Kankam and Boateng (2017) found that students became highly anxious when they were asked to conduct a speech-related task in the class, and they were scared of receiving negative evaluations. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that this fact had a negative influence on professional and academic performances of the students. The most significant point in the study was that the creation of a satisfactory and friendly learning environment by the teacher played a significant role in achieving speech and positive learning outcomes.

Vocabulary and speech skills are a much more important issue for individuals such as teachers, lawyers, politicians, etc. who utilise the language intensively due to their profession (Beyreli, Cetindag & Celepoglu, 2012, p. 143). The physical, cognitive and affective dimensions of the act of speech should be taken into account and the instructional process should be planned accordingly in order for the students to acquire important verbal skills successfully.

Permanent learning can be achieved only when students are interested and the process is meaningful for them. An instructional process that could attract the students' interests and that could be considered significant is closely associated with the principle of embedding the objectives and achievements of the course in planned activities. Activity-based instruction is an instructional setting where pre- and post-behavioural stimuli that are in a natural and significant relationship with behaviour are used, learning opportunities are provided for the child in a natural environment, and functional and generalised goals based on the interests of the child are embedded in daily routines and planned game activities (Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker, 2004). It is possible to conduct a variety of activities in the oral expression course, in the process of transforming the goals that the students are expected to achieve into functional skills with planned or daily routine course procedures. An oral expression is an act that individuals constantly utilise in society since they naturally communicate with others. In order to conduct this act successfully, the objectives and achievements of the oral expression course should be transformed into the skills that the students possess. Participation of the students in the educational process through activities, in accordance with the constructivist approach, could lead to the active participation of the students, learning the basic communications component of oral expression by living, sharing their learning experiences with their peers and development of their speech self-efficacies based on the activities they conducted. Thus, Kosterelioglu, Bayar and Kosterelioglu (2014) determined the activity-supported instruction in the learning process based on pre-service teacher views and reported that the students stated that activity-based instruction (1) supported participation by activating the learner, (2) enabled communication among learners, (3) contributed particularly to the participants' getting to know each other, (4) allowed respect for alternative views and (5) allowed for a better comprehension of the learners. Activity-based instruction enables active participation of the students in the process. It is possible for active participant students to develop collaboration, to transfer the course objectives into skills, mutually share and construct knowledge with instructors, and to find opportunities to learn by living while conducting all these activities. The fact that students are more active in the classroom instead of the teacher is always emphasised in achieving the expected productivity in educational and instructional activities. The teachers should create a classroom environment where the students can express themselves easily. Thus, every opportunity that would allow the students to speak should be utilised' (Dogan, 2009, p. 194). Brown et al. (1981) indicated that the courses should be interesting for the students; they should be improved considering other fields in the curriculum and applicable in daily conversation. Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1998) stated that students acquire skills via interaction with peers in a controlled environment provided by active learning. Based on the above-mentioned facts, it was considered that the oral expression course, which is a skill required in every area of life, should be instructed with the activity-based approach. In the oral expression process, it is not

sufficient for the students to use solely the cognitive information while speaking. Despite the knowledge of the student on the subject matter during the speech process, several factors such as mood, self-esteem, motivation, interest, anxiety, etc., can be effective in this process. There was no study in the literature on the anxiety level of guidance and psychological counselling students. Similar to several other professions, verbal skills are of great importance for individuals who will be providing guidance and counselling in the future. The development of verbal skills that they would use in their profession as a basic instrument is a factor that could lead to a successful career. Literature review demonstrated that studies on instructional applications that could affect students' speech anxiety are limited. Sevim (2014), using the drama method, and Bulut (2015), using micro-instruction methods, investigated the effects of these methods on speech anxiety of the students. Katranci and Kusdemir (2015) conducted an applied oral expression course for pre-service teachers, and as a result, they determined that there was a decrease in the speech anxiety of the students. However, literature review demonstrated that there was no study on how various activities that the students actively participated during the course affected their level of anxiety.

The objective of the present study was to determine the effect of the activity-based oral expression course on the speech anxiety of the students attending the Guidance and Psychological Counselling department. Thus, the research sub-problems were determined as follows:

1. What were the speech anxiety levels of the students before and after the activity-based instruction of the oral expression course? Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test speech anxiety scores of the students as determined by the scale?
2. Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on gender at the beginning of the semester?
3. Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on the number of books they read annually at the beginning of the semester?
4. Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on gender at the end of the semester?
5. Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on the number of books they read annually at the end of the semester?

2. Method

The research was conducted using a single group pre-test–post-test model. In a single group pre-test–post-test design, 'a group is preliminarily tested, then the experimental procedure is conducted and finally, a post-test is conducted' (Creswell, 2003).

2.1. The study group

Table 1. Descriptive properties

Variables	Groups	Frequency (*n*)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	55	68.8
	Male	25	31.2
	Total	80	100.0
Number of books read annually	Between 1 and 5	33	41.2
	Between 6 and 11	30	37.5
	Between 12 and 24	17	21.2
	Total	80	100.0

Based on the gender variable, 55 (68.8%) of the students were female and 25 (31.2%) were male. Based on the number of books read annually, 33 (41.2%) students read between 1 and 5, 30 (37.5%) read between 6 and 11 and 17 (21.2%) read between 12 and 24 books.

2.2. Data collection instruments

'Speech Anxiety Scale for Pre-Service Teachers', developed by Kinay and Ozkan (2014) was used as a data collection instrument in the study. The scale includes 40 items and three sub-dimensions. These are 'psychological state', 'physiological symptoms' and 'skill-related anxiety' dimensions. The internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) coefficient was calculated as 0.942 for the whole scale and between 0.785 and 0.927 for the sub-scales. It was found that the test–retest reliability was 0.835 for the whole scales and 0.627–0.852 for the sub-scales. The reliability of the scale was found as (Cronbach's Alpha) 0.961 in the present study.

2.3. Data analysis

Data obtained with the Speech Anxiety Scale for Pre-Service Teachers were analysed with SPSS 21 software. Descriptive statistical methods were used including counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation in data analysis and the paired groups *t*-test was used to determine the difference between the measurements. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for the comparison of quantitative continuous data between two independent groups and the *t*-test was used for the comparison of quantitative continuous data among more than two independent groups. The Scheffe test was used as a complementary post-hoc analysis to determine the differences following the ANOVA test. The findings were evaluated and interpreted at the 95% confidence and 5% significance levels.

2.4. Application stages

In the first hour of the course during the 2016/2017 academic year spring semester, a pre-test was applied and the post-test was applied during last hour of the course in the semester. Oral expression course is instructed for 2-hours per week. During the semester, in the first hour, the teacher instructed the course content based on the constructivist approach. During the second hour, students conducted various oral expression activities. In the second week, the basic concepts related to verbal skills, the physical and psychological aspects of speech were emphasised and students were divided into activity groups that included four, five and six individuals in a volunteer basis. The activity topics determined by the instructor were presented to student groups. These topics were selected from the activities suggested by Arslan and Sevim (2013, pp. 162–179) and the activities for improving the verbal skills proposed by the 2005 Primary School Turkish Language Curriculum. These activities included activities titled 'Tell Me A Tale', 'From Our Chef's Kitchen', 'I am a Guide', 'Cross Examination', 'The Language Issue', 'Our Team', 'Rhyming', 'Six Hats', 'Let's Read a Poem' and 'Seeking My Rights'. The activities of 'Rhyming' and 'The Language Issue' were selected by two groups each and other activities were selected by one group. At the beginning of the semester, the date when each student group will conduct the activity was determined, and the related student group performed the activity during the second hour of the course on the determined date. In the Tell Me A Tale activity, the students preferred to conduct a storytelling activity and they narrated the story of Deli Dumrul in the book Dede Korkut stories using the dramatisation technique wearing adequate costumes. In the From Our Chef's Kitchen activity, every student described a meal from their region, accompanied by presentation images. In the I am a Guide activity, students introduced the locations they selected using presentations that included historical and touristic images and music. In the Cross Examination activity, the cross-examination of a suspect was portrayed. The students organised a panel discussion where the current problems of the Turkish language were debated and solutions to these problems were proposed in The Language Issue activity. In the Our Team activity, examples of unprepared speech examples were portrayed using the drama method. In the Rhyming activity, students portrayed several rhymes in an entertaining manner assuming that they were conducting a presentation in a preschool education institution. In the Six Hats activity, opinions on education were expressed based on the technique. The Let's Read a Poem activity was performed as a poetry recital. In the Seeking My Rights activity, the students portrayed the process of seeking the rights of an

individual who went to the court after a traffic accident. The final grades of the students were determined based on their performances in verbal skills during the activities.

3. Results

The first sub-problem of the research was 'What were the speech anxiety levels of the students before and after the activity-based instruction of the oral expression course? Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test speech anxiety scores of the students as determined by the scale?' The findings related to this sub-problem are presented below:

Table 2. Mean speech anxiety scores

Groups	Pre-test ($n = 80$)		Post-test ($n = 80$)		t	P
	Ort	Ss	Ort	Ss		
Psychological status	3.527	0.768	3.976	0.723	−3.813	0,000
Physiological symptoms	3.791	0.768	4.034	0.582	−2.256	0.026
Skill-related anxiety	3.323	0.734	3.744	0.731	−3.634	0.000
Speech anxiety	3.569	0.685	3.957	0.616	−3.770	0.000

The analyses were conducted based on the scale sub-dimensions. It was found that the difference between the group averages was statistically significant ($t(158) = −3.813$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) based on the paired group *t*-test results conducted to determine whether the mean psychological state scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the measurement variable. Post-test psychological status scores ($\bar{x} = 3.976$) were higher than pre-test psychological status scores ($\bar{x} = 3.527$).

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant ($t(158) = −2.256$, $p = 0.026 < 0.05$) based on the paired group *t*-test results conducted to determine whether the mean physiological symptom scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the measurement variable. The post-test physiological symptom scores ($\bar{x} = 4.034$) were higher than the pre-test physiological symptom scores ($\bar{x} = 3.791$).

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant based on the paired group *t*-test results conducted to determine whether the mean skill-related anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the measurement variable ($t(158) = −3.634$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The post-test skill-related anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.744$) were higher than pre-test skill-related anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.323$).

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant ($t(158) = −3.770$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) based on the paired group *t*-test results conducted to determine whether the mean speech anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the measurement variable. The post-test speech anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.957$) were higher than the pre-test speech anxiety scores ($\bar{x} = 3.569$).

The findings related to the 'Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on gender at the beginning of the semester?' study sub-problem are presented below:

Table 3. Mean pre-test speech anxiety levels by gender

	Group	N	Ort	Ss	t	p
Psychological status pre-test	Female	55	3.502	0.780	−0.424	0.673
	Male	25	3.581	0.752		
Physiological symptoms pre-test	Female	55	3.759	0.773	−0.554	0.581
	Male	25	3.862	0.769		
Skill-related anxiety pre-test	Female	55	3.339	0.723	0.296	0.768
	Male	25	3.287	0.772		

Speech anxiety pre-test	Female	55	3.548	0.686	−0.396	0.693
	Male	25	3.614	0.694		

The difference between the group averages was not statistically significant based on the *t*-test results conducted to determine whether the psychological status scores, mean physiological symptom scores, mean skill-related anxiety scores and mean speech anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated significant differences based on the gender variable (*p* > 0.05).

The findings related to the 'Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on the number of books they read annually at the beginning of the semester?' study sub-problem are presented below:

Table 4. Mean pre-test speech anxiety levels by the number of books read annually

	Group	N	Ort	Sd	F	p	Difference
Psychological status pre-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.265	0.694	8.178	**0.001**	**3 > 1**
	Between 6 and 11	30	3.483	0.758			**3 > 2**
	Between 12 and 24	17	4.113	0.627			
Physiological symptoms pre-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.614	0.864	5.588	**0.005**	**3 > 1**
	Between 6 and 11	30	3.691	0.693			**3 > 2**
	Between 12 and 24	17	4.310	0.429			
Skill-related anxiety pre-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.237	0.673	2.942	0.059	
	Between 6 and 11	30	3.206	0.745			
	Between 12 and 24	17	3.696	0.748			
Speech anxiety pre-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.357	0.666	8.200	**0.001**	**3 > 1**
	Between 6 and 11	30	3.498	0.648			**3 > 2**
	Between 12 and 24	17	4.104	0.513			

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant based on the one-way ANOVA results conducted to determine whether the mean pre-test psychological status scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable (*F* = 8.178; *p* = 0.001 < 0.05). A complementary post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the sources of the differences. The psychological status scores (4.113 ± 0.627) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the psychological status scores (3.265 ± 0.694) of the students who read 1–5 books annually. The psychological status scores (4.113 ± 0.627) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the psychological status scores (3.483 ± 0.758) of the students who read 6–11 books annually.

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant based on the one-way ANOVA results conducted to determine whether the mean pre-test physiological symptom scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable (*F* = 5.588, *p* = 0.005 < 0.05). A complementary post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the sources of the differences. The physiological symptom scores (4.310 ± 0.429) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the physiological symptom scores (3.614 ± 0.864) of the students who read 1–5 books annually. The physiological symptom scores (4.310 ± 0.429) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the physiological symptom scores (3.691 ± 0.693) of the students who read 6–11 books annually.

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant based on the one-way ANOVA results conducted to determine whether the mean pre-test speech anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable (*F* = 8.200, *p* = 0.001 < 0.05). A complementary post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the sources of the differences. The speech anxiety scores (4.104 ± 0.513) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the speech anxiety scores (3.357 ± 0.666) of the students who read 1–5 books annually. The speech anxiety scores (4.104 ± 0.513) of the

students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the speech anxiety scores (3.498 ± 0.648) of the students who read 6–11 books annually.

It was determined that there was no significant difference between group averages based on the one-way ANOVA results conducted to determine whether the mean pre-test skill-related anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable ($p > 0.05$).

The findings related to the 'Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on gender at the end of the semester?' study sub-problem are presented below:

Table 5. Mean post-test speech anxiety levels by gender

	Group	N	Ort	Sd	t	p
Psychological status post-test	Female	55	3.966	0.748	−0.206	0.837
	Male	25	4.004	0.663		
Physiological symptoms post-test	Female	55	4.006	0.618	−0.717	0.476
	Male	25	4.113	0.471		
Skill-related anxiety post-test	Female	55	3.811	0.707	1.383	0.171
	Male	25	3.556	0.781		
Speech anxiety post-test	Female	55	3.954	0.644	−0.082	0.935
	Male	25	3.967	0.545		

The difference between the group averages was not statistically significant based on the *t*-test results conducted to determine whether the post-test mean psychological status scores, mean physiological symptom scores, mean skill-related anxiety scores and mean speech anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated significant differences based on the gender variable ($p > 0.05$).

The findings related to the 'Was there a significant difference between the speech anxiety levels of the students based on the number of books they read annually at the end of the semester?' study sub-problem are presented below:

Table 6. Mean post-test anxiety levels by the number of books read annually

	Group	N	Ort	Sd	F	p	Difference
Psychological status post-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.715	0.719	6.391	**0.003**	**2 > 1**
	Between 6 and 11	30	4.081	0.665			**3 > 1**
	Between 12 and 24	17	4.426	0.590			
Physiological symptoms post-test	Between 1 and 5	33	4.003	0.597	1.937	0.151	
	Between 6 and 11	30	3.938	0.608			
	Between 12 and 24	17	4.291	0.439			
Skill-related anxiety post-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.541	0.764	2.816	0.066	
	Between 6 and 11	30	3.899	0.597			
	Between 12 and 24	17	3.956	0.785			
Speech anxiety post-test	Between 1 and 5	33	3.768	0.622	4.884	**0.010**	**3 > 1**
	Between 6 and 11	30	4.014	0.591			
	Between 12 and 24	17	4.318	0.483			

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant based on the one-way ANOVA results conducted to determine whether the mean post-test psychological status scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable ($F = 6.391$, $p = 0.003 < 0.05$). A complementary post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the sources of the differences. Psychological status scores (4.081 ± 0.665) of the students who read 6–11 books annually were higher than the psychological status scores (3.715 ± 0.719) of the students who read 1–5 books annually. The psychological status

scores (4.426 ± 0.590) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the psychological status scores (3.715 ± 0.719) of the students who read 1–5 books annually.

It was found that the difference between group averages was statistically significant based on the one-way ANOVA results conducted to determine whether the mean post-test speech anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable (F = 4.884; p = 0.010 < 0.05). A complementary post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the sources of the differences. The speech anxiety scores (4.318 ± 0.483) of the students who read 12–24 books annually were higher than the speech anxiety scores (3.768 ± 0.622) of the students who read 1–5 books annually.

There was no statistically significant difference between the mean group scores (p > 0.05) based on the results of the one-way ANOVA conducted to determine whether the mean post-test skill-related anxiety scores of the students participating in the study demonstrated a significant difference based on the number of books read annually variable.

4. Conclusion, discussion and recommendations

At the end of the study, the data obtained with Speech Anxiety Scale for Pre-Service Teachers were analysed based on the whole scale and the sub-scales of the scale. Thus, it was determined that there were significant differences between the mean pre-test and post-test psychological status, physiological symptoms, skill-related anxiety and general speech anxiety scores. It was found that the students' post-test speech anxiety scores were higher in all three dimensions and general speech anxiety when compared to the pre-test speech anxiety scores. This can be attributed to the fact that students could have been less anxious about the statements in the scale before they had a speech experience in front of an audience during the pre-test. Because the students who took part in an activity group during the semester and made a speech in front of the class might have better perceived the speech anxiety dimension after this experience. Aydin (1999) found that high personal expectations of Turkish university students learning English as a second language were among the causes of their anxiety in their doctoral dissertation that explored the causes of anxiety in speech and writing courses in foreign language. When the above-mentioned findings and the present study findings are associated, it can be suggested that the students in the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Department in the study group had high expectations. A different research was conducted by the author in the same academic year and the speech self-efficacy perceptions of the students were investigated, and eventually, it was determined that the activity-based oral expression course improved the speech self-efficacy perceptions of the students (Altunkaya, 2018). The increase in the speech self-efficacy perceptions by the same instruction method is considered to be a positive consequence. In the present study, the increase observed in the speech anxiety of the students after the application may suggest the fact that anxiety could be considered as a required factor for achievement.

In a study by Kana (2015) who investigated speech anxiety of 540 pre-service teachers, it was determined that the speech anxiety of pre-service teachers increased with their desire to participate in the activities. When the findings of this study and the present study are compared, it can be suggested that students attending the activity-based oral expression course wanted to participate in the activities despite the increase in their speech anxiety. Furthermore, all active learning activities may not be adequate for all students (Boas, 1989; Harton, Richardson, Barreras, Rockloff & Latane, 2002; Salemi, 2002). It was also considered that the increase in speech anxiety of the students could be related to the fact that they received final grades based on their performances in the course activities. An assessment should be conducted to understand the final outputs of the education process conducted in the present study. Oral expression course can only be assessed by evaluating the verbal skills of the students. Thus, the final grades of the students are calculated based on the speech performances demonstrated by the students during the activities. Assessment is an important component of the academic environment and students are constantly exposed to evaluation

processes, thus, students may experience emotions of anxiety as a result of the fear of negative assessments (Nonterah et al., 2015, p. 128).

Katranci and Kusdemir (2015) conducted an application study on oral expression course and found that the application decreased the speech anxiety of teacher candidates. In a study by Bulut, Acik and Ciftci (2016) titled 'The Impact of Microinstruction Technique on Speech Anxiety of Pre-Service Turkish Language Teachers' and conducted with experimental and control groups, it was determined that there was a significant decrease in the speech anxiety of the students in the study group, while there was no decrease in the control group. It is considered that this difference between the two studies may be due to the differences in the instruction methods and utilised scales. The above-mentioned study based on the dissertation by Bulut (2015) was conducted in Narration Techniques, Speech Education course. The students who attended this course already took the oral expression course, where the present study was conducted, in the freshmen year. It is considered that this could be positively reflected in the students' verbal skills and that the class levels and departmental differences could also had an impact on these results. Sevim (2014) investigated the effect of oral expression course conducted with the drama method on speaking anxiety of pre-service Turkish language teachers and found that the method reduced the speech anxieties of pre-service Turkish language teachers.

There were no significant differences between the pre-test and post-test mean psychological status, physiological symptoms, skill-related anxiety and speech anxiety scores of the students based on gender in the present study. KatrancI and Kusdemir (2015) found that female students had lower levels of speech anxiety when compared to male students. In the study that was conducted with pre-service teachers from different departments, it was stated that the students with the lowest speech anxiety were preschool teacher candidates. Suroglu Sofu (2012) stated that there was a higher level of speech anxiety in female teacher candidates when compared to the male teacher candidates. Ozkan and Kinay (2015) found that there were no significant differences between the speech anxiety of teacher candidates based on gender. These findings are consistent with the results of the present study. Sen (2017) and Lule Mert (2015) stated that there was no difference between speech anxiety levels of pre-service Turkish language teachers based on the gender variables.

Pre-test psychological status, physiological symptoms and general speech anxiety scores of the students in Guidance and Psychological Counselling Department differed significantly based on the number of books they read annually. The mean score of those who read 12–24 books a year was higher than the average scores of those who read 1–5 books annually and those who read 6–11 books annually. There was no significant difference between pre-test scores in terms of skill-related anxiety based on the number of books read annually.

It was found that the post-test psychological status scores of students were significantly different based on the number of books they read annually. The post-test psychological status scores of students who read between 6–11 and 12–24 books annually were higher than the post-test psychological status scores of students who read between 1 and 5 books annually. There was no significant difference between the post-test physiological symptoms and skill-related anxiety scores of the students based on the number of books they read annually. The reason for including the variable of the number of books read annually in the study was the 'idea that the reading a storybook would lead to language development and the fact that the said idea was supported by correlational, empirical and intervention studies' (Bus, van IJzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995). The principle that the education should be conducted so that the four basic language skills could support each other. The high level of speech anxiety of the students who read more books annually should be the topic of a future study. Contrary to the present study findings, Sen (2017) stated that there was no significant difference between the frequency of reading books and the levels of speech anxiety of the pre-service teachers.

Duff, Levine, Beatty, Woolbright and Sun Park (2007) stated that speaking repeatedly to the same audience reduces speech anxiety unlike the other anxiety treatments such as systematic desensitisation and visualisation. Based on the above-mentioned findings and the findings of the present study, it is considered that Guidance and Psychological Counselling students should take this

course in the higher grades to reduce their speech anxiety based on the fact that they would perform their profession via speech in the future.

It was observed that the course was entertaining and the students enjoyed the course. However, the fact that they will be graded based on their performance in the activities at the end of the course could have led to speech anxiety, it can be recommended to avoid grading based on the activity performances to allow the students to conduct the activities without the fear of assessment.

References

Akkaya, A. (2012). Ogretmen adaylarinin konusma sorunlarina iliskin gorusleri. *Mustafa Kemal Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu Dergisi, 9*(20), 405–420.

Altunkaya, H. (2018). The impact of activity-based oral expression course on speech self-efficacy of students. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 6/1*, 137–150.

Arslan, A. & Sevim, O. (2013). Konusma becerisinin gelistirilmesinde kullanilabilecek etkinlik ornekleri. Icinde Aziz Kilinc & Abdullah Sahin (Eds.), *Konusma egitimi* (s. 151–180). Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayincilik.

Ayan, S., Katranci, M. & Melanlioglu, D. (2014). Awareness level of teacher candidates' in terms of their Turkish language sufficiency: a qualitative research. *International Journal of Academic Research, 6*(29), 137–143.

Beyreli, L., Cetindag, Z. & Celepoglu, A. (2012). *Yazili ve sozlu anlatim (7. Baski)*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayincilik.

Boas, H. D. (1989). Implementing a school-based staff development project designed to promote active learning and increase student interest in elementary social studies: a case study. *Dissertation Abstract International, 49*(7), 1682-A, (DA8816896).

Brown, K. L., Burnett, N., Jones, G., Matsumoto, S., Langford, N. J. & Pacheco, M. (1981). *Teaching speaking and listening skills in the elementary and secondary school.* Massachusetts.

Bulut, K. (2015). *Mikro ogretim tekniginin Turkce ogretmen adaylarinin konusma beceri ve kaygilarina etkisi.* Doktora Tezi, Gazi Universitesi Egitim Bilimleri Enstitusu, Ankara.

Bulut, K., Acik, F. & Ciftci, O. (2016). The effect of micro teaching on pre-service Turkish language teachers' speaking anxieties. *European Journal of Education Studies, 2/11*, 89–106.

Bus, A. G., van IJzendoorn, M. H. & Pellegrini, A. D. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research, 65*, 1–21. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543065001001

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Congur, H. R. (1995). Soz sanati (I). *TOMER Dil Dergisi, 28*.

Dogan, Y. (2009). Konusma becerisinin gelistirilmesine yonelik etkinlik onerileri. *Turk Egitim Bilimleri Dergisi, 7/1*, 184–205.

Duff, D. C., Levine, T. R., Beatty, M. J., Woolbright, J. & Sun Park, H. (2007). Testing public anxiety treatments against a credible placebo control. *Communication Education, 56*, 72–88.

Harb, G. C., Eng, W., Zaider T. & Heimberg R. G. (2003). Behavioral assessment of public-speaking anxiety using a modified version of the social performance rating scale. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 41*, 1373–1380.

Harton, H. C., Richardson, D. S., Barreras, R. E., Rocloff, M. J. & Latane, B. (2002). Focused interactive learning: a tool for active class discussion. *Teaching of Psychology, 29*(1), 10–15.

Altunkaya, H. (2018). Speech anxiety in guidance and psychological counselling department students. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science. 13*(3), 328-339.

Kankam, P. K. & Boateng, S. O. (2017). Addressing the problem of speech anxiety among students. *International Journal of Public Leadership, 13/1*, 26–39. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-07-2016-0029

Kant, L. (2000). *Public speaking anxiety [brochure]*. Martin, TN: University of Tennessee at Martin Counselling Center.

Kinay, I. & Ozkan, E. (2014). Ogretmen adaylari icin konusma kaygisi olcegi (OAKKO) gelistirilmesi: Gecerlik ve guvenirlik calismasi. *Turkish Studies—International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic, 9*(5), 1747–1760.

Katranci, M. & Kusdemir, Y. (2015). Ogretmen adaylarinin konusma kaygilarinin incelenmesi: Sozlu anlatim dersine yonelik bir uygulama. *Dicle Universitesi Ziya Gokalp Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi, 24*, 415–445.

Korkmaz, Z. (2005). *Turk dili uzerine arastirmalar C.I*. Ankara: TDK Yayinlari.

Lule Mert, E. (2015). Turkce ogretmeni adaylarinin konusma kaygilarina iliskin bir inceleme. *Uluslararasi Sosyal Arastirmalar Dergisi, 8*(37), 784–789.

McCroskey, J. C. (1997). *An introduction rhetorical communication* (7 ed.) Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Melanlioglu, D. & Demir, T. (2013). Turkce ogrenen yabancilar icin konusma kaygisi olceginin Turkce formunun gecerlik ve guvenirlik calismasi. *International Journal of Social Science, 6*(3), 389–404.

Nonterah, C. W., Hahn, N. C., Utsey, S. O., Hook, J. N., Abrams, Y. A., Hubbard, R. R. & Henako, A. O. (2015). Fear of negative evaluation as a mediator of the relation between academic stress, anxiety and depression in a sample of Ghanaian college students. *Psychology and Developing Societies, 27/1*, 125–142.

Ozkan, E. & Kinay, I. (2015). Ogretmen adaylarinin konusma kaygilarinin incelenmesi (Ziya Gokalp Egitim Fakultesi Ornegi). *Uluslararasi Turkce Edebiyat Kultur Egitim Dergisi, 4/3*, 1290–1301.

Pretti-Frontczak, K. & Bricker, D. (2004). *An activity-based approach to early intervention* (3rd ed.). Baltimore: Paul Brooks Publishing.

Reinard, J. (2001). *Introduction to communication research* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Salemi, M. K. (2002). An illustrated case for active learning. *Southern Economic Journal, 68*, 721–731.

Sen, U. (2017). Turkce ogretmeni adaylarinin konusma kaygilarinin degerlendirilmesi. *Uluslararasi Turkoloji Arastirmalari ve Incelemeleri Dergisi, 2/2*, 70–84.

Sever, S. (2011). *Turkce ogretimi ve tam ogrenme.* Ankara: Ani Yayincilik.

Sevim, O. (2014). Effects of drama method on speaking anxieties of preservice teachers and their opinions about the method. *Educational Research and Reviews, 9*(18), 734–742.

Sevim, O. & Gedik, M. (2014). Ortaogretim ogrencilerinin konusma kaygilarinin cesitli degiskenler acisindan incelenmesi. *Ataturk Universitesi Turkiyat Arastirmalari Enstitusu Dergisi (TAED), 52,* 379–393.

Suroglu Sofu, M. (2012). *Ogretmen adaylarinin konusma kaygi duzeyleri.* Yayimlanmamis yuksek lisans tezi. Sakarya Universitesi, Egitim Bilimleri Enstitusu, Sakarya.

Temiz, E. (2013). Speech anxiety of music and Turkish language teacher candidates. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World, 3*(2), 101–105.

Tobias, S. (1979). Anxiety research in educational psychology. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 71/5*, 573–582.

Yaman, H. & Suroglu Sofu, M. (2013). Ogretmen adaylarina yonelik konusma kaygisi olceginin gelistirilmesi. *TSA Dergisi, 17*(3), 41–50.