Do Gender Differences Affect Foreign Language Anxiety and Preferences for Oral Corrective Feedback?*

Cinsiyet Farklılıkları Yabancı Dil Kaygısını ve Sözlü Düzeltici Geribildirim Tercihlerini Etkiler Mi?

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the extent gender differences affect foreign language anxiety and student beliefs about spoken corrective feedback. A random sample of 100 Turkish students (50 males, 50 females) who were pre-intermediate level learners of English as a foreign language at a state preparatory school in Turkey completed two questionnaires which measured their level of anxiety and beliefs. The female participants differed from the male participants in that they exhibited higher levels of anxiety, valued delayed feedback and preferred repetition more as the main error correction method. The males, on the other hand, rated elicitation as their favored method of correction and preferred to be given time to correct their errors themselves more than the females did. Both males and females viewed feedback, especially to their serious and individual errors, as a necessary component of the learning process and rated feedback given by the teacher more positively. As the take-home message, teachers need to be selective in their feedback choices and activities in reducing anxiety by taking gender differences in consideration.

Keywords: Foreign language anxiety, corrective feedback in speaking, gender effect.

ÖZ: Bu çalışma, cinsiyet farklılıklarının yabancı dil kaygı düzeyi ve öğrencilerin sözlü düzeltici geri bildirim inanışları üzerindeki etkisinin boyutunu araştırmaktadır. Türkiye'deki bir devlet hazırlık okulunda yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen ön orta düzeydeki örneklemden rastgele seçilmiş 100 öğrenci (50 kadın, 50 erkek) kaygı düzeylerini ve inanışlarını ölçen iki anket cevaplamışlardır. Kadın katılımcılar, erkek katılımcılardan daha yüksek kaygı düzeyi göstermeleri, geciktirilmiş geri bildirime değer vermeleri ve tekrarlamayı ana düzeltici geri bildirim yöntemi olarak tercih etmeleri açısından ayrışmışlardır. Erkekler, öte yandan, söyletimi en çok istenen düzeltme yöntemi olarak değerlendirmişler ve kadınlara kıyasla hatalarını kendilerinin düzeltebilmeleri için zaman verilmesini tercih etmişlerdir. Hem erkek hem de kadın katılımcılar, geribildirimi, özellikle ciddi ve bireysel hatalarına verilen geribildirimi, öğrenme süreçleri için gerekli bir bileşen olarak görmüşler ve öğretmenin verdiği geri bildirimi daha olumlu değerlendirmişlerdir. Bu çalışmadan çıkarılacak ders, öğretmenlerin geribildirim ve kaygı azaltıcı etkinlik tercihlerinde cinsiyet farklılıklarını göz önünde bulundurarak seçici olmalarıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yabancı dil kaygısı, konuşmada sözlü düzeltici geribildirim, cinsiyet etkisi.

This paper aims to uncover the effect of gender on foreign language anxiety and student preferences behind oral corrective feedback. The motivation for studying gender, anxiety and learner beliefs is at least twofold. First, the role of gender in learning a second or foreign language has not been a thoroughly explored area of research (Sunderland, 2010). Second, existing research on the role gender plays in foreign language anxiety (Azizifar, Faryadian, & Gowhary, 2014) and student corrective feedback (CF) preferences (Khorshidi & Rassaei, 2013) has revealed inconclusive and debatable results. Some research (Çağatay, 2015; Yih, Chin, & Ling, 2017) suggests that female students display higher levels of anxiety while learning a second language whereas others (Kitano, 2001 among others) report that male students are more anxious throughout the process. There is also research indicating no significant difference between the language anxiety levels of male and female students (Yiang & Dewaele, 2019). These results have been attributed to males' unwillingness to express their true feelings and experiences about learning a foreign language (Ahmed, Pathan, & Khan, 2017; Batiha, Noor, & Mustaffa, 2016). The higher levels of anxiety experienced by females originate from a fear of negative evaluation especially when teachers give corrective feedback in front of the other students (Mersi, 2012). Anxiety related to test performance and communication apprehension also contributes to higher levels of female foreign language anxiety (Arnaiz & Guillen, 2012). This study complements the findings in the literature in the sense that the data come from one of the top state universities which hosts high-achievers and in which the medium of instruction is English.

Not many studies investigated the role of gender on the necessity and timing of student corrective feedback beliefs in oral practice. Katayama (2017) suggests that foreign language learners believe in the necessity of feedback. More specifically, female students believe in the necessity of corrective feedback (CF) more than the males do (Zarei, 2011). As for its timing, CF can be provided immediately after an error is committed, during a task performance or after the task is completed. For example, Park (2010) reports that gender makes no difference with respect to immediate or delayed feedback, but Li, Zhu, and Ellis (2016) found immediate feedback to be more effective than delayed feedback. Most students prefer to be given some time to think about their mistakes and correct their own errors before teachers feed them with the correct forms through recasts (Ölmezer-Öztürk & Öztürk, 2016; Yoshida, 2008).

In terms of preference for the feedback providing agent, learners value teacher correction and self-correction over peer correction. Second language learners interpret feedback given by the teacher to be more reliable and effective (Gielen, Tops, Dochy, Onhema, & Smeets, 2010). Feedback obtained from peers, on the other hand, is considered to be less authoritarian and beneficial than feedback from the other agents (Rollinson, 2005). It is worth to note that peer feedback is valued for subsequent learning (Tseng & Tsai, 2007).

Gender is reported not to play a role in the type of errors to be corrected or the methods of feedback treatment to be given; yet, research findings in this area come with multiple results. For instance, explicit correction and recasts stand out as the most favored feedback correction types among the others (Öztürk, 2016). Explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback are favored by the students more since these forms of CF are reported to decrease their level of anxiety (Renko, 2012) and contribute to learner

uptake (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Some students perceive elicitation, implicit correction and recasts as the most effective CF methods regardless of the anxiety level (Abedi, Mahadavi, & Hassaskhah, 2015). Repetition is also considered to significantly improve learner uptake (Büyükbay, 2007). Some studies (Sheen, 2011; Surakka, 2007) report that high-anxiety learners benefit less from recasts; however, Martin and Valdivia (2017) claim that students with high levels of anxiety rate recasts and metalinguistic feedback more positively. Rassaei (2015) reports that high-anxiety learners find recasts more effective than metalinguistic feedback, while low-anxiety learners believe that recasts and metalinguistic feedback are equally effective in treating spoken errors.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the ongoing discussion in the field on the roots of foreign language anxiety and student beliefs on corrective feedback in oral communication with a specific focus on gender in an EFL setting. The research questions addressed are (i) whether gender differences play a role in the anxiety levels of pre-intermediate level Turkish students learning English, (ii) what the causes behind language anxiety across genders are and (iii) whether gender plays a role in the beliefs EFL students hold about corrective feedback in oral communication. Next, the methodology of the study is presented, followed by the results. Finally, the main findings and implications for foreign language classes are discussed.

Method

Research Design

This paper adopted a purely quantitative design. The data were obtained using the structured questionnaire approach. The instrument used in this study was a single questionnaire comprising of The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Corrective Feedback Belief Scale (CFBS), which have been successfully used in different contexts to measure gender-related beliefs (e.g., Genç, 2014; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). The variable studied is gender with respect to foreign language anxiety and the components of oral corrective feedback.

Participants

Convenience sampling, which allows one to have access to basic data and trends without further complications, was employed in this study (Mackey & Gass, 2005). A total of 112 students participated in the study. 12 incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis due to missing data. The data were analyzed out of the remaining 100 respondents (50 females, 50 males) who learned English at Boğaziçi University School of Foreign Languages, in Turkey. The participants were all pre-intermediate level foreign language learners of English as determined by the institutional English language placement test given at the beginning of the year. They had no working knowledge of a third language. The students majored in natural and applied sciences at the Faculty of Education (female n=21, male n=2), Engineering (female n=5, male n=22), Arts and Sciences (female n=12, male n=11), Economics and Administrative Sciences (female n=7, male n=13) and the School of Applied Disciplines (female n=5, male n=2). The participants took the questionnaires at the end of the second semester after completing an intensive program offering instruction in English where they improved their academic listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. As a part of the program, the students were required to give an oral presentation

each semester. Passing an institutional language proficiency test (BUEPT) or receiving a score of 101 from TOEFL (IBT) or a score of 6.5 from IELTS (academic) is a prerequisite to start undergraduate courses at this English-medium university. The female participants were aged between 18 and 25 (*M*=18.98, *SD*=1.45) and their first exposure to English ranged from age 1 to age 11 (*M*=8.62, *SD*=2.26). The male participants were aged between 18 and 21 (*M*=18.70, *SD*=.71) and their first exposure to English ranged from age 5 to age 12 (*M*=9.42, *SD*=1.51). These groups were not statistically different age wise (F (98) =1.77, *p*=.22). Yet, the female students were first exposed to English at a younger age than their male peers (F (98) =11, *p*=.04).

Data Collection Tools

To collect data, a mini demographic survey and two questionnaires were used. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has 33 items and assesses the degree of anxiety experienced by foreign language learners of English (adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). FLCAS measures four components of possible causes of language anxiety; namely, (i) fear of negative evaluation, (ii) communication apprehension (iii) test anxiety and (iv) anxiety in class, which are cited as individual factors determining anxiety levels among tertiary level students who have to master a foreign language to pursue their academic studies (Aida, 1994). *Fear of negative evaluation* arises when the learner worries about not leaving a good impression on others and avoids situations where one is to be evaluated personally or academically. It also includes the fear of not understanding the teacher or the fear of doing worse than the others. *Communication apprehension* is associated with the uncomfortable feeling when expressing yourself in front of native or non-native speakers of that language. It is often observed as shyness and social anxiety. *Test anxiety* is a performance-related fear of failing tests. This type of anxiety develops when one dwells on negative and irrelevant thoughts about the test especially after a poor performance. *In-class anxiety* mostly depends on teacher expectations, peer pressure and the difficulty of the tasks. It also includes students' worries about making mistakes, mispronouncing words and having inadequate wait time to respond quickly. The questionnaire is designed on a five-point Likert-type scale. The scale for the FLACS ranged from 1 to 5 where 1 referred to strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, and 5- strongly agree.

Corrective Feedback Belief Scale (CFBS) is a 21-item questionnaire which focuses on student beliefs on the necessity, frequency, timing (delayed vs immediate) of feedback, type of errors ((less) serious, (in)frequent, individual) to be corrected, methods of feedback and feedback providing agents (peers, teacher, students themselves) (Fukuda, 2004). Clarification requests, repetitions, explicit corrections, elicitations, metalinguistic feedback and recasts can be listed as the six main methods of CF (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). To exemplify, the error in the tense use in the utterance "She take the bus to school every day" can be treated by *a clarification request* where the teacher prompts a reformulation and makes the learner become aware of the problematic nature of the utterance by saying: 'Sorry?'. The instructor can use *repetition* by simply repeating the wrong part or the whole sentence to alert the learner to the presence of an error: 'She take'? *Explicit feedback* can be given by providing the correct form directly: 'Not "take"—takes'. The student can be made to realize that there

is an error in the utterance through *elicitation* where the instructor prompts a complete sentence: 'She ...?' The instructor may also provide *a recast*, by reformulating all or part of the student's utterance minus the error: 'she takes', or *a meta-linguistic comment* about the erroneous utterance: 'You need the present tense'. CFBS is also designed based on a 5-point-Likert-scale ranking in "strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree" together with "never, occasionally, sometimes, usually, always" and, "very ineffective, ineffective, neutral, effective, very effective".

Both FLCAS and CFBS were translated into Turkish and were successfully used in the Turkish context with internal consistencies higher than .90 (e.g., Çetinkaya & Hamzadayı, 2015; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013). For this study, the questionnaires were given in English. The alpha reliabilities for the FLCAS and the CFBS in the present study were .77 and .71 respectively, indicating acceptable internal consistency for the instrument.

Data Collection

Necessary ethics permission was taken from Boğaziçi University Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects (no: 2019/15). Participation in the study was on voluntary basis. Prior to the questionnaire, the written consent of each participant was taken. First, student demographics were elicited and then the FLCAS and the CFBS were administered with the assistance of several instructors of English, who were given a training on how to conduct the questionnaires during regular class time in the 15th week of the second semester. The training about data collection was given by the researcher who also entered and analyzed the obtained data. The respondents were instructed to read the items on the questionnaires carefully and circle the choice which appealed to them the best. Choosing the appropriate number would indicate the degree of agreement implied in each item. Each participant took about 25 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

All the completed questionnaires were numbered, and the data were entered anonymously. After the scores of the negatively worded items in each scale were reversed, a higher score on the FLCAS corresponded to a high level of foreign language anxiety. A similar procedure was followed for the analysis of the CFBS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were reported. The difference between genders was determined for each item via a t-test for independent samples by using the statistical software package for social sciences program (SPSS version 25).

Results

The minimum score on the FLCAS was 33 and the maximum was 165. Out of a score of 165, the male participants scored a mean of 90.68 (SD=14.05, range=61-130) and the female participants scored a mean of 98.50 (SD=12.20, range=72-121). The female students were more anxious about learning English in an EFL context than their male counterparts across the four dimensions investigated (F (98)=.50, p=.004) and they especially feared more about receiving negative evaluation and making mistakes in classroom activities (see Table 1).

Table 1

Distribution of Factors Leading to Language Anxiety

Indicator	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p	Pattern of variation
Fear of negative evaluation	male	2.55	.71	3.01	.003*	female>male
	female	2.98	.71			
Communication apprehension	male	2.86	.39	1.65	.102	female>male
	female	2.99	.36			
Test anxiety	male	2.81	.52	.83	.40	female>male
	female	2.90	.53			
Anxiety in class	male	2.80	.47	2.68	.009*	female>male
	female	3.03	.40			

p<.05 Adapted from (Horwitz et al., 1986)

An analysis of the breakdown of the items under *fear of negative evaluation* resulted in higher levels of female anxiety especially when the participants did not understand what the teacher was correcting and when they thought that they would be called on in class (see Table 2).

Table 2

Item by Item Analysis of Fear of Negative Evaluation across Genders

Statement	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p
-I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in class.	male	2.04	1.21	1.60	.112
	female	2.44	1.28		
-I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	male	2.94	1.22	1.56	.122
	female	3.32	1.22		
-It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in class.	male	2.02	1.06	1.61	.111
	female	2.38	1.17		
-I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	male	3.18	1.21	3.88	.000*
	female	3.98	.82		
-I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language classes.	male	2.22	1.15	2.32	.022*
	female	2.80	1.34		
-I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	male	3.00	1.30	.808	.421
	female	3.21	1.18		
-Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	male	2.50	1.30	1.36	.177
	female	2.84	1.20		
-I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	male	1.96	1.05	1.60	.114
	female	2.32	1.20		

-I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I was not prepared for before.	male	3.12	1.19	1.85	.067
	female	3.54	1.07		

*p<.05

With respect to communication apprehension, the male students felt less sure of themselves when speaking in class, but they reported to be more comfortable around native speakers (see Table 3). The female students, on the other hand, felt nervous and confused while indulging in classroom activities.

Table 3

Item by Item Analysis of Communication Apprehension across Genders

Statement	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p
-I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in class.	male	3.12	1.04	2.57	.012*
	female	2.56	1.15		
-I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in class.	male	3.04	1.43	2.31	.23
	female	3.64	1.16		
-I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	male	2.58	1.18	2.81	.006*
	female	3.22	1.09		
-I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class.	male	2.90	.93	1.63	.320
	female	2.58	1.03		
-I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	male	2.68	1.16	1.83	.071
	female	3.12	1.24		
-I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	male	2.62	1.11	2.36	.020*
	female	3.16	1.18		
-I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	male	2.58	1.25	.823	.413
	female	2.78	1.18		
-I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	male	3.38	1.19	2.46	.016*
	female	2.82	1.08		

*p<.05

The female students exhibited higher levels of test anxiety by reporting that 'the more they studied, the more confused they got' (see Table 4). The male students usually felt at ease when communicating in a foreign language class.

Table 4

Item by Item Analysis of Fear of Test Anxiety across Genders

Statement	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p
-I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	male	3.08	1.18	.969	.335
	female	3.30	1.09		

-I am usually at ease while speaking in a foreign language in class.	male	3.04	1.03	3.31	.001*
	female	2.36	1.03		
-I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language classes.	male	3.70	1.23	.624	.534
	female	3.54	1.33		
-I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	male	2.18	1.19	1.42	.158
	female	2.52	1.20		
-The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	male	2.04	1.07	2.98	.004*
	female	2.76	1.33		

*p<. 05

When in-class anxiety is considered, it appears that the female students got more nervous and tenser even if they were well-prepared and they might forget the things they already knew whereas the male students appeared to be more relaxed (see Table 5).

Table 5

Item by Item Analysis of In-Class Anxiety across Genders

Statement	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p
-It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in a foreign language	male	2.42	1.26	.972	.333
	female	2.66	1.21		
-It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	male	2.44	1.25	.646	.520
	female	2.60	1.23		
-During class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	male	3.82	1.06	.753	.453
	female	3.62	1.06		
-I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	male	3.00	1.16	1.62	.109
	female	3.40	1.31		
-In class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.	male	2.34	1.19	4.31	.000*
	female	3.30	1.11		
-Even if I am well prepared, I feel anxious about it.	male	2.50	1.36	2.82	.006*
	female	3.26	1.34		
-I often feel like not going to my language classes.	male	2.90	1.42	.441	.660
	female	3.02	1.30		
-I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language classes.	male	2.78	1.25	.399	.691
	female	2.88	1.26		
-I feel tense and nervous in class.	male	1.88	1.10	2.40	.018*
	female	2.40	1.07		
-When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	male	3.46	.97	3.25	.002*
	female	2.78	1.11		
-I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to	male	3.22	1.28	.555	.580

learn to speak a foreign language.		female	3.36	1.24

*p<.05

With regard to the necessity of error correction, 89% of the students agreed that CF was necessary (*M*=4.3, *SD*=.73) The results clearly indicated that the students in both groups, regardless of their level of anxiety, were in favor of receiving CF (see Table 6).

Table 6

Responses to the Necessity of Corrective Feedback

Group	n	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p	Pattern of variation
female	50	4.26	.579	1.39	.17	female=male
male	50	4.26	.828			

*p<.05

A breakdown of the responses to the necessity of CF showed that 96% of the female students agreed on the necessity of feedback whereas 88% of the male students thought so. Interestingly 6% of the male students did not agree that getting feedback was indispensable in foreign language classes (see Table 7).

Table 7

A Breakdown of Responses to the Necessity of Corrective Feedback

Group	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Pattern of variation
female	50	25(50%)	23(46%)	2(4%)	0	0	female>male
male	50	22(44%)	22(44%)	3(6%)	3(6%)	0	

*p<.05

Frequency of Corrective Feedback

Overall, 61% of these students wanted their errors to be corrected frequently (*M*=3.69, *SD*=.83). The female students wanted to be corrected more often than the male students (see Table 8).

Table 8

Responses to the Frequency of Corrective Feedback

Group	n	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p	Pattern of variation
female	50	3.80	.808	1.31	.19	female>male
male	50	3.58	.859			

A breakdown of the responses to the frequency of CF showed that 64% of the female participants preferred to be corrected frequently, but only 54% of the males opted for frequent correction (see Table 9).

Table 9
A Breakdown of Responses to the Frequency of Corrective Feedback

Group	n	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
female	50	10(20%)	22(44%)	16 (32%)	2(4%)	0
male	50	6(12%)	23(46%)	15(30%)	6(12%)	0

Timing of Corrective Feedback

As for the timing of feedback, even though no significant difference existed between the male and the female participants, the male participants favored immediate feedback more as opposed to the females who desired to receive delayed feedback more (see Table 10).

Table 10
Responses to the Timing of CF

Timing of feedback	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p	Pattern of variation
Immediate CF	male	3.58	1.05	-.82	.41	male>female
	female	3.40	1.14			
CF after students finish talking	male	3.74	1.04	-.22	.82	male>female
	female	3.70	.67			
CF after the activity	male	2.94	1.13	.35	.72	female>male
	female	3.02	1.09			
CF at the conclusion of class	male	2.22	1.32	.77	.44	female>male
	female	2.42	1.24			

Types of Corrective Feedback

The type of feedback both groups favored were quite different (see Table 11). The female participants favored repetition > metalinguistic feedback > elicitation > clarification requests> explicit correction whereas the male participants preferred elicitation > repetition > explicit correction > metalinguistic feedback > clarification requests. Neither of the groups believed in the effectiveness of no correction. The only significant difference between the male and female participants was observed in their beliefs about the effectiveness of elicitation.

Table 11

Responses to the Types of CF

Timing of feedback	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p	Pattern of variation
Clarification request	male	3.36	1.02	.94	.35	female>male
	female	3.56	1.09			
Repetition	male	3.80	1.06	.09	.92	female>male
	female	3.82	.98			
Explicit feedback	male	3.66	1.15	-.56	-.57	male>female
	female	3.54	.97			
Elicitation	male	4.08	.11	-2.50	.014	male>female
	female	3.66	.87			
No Corrective Feedback	male	1.74	.85	.93	.35	female>male
	female	1.94	1.25			
Metalinguistic Feedback	male	3.62	1	.52	.60	female>male
	female	3.72	.90			
Recasts	male	3.14	1.03	.76	.45	female>male
	female	3.30	1.07			

*p<.05

Types of Errors for Corrective Feedback

Both genders believed that the following types of errors needed to be corrected: serious > individual > frequent > less serious > infrequent spoken errors. No statistically meaningful difference was observed between the two groups (see Table 12).

Table 12

Responses to the Types of Errors to be Corrected

Types of Errors	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-value	p	Pattern of variation
Serious	male	4.54	.64	-1.41	.16	male>female
	female	4.36	.63			
Less Serious	male	3.14	.83	.81	.42	female>male
	female	3.28	.88			
Frequent	male	3.38	1.14	1.15	.25	female>male
	female	3.62	.85			
Infrequent	male	2.90	1.14	1.19	.23	female>male
	female	3.16	1.01			
Individual	male	4.10	.76	.000	1.00	female=male
	female	4.10	1.09			

*p<.05

Choice of Correctors

Both genders trusted and valued feedback given by the teacher. The female participants were significantly more into teacher feedback than the male participants. Peer feedback was the least preferred one for both groups. Interestingly, the male students wanted to be given the chance to correct their own errors more than the females did (see Table 13).

Table 13

Responses about Choice of Correctors

Choice of Correctors	Group	$\bar{X}$	sd	*t-value*	p	*Pattern of variation*
Peers	male	2.26	1.04	.28	.77	female>male
	female	2.32	1.03			
Teachers	male	4.18	.66	*2.15*	.03*	female>male
	female	4.44	.54			
Students themselves	male	4.24	-.83	1.15	.40	male>female
	female	4.10	.90			

*p<.05

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated whether gender differences had a role on foreign language anxiety and corrective feedback preferences in oral communication. As an answer to the first research question, gender had a role in the anxiety levels of foreign language learners in the Turkish EFL context. The findings of this study are in line with the previous research (e.g., Park & French, 2013) which claims that female participants exhibit greater levels of anxiety than males. As for the second research question, the causes behind the different levels of language anxiety was that females worried the most about receiving a negative evaluation and failing in class activities. This finding lends support to Mersi (2012). More specifically, for the fear of negative evaluation, the females differed from the males in that 'they got upset when they didn't understand what the teacher was correcting' and 'they could feel their hearts pounding when they were going to be called on in a language class'. In terms of communication apprehension, the males differed from the females in that 'they never felt quite sure of themselves when they were speaking in class' and 'they would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language'. The females stated that 'they got nervous and confused when they were speaking in a language class and when they were conversing with the native speakers of that language'. The females exhibited higher levels of test anxiety by stating that 'the more they studied for a language test, the more confused they got'. The males, on the other hand, reported that 'they were usually at ease while speaking in a foreign language in class'. The females experienced higher levels of in-class anxiety by agreeing with the statement that 'even if they were well prepared, they got tense and anxious in class'. The males stated that 'they were pretty relaxed on the way to the language class'.

The last research question explored the role of gender in CF preferences. Both genders believed that receiving CF was necessary in an EFL setting as dictated by the previous work (Zarei, 2012; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). This result can be attributed to learners' awareness of the purpose and effectiveness of CF (Ellis, 2009). That is, by raising learners' awareness about the purpose of the CF, the inhibitive role of anxiety could be decreased. The finding that feedback provided by the teacher is valued the most by both genders validates the previous findings in the literature (Gamlo, 2019; Gielen, Tops, Dochy, Onhema, & Smeets, 2010). Yet, in this study, the difference between the male and female participants is significant. Even though both genders preferred their serious and individual errors to be corrected, there was no significant effect of gender as reported in Khorshidi and Rassaei (2013). Park (2010) states that gender is not a determining factor in terms of the timing of feedback. This study concludes similar findings, too. The female participants favored delayed feedback whereas the male participants preferred immediate feedback. However, this difference in preference was not statistically significant. When the feedback methods were taken into consideration, none of the groups believed in the effectiveness of no corrective feedback. The second least favored correction method was reported to be recasts. This finding contradicts with Rassaei (2015) reporting that learners highly value recasts. The top three most positively rated feedback methods were repetition, metalinguistic feedback and elicitation for the female participants, whereas the males rated elicitation, repetition and explicit correction as the top three most effective CF methods. This finding lends support to Büyükbay (2007) which reported that repetition contributes to learner uptake. The only significant difference between the male and female participants is that the males rated elicitation as a more effective method of correction than the females did. Metalinguistic feedback did not make the top three most positively rated corrective feedback method for the males; yet, it was highly valued by the females. The reason why metalinguistic feedback was rated as quite effective by the females could be that it is cited to decrease anxiety levels of learners (Renko, 2012). In this case, metalinguistic comments on spoken errors might decrease higher levels of language anxiety that the female participants experience.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest that foreign language teachers need to be cautious about gender differences in their lesson planning and teaching practices. Instructors at schools of foreign languages can increase the learning outcomes in their classes by providing the right kind of spoken corrective feedback to relieve the high anxiety female students experience in oral communication classes. Integrating anxiety relieving activities into their lesson plans could motive the learners to take risks, overcome their shyness and become more confident communicators in the target language.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The current study is limited to tertiary level students learning English at an English medium state university in Turkey. More studies of students from different levels and universities are necessary to generalize from the results. Including different methodologies such as interviews and observations would allow triangulation of the data to reach more dependable, reliable and generalizable results.

Acknowledgments

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