Foreign Language Anxiety and Communicative Performance:
A Structural Equation Modelling

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ABSTRACT

The connection between affective factors and language learning has always been a critical issue and a matter of investigation in the field of foreign and second language learning. Anxiety in particular, has been identified as a significant factor which can negatively influence language learners' communicative competence. The current study investigates foreign language anxiety among Kurdish EFL students and its consequences on their communicative performance. An investigative quantitative approach was used to conduct this study. A Total number of two hundred (200) EFL learners with different language proficiency levels from three different universities, University of Halabja and University of Sulaimani in Iraqi Kurdistan Region and University of Kurdistan / Iran, participated in this study. To obtain necessary information and data, a face-to-face assessment, in small groups of four (4) was conducted during students' class time in which their communicative performance based on accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation was evaluated and recorded. Additionally, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire was adapted and the target population was requested to respond to the statements presented in the questionnaire. The findings of the research taken from a structural equation modelling (SEM) indicated that all components of communicative performance were in a negative and significant correlation with anxiety.

KEY WORDS: Accuracy, Communicative Performance, Fluency, Foreign Language Anxiety, Kurdish EFL Learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Affective factors and their role in EFL learners' language learning have always been a significant issue and the subject of investigation for many researchers in second and foreign language learning. Therefore, identifying the factors which cause anxiety among EFL students in the classroom as well as finding suitable mechanisms to decrease or eliminate their effect, can remarkably promote students' participation in the lesson and increase their reception and productivity in the target subject. This psychological effect and its consequences can be more prominent in EFL learners' productive skill of speaking when they involve in certain conversational situations inside or outside of the class and have to demonstrate their speaking ability in front of teacher, classmates, and other English language speakers. Learning any foreign language is believed to be a process and a kind of activity that can cause anxiety among some learners (Hewitt & Stefenson, 2011). Anxiety, as an emotional state and a noteworthy barrier in learning a language effectively, more or less exists among foreign language learners (Young, 1991) which mainly stems from two factors; psychological factors such as being mocked or criticized by the teacher or the classmates due to making mistakes , and the Linguistic

factors such as having poor vocabulary, lack of mastery of grammatical rules, and unfamiliarity with aspects of fluency which lead to incomprehensible speaking performance.

There is a direct connection between EFL learners' anxiety and their oral performance during engaging in various situations which require them to speak. This in return, involves learners' vocabulary knowledge, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation.

Schmitt and Carter (2000) regard vocabulary learning a vital and an indispensable part of foreign language learning. Having adequate and suitable vocabulary can aid the foreign language learners to establish real communication than merely sticking to the grammatical rules. Moreover, vocabulary knowledge is a key indicator of learners' language proficiency (Schmitt, 2008) whose lack is considered one of the major reasons of EFL reticence (Liu & Jackson, 2009).

Similar to vocabulary knowledge, fluency in speaking is an essential factor which indicates a competent EFL learner. According to Bayne (1986, p.9), the main purpose of teaching speaking skill is to boost EFL learners' fluency and empower them to "express themselves intelligibly, reasonably, accurately without too much hesitation". Skehan (1996, p.22) referred to fluency as the "ability to produce the spoken language without undue pausing or hesitation". Nunan (1989) also saw fluency as "the extent to which speakers can use the target language quickly and confidently with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false starts and word searches" (p.23). Accuracy on the other hand, is another aspect worth considering whose inadequacy can play as a barrier in founding a comprehensible and successful communication by foreign language learners. Byne (1986, p.8) regards accuracy as "the use of correct forms where utterances do not contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, semantic or discourse features of a language".

The afore-mentioned factors can lead to anxiety and prevent EFL learners from initiating or engaging in communicative activities and tasks in the class (Dörnyei, 2005; Harmer, 2004; Öztekin, 2011; Wang & Chang, 2010). Fear of "being wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible" (Brown, 2001, p. 269) tend to demotivate learners and too much anxiety can furthermore, make them "tongue-tied or lost for words" (Shumin, 2002, p. 206).

Like many other EFL learns around the globe, foreign language anxiety is also a common phenomenon among Kurdish EFL students due to their lack of an interactive and encouraging ambience inside and outside of the classroom, psychological and linguistic problems. As a result of these factors, learners lose their interest and zeal in participating in class activities and consequently, their weaknesses and strengths remain unexposed and untreated.

The present research attempts to tackle the following questions:

RQ1: To what extent does the structural regression model of speaking and anxiety enjoy good fit?

RQ2: Do components of speaking significantly contribute to their latent variable?

RQ3: Is there any substantial correlation between speaking performance and anxiety?

RQ4: Are there any significant correlation between components of speaking and anxiety

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Anxiety as an emotional state is experienced by majority of foreign language learners. Some researchers and experts in the field have tackled this issue and proposed different definitions and explanations. According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), foreign languages anxiety is a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process"(p.128). According to them, foreign language anxiety stems from three reasons; comprehension apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative assessment. Therefore, to have a better understanding of anxiety and its effects, they devised a 33-items questionnaire, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), by which they could measure foreign language anxiety levels among language learners (Ibid).

Daly (1991) on the other hand, explains the factors which result in EFL learners' apprehension in FL / ESL class. He claims that unwillingness, lack of interest, and ill-preparation of the learners for the target topic being discussed, as well as lack of confidence in their speaking ability, can result in poor or no interaction and participation in the communicative activities. Moreover, anxious learners who experience communication apprehension are not able to express themselves and comprehend other learners during speaking. This can consequently frustrate and disappoint them (Gardner 1991) and create unsought attitude in them towards communicative performance.

Scovel (1978) categorized anxiety into facilitative and debilitative which the former can encourage and the latter can be a factor to hinder learning. In this regard, Brown (2000) posits that facilitative anxiety can motivate students towards success and creates the sense of competition among learners whereas Takayuki (2008) stresses that debilitative anxiety can demotivate learners and inhibit learning.

Thornbury (2005) believes that EFL learners' familiarity with topic being discussed, can decrease their apprehension and motivate them to more comfortably

and confidently engage in the communicative task. On the other hand, learners' lack of self-confidence can deter them from participating in the tasks and sharing their thoughts and consequently they will not get a chance to cooperate and interact with other classmates (Baker & Westrup, 2003). Also, Ur (2000, p.111) explains the concerns of anxious students over engaging in speaking activities in EFL classroom due to being "worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts". Another reason of apprehension and fear among EFL learners to communicate and demonstrate their speaking ability in foreign language environment may be their low assessment and evaluation of their own linguistic knowledge or competence. Since speaking is "the productive oral skill, it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning" (Nunan 2003, p.48). They believe any EFL learner that should participate in oral activities, should own a perfect pronunciation, rich vocabulary, and an accurate grammar. This notion has partially been substantiated by the views of some experts and researchers in the field. Thornbury (2005) substantiates the importance of linguistic knowledge for EFL learners in speaking skill and asserts that lacking or poorly performing any aspect of this knowledge; vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, will hamper their speaking development. Likewise, Davis and Pearce (2000, p.82) relate the reticence of certain people to speak a foreign language in front of a large group of people to the fact that they "may worry about producing utterances with many errors or oddities in them". Additionally, Bacha (2002) explains that rhythm, intention, and stress can play as a hindrance and barrier to let EFL learners actively participate in conversational situations.

To demonstrate the linguistic and psychological effects of anxiety on EFL learners' oral communication in a foreign language classroom or environment, a number of studies have been conducted. Aida (1994) and Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) indicated that there is a direct, negative relation between foreign language anxiety and students' achievement level. Woodrow (2014) found a strong connection between learners' oral performance that the anxiety they experienced in EFL class which had a debilitative influence on their communicative competence. Zhao (2007) noted a significant relationship between anxiety and Chinese high school students in English classes and discovered that fear of the negative evaluation was the primary source of anxiety among the students and that the more anxious the student was, the lower achievement s/he had in foreign language learning. Regarding Iranian EFL context, Hashemi and Abbasi (2013, p.641) conducted a study on EFL learners' speaking performance and suggested that "adopting or acquiring native-like pronunciation" and "formal language classroom setting" played a decisive role in their reticence and weak oral performance.

To explore effects of anxiety on learners' oral performance in Arab EFL context, Ihmuda (2014) examined the effective factors which impede Libyan EFL learners' progress in the foreign language. He discovered that anxiety, lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation, and embarrassment hindered the learners to communicate confidently. In addition to the factors mentioned, having the experience of past failures and comparing oneself to others, can further contribute to EFL learners' anxiety and weak oral performance (Genard, 2015). Furthermore, Subaşi (2010) investigated learners' views on anxiety in Turkish EFL context and concluded that negative evaluation and self-perception led to their poor performance in conversational situations and communicative activities. Likewise, Koizumi (2005) carried out a study on the relationship between Japanese EFL learners' communicative performance and productive vocabulary knowledge. He found that the size and depth of vocabulary of the learners directly affected their fluency, accuracy and lexical complexity in oral performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

An investigative approach and a quantitative and descriptive method were used to deal with and analyze the obtained data and investigate the potential correlation between anxiety and communicative performance.

3.1 Participants

The study comprised a purposive sample of 200 Kurdish EFL second-year sophomore students, including both male and female, selected from three different public universities, Halabja and Sulaimani universities in Kurdistan Region / Iraq and University of Kurdistan in Eastern Kurdistan / Iran. Their age ranged between 18-22 years. They were not so much different regarding their English language proficiency as they were English-major students and had passed 60 credits.

3.2 Instruments

In the first phase, a face to face assessment (interview) was used to gather intended information. Students' responses and performance were assessed based on the rubrics prepared in advance focusing on speaking components of Pronunciation, Fluency, Accuracy, and Vocabulary knowledge. Each component bore five (5) marks for the best performance and one (1) for the poorest and the total for the best performance was considered to be 25 in communicative performance.

Then, to create a questionnaire with suitable questions that could produce reliable and valid responses, participants' English language background, their availability and ease of access, as well as their readability

level, i.e., reading with understanding to the proposed questions were regarded.

After securing these considerations, the FLCAS questionnaire was adapted to carry out the current research and acquire the necessary information. To measure participants' answers to each question or statement, Likert scale was used by which participants' responses for each statement was arranged from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

3.3 Data Collection

The data to be collected through the questionnaire was organized in google docs and sent to the participants' emails to be filled out and returned. They were given three days to accomplish the task and were provided with the phone number and the e-mail address of the researcher in order to contact him for any further explanation or clarification to remove possible confusion of participants regarding questionnaire statements. Participants were requested to carefully and truthfully fill the questionnaire and were assured that the information they provide would be merely used for the research purpose and that their anonymity would be secured.

Regarding the in-class face-to-face assessment, it was carried out during the class time and the learners were evaluated, in small groups of 4, within a timeframe provided. They commenced talking exchanging opinions and information regarding the ideas or questions posed by assessor (teacher) or raised among themselves during speaking. learner's communicative performance was assessed and recorded based on the criteria prepared beforehand such as fluency, accuracy, grammar, and pronunciation.

3.4 Inter-Rater Reliability of speakin

Table 3.1 presents the results of the Pearson correlations computed to estimate the inter-rater reliability indices for both raters who rated the participants' performance on the five components of speaking. Considering the results obtained, it can be inferred that there were significant agreements between the two raters:

- **Fluency** (r (198) = .610, representing a large effect size, p = .000),
- **Grammar** (r (198) = .642, representing a large effect size, p = .000),
- **Vocabulary** (r (198) = .571, representing a large effect size, p = .000),
- **Pronunciation** (r (198) = .542, representing a large effect size, p = .000), and
- **Style** (r (198) = .591, representing a large effect size, p = .000).

TABLE 3.1
Pearson Correlations; Inter-Rater Reliability of Components of Speaking

		Fluency R2	Grammar R2	Vocabulary R2	Pronunciation R2	Style R2
Fluency R1	Pearson	.610**				
	Sig.	.000				
	N	200				
Gramma R1	Pearson		.642**			
	Sig.		.000			
	N		200			
Vocabulary R1	Pearson			.571**		
	Sig.			.000		
	N			200		
Pronunciation R1	Pearson				.542**	
	Sig.				.000	
	N				200	
Style R1	Pearson					.591**
	Sig.					.000
	N					200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.5 KR-21 Reliability of Anxiety

Table 3.2 displays the descriptive statistics and KR-21 reliability index for anxiety. The results showed that the reliability index for anxiety was .94.

TABLE 3.2
KR-21 Reliability Index of Anxiety

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	KR-21
Anxiety	200	26	179	102.44	30.899	954.76	.94

4.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

This study was an attempt to explore any significant relationship between speaking and anxiety among EFL learners. The research questions raised in this study were explored through structural equation modeling. Before discussing the results, it should be noted that the assumptions of univariate and multivariate outliers were retained. As Table 4.1 shows, the values of skewness and kurtosis were lower than +/- 2 (Bachman 2005, and Bae & Bachman 2010). Thus, it can be concluded that the assumption of univariate normality was retained.

TABLE 4.1
Testing Univariate and Multivariate Normality Assumption

Variable	Min	Max	Skew	Ratio	Kurtosis	Ratio
Anxiety	26.000	179.000	.055	.319	-.253	-.731
Fluency	1.000	27.000	-.058	-.337	-.086	-.247
Grammar	5.000	30.000	.058	.334	-.195	-.562
Vocabulary	2.000	27.000	-.128	-.741	-.327	-.944
Pronunciation	1.000	24.000	-.080	-.459	-.102	-.294
Style/Complexity	2.000	31.000	-.028	-.164	.074	.213
Mardia					-2.024	-1.460

The Mardia' index of multivariate normality was -2.02. As noted by Bachman 2005, and Bae & Bachman 2010, absolute values of Mardia's index lower than 3 indicate that the assumption of multivariate normality was met.

Exploring Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent does the structural regression model of speaking and anxiety enjoy good fit?

RQ2: Do components of speaking significantly contribute to their latent variable?

RQ3: Is there any significant correlation between anxiety and speaking?

RQ4: Are there any significant correlation between components of speaking and anxiety?

As mentioned above, the present data were analyzed through a structural regression model as displayed in Conceptual Model 4.2. On the left side of the model, the contributions of the five components of speaking to their latent variable will be estimated. The latent variable will later be correlated with anxiety.
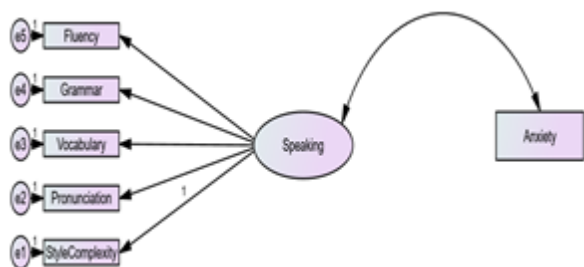
Conceptual Diagram 4.2, Structural Regression Model of Speaking and Anxiety

Table 4.3 displays the fit indices of the model. Regarding these results, it can be said that the structural regression model enjoyed a good fit. The non-significant results of chi-square ($\chi2$ (9) = 10.230, p = .332) indicated that the model enjoyed a good fit. The ratio of chi-square over the degree of freedom; i.e. 1.13 was lower than 3. These results also supported the fit of the present model. The standardized root mean residual (SRMR) of .014 was lower than .10; hence fit of the model. The root mean square of error approximation (RMSEA) of .026 was lower than .05, and the probability of close fit (PCLOSE) of .671 was higher than .05. These results further supported the fit of the model.

TABLE 4.3
Model Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Labels	Statistic	D.F.	P-Value	Criterion	Conclusion
Absolute	X^2	10.230	9	.332	>.05	Good Fit
	X^2 Ratio	1.137	---	---	<=3	Good Fit
	SRMR	.014	---	---	<=.10	Good Fit
	RMSEA	.026	---	---	<=.05	Good Fit
	PCLOSE	.671	---	---	=>.05	Good Fit
	GFI	.985	---	---	=>.95	Good Fit
Incremental	RFI	.976	---	---	=>.95	Good Fit
	TLI	.997	---	---	=>.95	Good Fit
	CFI	.998	---	---	=>.95	Good Fit
	NFI	.986	---	---	=>.95	Good Fit
	IFI	.998	---	---	=>.95	Good Fit
Hoelter		330	---	---	=>200	Sampling Adequacy

The goodness of fit index (GFI = .985), relative fit index (RFI = .976), incremental fit index (IFI = .998), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI = .997), comparative fit index (CFI = .998) and normed fit index (NFI = .986) were all higher than .95 and supported the fit of the model. And finally, the Hoelter index of 330 was higher than 200. Based on these results it can be concluded that the present sample size was adequate for running the model. All these results showed that the first research question was supported.

Table 4.3 displays the standardized and unstandardized regression weights for the contributions of the five components of speaking to their latent variables. All standardized regression weights were higher than 0.30. That is to say, the components of speaking had significant contributions to their latent variable. It should be noted that the standardized and unstandardized regression weights are analogous to B and beta values in an ordinary regression model. For example, the standardized regression weight for the contribution of pronunciation to speaking was .813. That is to say, if pronunciation increases one standard deviation, speaking increases .813 standard deviations. The significant results displayed in Table 4.4; i.e. (p = .000) indicated that the second research question was supported.

TABLE 4.4
Standardized and Unstandardized Regression Weights of Components of Speaking

			Unstandardized	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized
Style/Complexity	<--	Speaking	1.000				.813
Pronunciation	<--	Speaking	.867	.067	12.962	.000	.813
Vocabulary	<--	Speaking	.942	.078	12.138	.000	.775
Grammar	<--	Speaking	.959	.078	12.276	.000	.781
Fluency	<--	Speaking	.980	.076	12.919	.000	.811

And finally, Table 4.5 displays the correlation between speaking and anxiety. The results indicated that there was a negative and significant relationship between the two variables (-.753 > .30, p = .000). Thus, the third research question was supported.

TABLE 4.5
Standardized and Unstandardized Regression Weights of
Between Speaking and Anxiety

			Unstandardized	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized
Speaking	<-->	Anxiety	-88.322	11.586	-7.623	.000	-.753

Diagram 4.6 displays the standardized regression weights for the contribution of the components of speaking to their latent variable, and the correlation between the latent variable of speaking and anxiety. All components of speaking showed significant; i.e. > .30 to their latent variable; which in turn, had a negative and significant correlation (- .75) with anxiety.
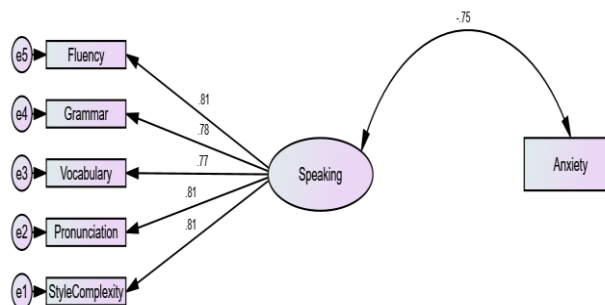
Diagram 4.6, Structural Regression Model of Speaking and Anxiety

Table 4.7 displays the Pearson correlations between the components of speaking and anxiety. The results indicated that fluency (r = - .593, p = .000), grammar (r = - .564, p = .000) , vocabulary (r = - .616, p = .000), pronunciation (r = - .610, p = .000) and style/complexity (r = - .625, p = .000) all had negative, significant and large; i.e. > .50, correlations with anxiety. Thus, it can be concluded that the fourth research question was supported.

TABLE 4.7
Pearson Correlations; Components of Speaking with Anxiety

		Anxiety
Fluency	Pearson Correlation	-.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Grammar	Pearson Correlation	-.564**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Vocabulary	Pearson Correlation	-.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Pronunciation	Pearson Correlation	-.610**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Style/Complexity	Pearson Correlation	-.625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

**. Correlation Is Significant at The 0.01 Level (2-Tailed).

4.2 Discussion of Results

This study was an attempt to examine relationship between communicative speaking performance and speaking anxiety. Four questions were posed to account for investigating such a correlation and exploring the fitness of structural regression model of speaking and anxiety, contribution of components of speaking to their latent variable, any significant relationship between anxiety and speaking, and finally probing any correlation between components of speaking and anxiety. The structural equation modeling run to answer the first question of the study indicated that all components of speaking were lower than 0.30, showing significance and they all, were in a negative and significant correlation with anxiety, the sample size was adequate for running the model and the structural regression model enjoyed a good fit to show that the components of speaking had significant contributions to their latent variable and all components of speaking performance were in a negative correlation with anxiety. These results are consistent with those of other researchers (Mazouzi, 2013; Thornbury, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Brown, 2000; Mahripah, 2014; Tanveer, 2007; Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013; Hanifa, 2018; Baran-Łucarz, 2013; Mahmoodzadeh, 2012; Suleimenova, 2013; Dewaele & Ip, 2013; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Subekti, 2018; Zheng & Cheng, 2018; Liu, 2018), which found significant negative relationships between the anxiety and speaking performance. Conversely, the other two components of vocabulary and grammar as components more related with writing should take a different route and not be so affected by anxiety. Nevertheless, the results taken from this study and observing such an effect from anxiety by all components of speaking is an evidence to loudly mention that anxiety as an affective factor is not something to be neglected in the educational systems and everything should be done to decrease the effect of such an emotional and influencing factor in teaching and testing and assessment environments.

Therefore, based on the results of this study, EFL learners need to carefully consider the completeness and exactness of language forms such as pronunciation, grammatical rules, pronunciation, and vocabulary during speaking (Mazouzi, 2013). Also, learners' correct use of grammatical structures requires the length and complexity of the utterances and the well-structured clauses (Thornbury, 2005). To acquire vocabulary accuracy, they should learn how to correctly select an appropriate word for an intended context. Many EFL learners tend to utilize the same words and expressions in different speaking contexts which do not convey the same intention and meaning. Pronunciation on the other hand, is a significant aspect of speaking which receives the lowest attention by the EFL learners. To speak

fluently and effectively, learners should be familiar with various English sounds and their features. They should further master and be aware of phonological rules such as intonation, pitch, and stress.

Woodrow (2006) states that there is a negative connection between anxiety and EFL learners' speaking performance. Adult learners are cautious about making mistakes during speaking because for them, making mistakes shows their lack of awareness regarding fluency and accuracy rules. This can result in nervousness and embarrassment and hinder them to speak. Communicative anxiety can sometimes be caused by an EFL class condition. Strong learners dominate the speaking tasks and activities either in pair or groups and the weak learners, who lack confidence and language knowledge, remain silent and passive.

Inhibition is "a feeling of embarrassment or worry that prevents people from saying [or performing] what they want" (Cambridge A. L. Dictionary, 2008). Human beings naturally adopt certain precautions to protect their ego. Since foreign language learners make mistakes, which is a natural process of learning a language, this can pose potential threats to their ego. These threats may result in learners' disappoint and increase the tendency towards silence so as to keep their ego and not to be criticized in front of a large number of people (Brown, 2000). EFL Learners' Risk-taking is another feature which is directly related to their self-respect and inhibition. Those who enjoy a low level of self-respect hesitate to take chances and risks to make mistakes during accomplishing communicative tasks which this in turn, prevents the improvement of their speaking skill (Mahripah, 2014).

Experiencing a high level of anxiety can lower EFL learners' communicative ability. Learners who are anxious and stressed, gradually lose their speaking performance abilities and avoid participating in speaking tasks and conversational situations (Tanveer, 2007).

5. CONCLUSION

Despite studying English language for many years, starting from the Basic school, Kurdish EFL learners experienced accuracy and fluency problems which made them uncertain and nervous about active engagement in communicative tasks and activities in EFL class in the university level.

Lack of mastery of grammatical rules, and having inadequate vocabulary as well as the belief of having a flawless and native-like pronunciation played a negative role in EFL learners' decision on participating in or initiating communicative tasks.

Fear of being criticized or over-corrected by the teacher on the one hand, and being ridiculed by the classmates on the other hand due to making various grammatical, pronunciation, or vocabulary mistakes, lead many EFL learners to choosing silence and passivity during accomplishing communicative tasks in the class. Thus, their weaknesses remained veiled and this in turn could stagnate their progress and result in poor achievement in the target subject.

Anxiety was directly associated with EFL learners' mastery of English language components and those who had a poor mastery of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, demonstrated a greater level of resentment and nervousness during their speaking performance in the EFL class.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Based on the findings of the research, in order for EFL learners to have a lower anxiety and speak easily and effectively in class, it is wise for teachers to be aware of the following:

- Having a good understanding and evaluation of learners' feelings as well as interests. Furthermore, helping to boost learners' self-confidence by adopting teaching methods which suit learners' learning styles and encouraging them to actively involve in the speaking tasks.

- Creating an interactive ambience in the class and constructing a friendly relationship with learners. Also, encouraging and praising learners to speak and explaining to them the fact that making mistakes is something natural in the process of learning a foreign language.

- Overcoming timidness and anxiety is a time-consuming process. Therefore, teachers should deal with it smoothly and design certain tasks and activities which make learners comfortable, interested, and involved.

- Increasing speaking opportunities for weak learners and being cautious about when and how to correct learners' mistakes since over-correction can frustrate learners or make them forget the ideas they want to convey.

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