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# The Investigation of Gifted Students' Speaking and Writing Anxiety Level According to Some Variables

Bünyamin Sarıkaya<sup>1</sup>, Kenan Bulut<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Education, Muş Alparslan University, Türkiye

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Education, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Türkiye

Correspondence: Bünyamin Sarıkaya. E-mail: b.sarikaya@alparslan.edu.tr

## Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to examine the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students according to various variables. For this purpose, the study group consists of 50 volunteer students who continue their education in a Science and Art Center (BİLSEM) in Turkey and come to the school on the days of the study. The study was designed in the survey model and carried out according to the quantitative research method. In the study, the "Speaking Anxiety Scale" developed by Gündüz and Demir (2020) for secondary school students was used to determine the speaking anxiety of gifted students, and the "Writing Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students" developed by Karakuş Tayşi and Taşkın (2018) was used to determine their writing anxiety. The data were analyzed using the SPSS 26 package program. For analysis, t-Test and One Way Anova Test, which is one-way analysis of variance, were used from parametric tests. As a result of the study, it was determined that the writing and speaking anxiety levels of the gifted students were moderate, and the students do not differ according to their gender, grade level, school type and BİLSEM program they are studying. In the study, it is suggested that more studies should be done on the speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students.

**Keywords:** Gifted Students, Speaking Anxiety, Writing Anxiety

## 1. Introduction

There are many situations that have an impact on people's lives. One of them is the anxiety they experience. According to Morgan (2011) the concept of anxiety is fear that is not clearly understood. Beck and Emery (2017) state that anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling that occurs in the person with the effect of fear. Butcher, Mineka, and Hooley (2013) state that anxiety is a more future-oriented concept.

Anxiety affects individuals in different ways in daily life. Spielberger and Reheiser (2009) emphasize that anxiety limits people's behaviors. According to Rector, Bourdeau, Kitchen, and Joseph-Massiah (2008), high levels of anxiety results in cognitive, physical and behavioral disorders in people. In some studies (Vitasari et al., 2010; Weda & Sakti, 2018), it was found that anxiety negatively affects academic achievement. Burkovik (2009), on the other hand, looks at the situation differently and highlights that a certain level of anxiety enables people to act more willingly in decision-making processes and to be highly motivated.

Rapee, Spence, Cobham, and Wignall (2003) state that various factors are instrumental on anxiety. According to them, these elements are age, heredity, parental attitude, number of siblings, socioeconomic characteristics, educational status of parents, gender and student success.

Speaking and writing skills are among the skills that anxiety affects in human life. In this respect, it is thought to be useful to provide information about speaking and writing anxiety in the study.

Speaking anxiety is seen in many societies around the world (Fletcher, 2017). Different factors are effective in the formation of speaking anxiety. For example, negative thinking styles may cause speaking anxiety in the individual (Linver, 1997; Condrill & Bough, 2004; Stuart, 2005; Esposito, 2010). Speaking defects and listener-based factors result in speaking anxiety in the individual (Bippus & Daly, 1999). Environmental or environment-based factors also increase speaking anxiety. Speaking in front of a large number of people is an example of this (King, 1998). In studies on speaking skills, it has been shown that students have a high level of speaking anxiety among the reasons for their failure. It is expected that the individual avoids speaking activities as the anxiety level rises, and the individual will be more motivated towards the act of speaking, take a more active role in the activities, and accordingly be more successful in performances based on speaking skills as the level of anxiety decreases (Young, 1991).

Reducing speaking anxiety is as important as its causes and consequences. Tekşan, Mutlu, and Çinpolat (2019: 1407) suggests the followings for reducing high-level speaking anxiety: the student should be with a positive attitude towards his/her speaking skills; fun, attractive, up-to-date and simple speaking activities that will enable students to develop positive attitudes towards speaking should be included; speaking activities should be carried out using different techniques such as micro-education, and environments should be created where students can express their feelings and thoughts comfortably.

Writing anxiety is defined as “the situation in which an individual avoids writing with the thought that what he has written will be evaluated” (Daly and Wilson, 1983: 327). Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) state that individuals who want to communicate by writing may feel writing anxiety.

Many factors are effective in the occurrence of writing anxiety. As a matter of fact, Maden (2021), in his study in which he examined the literature in detail, states that many factors play a role in the formation of writing anxiety and these factors are feeling weak and inadequate in writing, lack of self-confidence, low self-efficacy in writing, negative experiences (feedbacks, experiences), lack of reading habit, slow writing.

Minimizing this anxiety is as important as the causes of writing anxiety. The following suggestions have been made to reduce writing anxiety (from Tighe, 1987 as cited in Katrancı & Temel, 2018; Şakiroğlu & Kılıç, 2019). First of all, students should understand the evaluation process by examining sample manuscripts and discussing them according to appropriate criteria. By dividing the writing process into appropriate stages in a planned manner, activities should be prepared for each level, and students should be able to master the evaluation criteria before taking each step to the next stage. Students should be made to feel ready to write. Thus, it can contribute to the students' less anxiety. It would be beneficial for peers to be included in the evaluation at the stage of reviewing written products.

### *1.1. The Importance and Aim of the Study*

Anxiety is a concept that is effective not only in education but also in all areas of life. For example, an individual working in industry may be worried about his job, while this is also true for a doctor working in a hospital. The student studying at the school, the family and teachers of this student may also have various anxieties. While normal students may be anxious in their education life, gifted students may also have various anxieties. Therefore, the concept of anxiety is valid for everyone, regardless of the occupational group, and efforts should be made to minimize this concept.

It is seen that various studies have been conducted on gifted students, when the literature is examined. There are studies on the creativity and creative thinking skills of gifted students (Akkan, 2010; Bapoğlu, 2010; Chien & Hui,

2010; Koçak & İçmenoğlu, 2012; Kanlı, 2017; Hacıoğlu & Türk, 2018). In Turkey, there have been studies examining writing skills (Yaylacık, 2014; Yavuz, 2020), and creative writing skills (Özdemir, 2010; Akça, 2017; Saluk & Pilav, 2018; Özcan, Konaş & Polat, 2020). In addition, there is a study (Okur & Özsoy, 2015) that determines the attitudes of gifted students towards the Turkish lesson. While very few studies (Özsoy, 2015; Sevim, Karabulut, & Elkatmış, 2021) have been conducted on the writing anxiety of these students in Turkey, which also concerns our study, there is no study that addresses speaking anxiety. In this respect, it is thought that the research is original and contributes to the field. In this context, the main problem of the study is to determine the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students studying at the Science and Art Center (BİLSEM) in Turkey. In the context of this basic problem, answers to the following sub-problems were sought:

1. What is the level of speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students?
2. Does the speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students differ according to gender, type of school, BİLSEM program they study and grade level variables?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. The Model of the Research

This study was designed in the survey model and conducted according to the quantitative research method. In survey studies, "the event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined in its own conditions and as it is. No attempt is made to change or influence them in any way. What is wanted to be known exists and it is there. The important thing is to 'observe' it appropriately" (Karasar, 2007: 77).

### 2.2. Working Group

The study group of this research, which aims to examine the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students according to some variables, consists of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students who continue their education at the Science and Art Center in a city center in Turkey. The study was carried out with 50 volunteer students who were studying in four secondary school classes in BİLSEM and who came to the school on the days of the study.

### 2.3. Data Collection and Assessment Tools

In this study, the "*Speaking Anxiety Scale*" developed by Gündüz and Demir (2020) for secondary school students and the "*Writing Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students*" developed by Karakuş Tayşi and Taşkın (2018) were used.

"*The Speaking Anxiety Scale*" was developed in a study conducted with 1214 students aged 9-14 and attending the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The scale, which has three factors and consists of 21 items, is a Likert type measurement tool. The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be .86.

"*The Writing Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students*" was developed as a result of a study conducted with 500 students (5, 6, 7 and 8) continuing their education in secondary schools. The said measurement tool is a three-factor, Likert-type measurement tool consisting of 16 items. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient used to calculate the internal consistency of the scale was found to be .79. A high total score from the scale will indicate a high level of writing anxiety, and a low one will indicate a low level of writing anxiety.

### 2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, in which the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students were examined according to some variables, the data were collected by the students' own course teachers in two separate sessions. Students filled out the data collection tools on different days. Before the data were collected, the students were asked to fill in the information about *gender, school type, BİLSEM program they studied and grade level* within the scope of the purpose of the study. The data obtained from two separate measurement tools were analyzed using the SPSS 26 package program. Before the analysis, the reliability of the data was checked through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and it was understood that the reliability was high. In addition, normality test was performed, it was

seen that the data were normally distributed, so t-Test and One Way Anova Test, which is one-way analysis of variance, were used for analysis.

The findings obtained after the analysis of the data are presented in tables and by making various comparisons in accordance with the purpose of the study.

### 3. Findings

#### *Findings Regarding the First Sub-Problem*

The first sub-problem of the study is about *the level of speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students*. Findings related to this are given in Table 1.

Table 1: T-test Determining the Difference Between Gifted Students' Speaking and Writing Anxiety

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Speech anxiety	50	50,18	17,94	98	4,343	<b>,000</b>
Writing anxiety	50	36,16	14,10			

Table 1 shows the level of speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students and whether there is a significant difference between them [ $t_{(98)} = 4.343$   $p < .05$  ( $p = .000$ )]. While the students' speaking anxiety level is 50.18, their writing anxiety level is 36.16. It is understood from this that *the speaking anxiety of gifted students is higher than their writing anxiety* and there is a significant difference.

#### *Findings Regarding the Second Sub-Problem*

The second sub-problem of the study is *whether the speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students differ according to the variables of gender, type of school, BILSEM program they study and grade level*. Findings for this are given in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Table 2: T-test Determining the Differences in Speaking and Writing Anxiety of Gifted Students by Gender

Groups	N		$\bar{X}$		S		sd	t	p
	W	M	W	M	W	M			
Speech anxiety	22	28	54,00	47,17	18,90	16,88	48	1,345	<b>,185</b>
Writing anxiety	25	25	36,80	35,20	13,82	14,64	48	,318	<b>,752</b>

In the first line of Table 2, it is stated whether the speaking anxiety of gifted students differ according to gender [ $t_{(48)} = 1,345$   $p > ,05$  ( $p = ,185$ )]. While the anxiety levels of *female* students are 54.00, the anxiety levels of *male* students are 47.17. It is seen that the *female* gifted students have higher speaking anxiety levels than the *male* ones. However, this difference is not statistically significant.

In the second row of the table, there are data about the writing anxiety of gifted students and the analysis of these data [ $t_{(48)} = ,318$   $p > ,05$  ( $p = ,752$ )]. Accordingly, while the anxiety levels of *female* students are 36.80, the anxiety levels of *male* students are 35.20. It is understood that the writing anxiety of gifted *female* and *male* students is close to each other and does not differ according to gender.

Table 3: T-test Determining the Differences in Speaking and Writing Anxiety of Gifted Students by School Type

Groups	N		$\bar{X}$		S		sd	t	p
	State school	Private school	State school	Private school	State school	Private school			

<b>Speech anxiety</b>	29	21	50,44	49,80	17,62	18,79	48	,123	<b>,903</b>
<b>Writing anxiety</b>	28	22	37,21	34,81	15,24	12,74	48	,592	<b>,557</b>

In the first line of Table 3, it is stated whether the speaking anxiety of gifted students differ according to the school type [ $t_{(48)} = ,123$   $p > ,05$  ( $p = ,903$ )]. According to this, the anxiety levels of the students studying in public schools are 50.44, while the anxiety levels of students studying in private schools are 49.80. It is understood from this that the speaking anxiety of gifted students is very close to each other and does not differ according to the type of school.

In the second line of the table, it is seen whether the writing anxiety of the gifted students differ according to the school type [ $t_{(48)} = ,592$   $p > ,05$  ( $p = ,557$ )]. According to this, while the anxiety levels of the students studying in public schools are 37.21, the anxiety levels of students studying in private schools are 34.81. According to the anxiety level mean scores, it is seen that the writing anxiety of gifted students studying in *private school* is lower than the writing anxiety of those studying in *public school*. However, it is understood that this difference does not differ according to the type of school.

Table 4: T-test Determining the Differences between Gifted and Talented Students' Anxiety in Speaking and Writing According to the BİLSEM Program in Which They Study

Groups	N		$\bar{X}$		S		sd	t	p
	Program of recognition individual talents	Program of recognition special talents	Program of recognition individual talents	Program of recognition special talents	Program of recognition individual talents	Program of recognition special talents			
<b>Speech anxiety</b>	29	21	48,20	52,90	20,02	14,62	48	-,912	<b>,366</b>
<b>Writing anxiety</b>	29	21	34,41	38,57	14,73	13,15	48	1,029	<b>,309</b>

In the first line of Table 4, it is stated whether the speaking anxiety of gifted students differ according to the BİLSEM program they are studying [ $t_{(48)} = -,912$   $p > ,05$  ( $p = ,366$ )]. While the anxiety level of the students studying in the program of recognizing individual talents is 48.20, the anxiety level of the students studying in the program of developing special abilities is 52.90.

In the second row of the table, there are data about the writing anxiety of gifted students and the analysis of these data [ $t_{(48)} = -1,029$   $p > ,05$  ( $p = ,309$ )]. According to this, while the anxiety levels of the students studying in the program of recognizing individual talents are 34.41, the anxiety levels of the students studying in the special talent development program are 38.57.

Considering the anxiety level score averages, it is seen that the speaking and writing anxieties of gifted students who study in *the program to recognize individual talents* are lower than those who study in *the special talent development program*. However, it is understood that this does not differ according to the BİLSEM program they study.

Table 5a: Descriptive Statistics on Speaking and Writing Anxiety Levels of Gifted Students by Grade Levels

Classes	N		$\bar{X}$		S	
	Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety	Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety	Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety

<b>5th grade</b>	15	13	47,33	35,76	21,03	16,96
<b>6th grade</b>	13	14	51,46	33,00	18,81	13,37
<b>7th grade</b>	14	13	49,35	38,23	14,61	13,65
<b>8th grade</b>	8	10	54,87	38,40	17,82	12,86
<b>Total</b>	50	50	50,18	36,16	17,94	14,10

Table 5b: One-Factor Analysis of Variance (One-Way Anova) Test Determining the Differences between Gifted Students' Speaking and Writing Anxiety Levels by Grade Level

Source of variance	Sum of squares		sd	Mean of squares		F		p	
	Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety		Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety	Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety	Speech anxiety	Writing anxiety
<b>Intergroup</b>	328,726	247,704	3	109,575	82,568				
<b>Ingroups</b>	15444,653	9507,015	46	335,753	206,674	,326	,400	,806	,754
<b>Total</b>	15773,380	9754,720	49						

In Table 5b, it is seen whether the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students differ statistically according to the grade level.

According to the table, students' speaking [ $F(3, 46) = ,326$   $p > .05$  ( $p = ,806$ )] and writing [ $F(3, 46) = ,400$   $p > .05$  ( $p = ,754$ )] anxiety levels does not differ by grade level. In other words, it is seen that the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students do not show statistical significance compared to the classes they are studying.

Considering the descriptive statistics in Table 5a, it was found that the students with the highest speaking anxiety level were 8th grade students (54,87) and the students with the lowest speaking anxiety level are the 5th grade students (47,33). According to the same table, 7th and 8th grade students had the highest writing anxiety levels (7th grade, 38,23; 8th grade, 38,40); It is seen that the students with the lowest level of writing anxiety are 6th grade students (33,00). According to the mean scores, these differences between the classes are not statistically significant.

When the findings are evaluated, it is seen that the levels of speaking and writing anxiety are lower in the *lower grades* and higher in the *upper grades*, especially in the 8th grade students.

#### 4. Discussion

Various results were obtained in this study, which aimed to examine the speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students according to some variables. One of the results reached in the study is that the writing anxiety level of the students was 36.16. Considering that the lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 16 and the highest score is 80, it can be said that the writing anxiety levels of gifted students are moderate. In the study conducted by Özsoy (2015), it was determined that the writing anxiety levels of gifted students were low. The relevant result is in parallel with the result reached in this study. In their study, Palmquist and Young (1992) determined that the writing anxiety levels of students who are described as gifted are lower than their peers. Similar results were obtained in studies investigating the writing anxiety levels of non-gifted students, and it was

determined that the writing anxiety levels of these students were moderate (Yaman, 2010; Aşılıoğlu & Özkan, 2013; Ateş & Akaydın, 2015).

In the study, the speaking anxiety levels of gifted students were 50.18. Considering that the lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 21 and the highest score is 102, it can be said that the speaking anxiety levels of gifted students are moderate. It was concluded that gifted students' speaking anxiety levels were higher than their writing anxiety levels and showed a significant difference. Since there is no study in the literature about the speaking anxiety of gifted students, this result is discussed with the speaking anxiety levels of non-gifted students. In this context, some studies in the literature (Aksu, 2021) that determined that the speaking anxiety levels of non-gifted students were at a medium level were similar to the results of this study, while some studies determined that the speaking anxiety levels of these students were low (Keşaplı & Çifçi, 2017; Akalın & Adıgüzel, 2020; Alturan, 2021).

In the study, it was determined that the writing anxiety of gifted students did not differ according to gender. While the anxiety level of female students is 36.80, the anxiety level of male students is 35.20. It has been determined that the writing anxiety of gifted female and male students is close to each other and does not differ according to gender. Özsoy (2015) determined in his study that the writing anxiety levels of gifted students differed significantly. It can be said that the study differs in this aspect. In the related study, gifted male students have a significantly higher level of writing anxiety than gifted female students. There are studies in the literature examining the writing anxiety levels of non-gifted students. While Yaman (2010), Tiryaki (2012), İşeri and Ünal (2012) did not find a significant difference between the writing anxiety scores of female and male students, Aşılıoğlu and Özkan (2013), Uçgun (2011), Shang (2013) found that female students' writing anxiety scores were significantly lower than male students. Xu (1993), Cheng (2002), and Tekşan (2013) found in their studies that male students had significantly lower writing anxiety than female students.

In the study, it was determined that the speaking anxiety of gifted students did not differ according to gender. While the anxiety levels of female students are 54.00, the anxiety levels of male students are 47.17. It is seen that the female gifted students have higher speaking anxiety levels than the male ones. However, this difference is not statistically significant. In the study conducted by Gölpınar, Hamzadayı, and Bayat (2018), no significant difference was found when speaking anxiety was compared in terms of gender. In a study by Gaibani and Elmenfi (2014), it was determined that being a man or a woman has no effect on speaking anxiety. In some studies in the literature, in which the speaking anxiety levels of non-gifted students were discussed according to the gender variable, while the speaking anxiety scores of female students were high (Rawson, Blomer, & Kendall, 1994; Campbell & Jones, 1997; Rosenthal & Schreiner 2000; Surtees, Wainwright, Pharoah, 2002; Keşaplı and Çifçi, 2017; Akalın and Adıgüzel, 2020), whereas in some other studies, it was determined that male students' speaking anxiety scores were high (Sevim & Gedik, 2014; Katrancı & Kuşdemir, 2015).

Speaking and writing anxiety levels of gifted students do not differ according to the grade level they are studying. When the results are evaluated in this context, it can be said that the levels of speaking and writing anxiety are lower in the lower grades and higher in the upper grades, especially in the 8th grade students. According to the mean scores, these differences between the classes are not statistically significant. In the study, the students with the highest level of writing anxiety were 7th and 8th grade students (7th grade, 38.23; 8th grade, 38.40) and it was determined that the students with the lowest level of writing anxiety were 6th grade students (33.00). Özsoy (2015), in his study investigating the writing anxiety levels of gifted students, determined that the writing anxiety levels of gifted students in the 8th grade were significantly higher than the levels of other grades. In this aspect, it can be said that the study is similar to our study. There are studies in the literature examining the writing anxiety levels of non-gifted students according to the grade level variable. In these studies, students' writing anxiety levels differ according to the class variable. In the studies conducted by Zorbaz (2010), Aşılıoğlu and Özkan (2013), it was determined that the writing anxiety of the students increased as the grade level increased. In the study, it was determined that the students with the highest speaking anxiety level were 8th grade students (54.87) and the students with the lowest speaking anxiety level were 5th grade students (47.33). Since there is no study that deals with the speaking anxiety of gifted students according to the class variable, this result is discussed with the speaking anxiety levels of non-gifted students. Keşaplı and Çifçi (2017) found in their study that as the grade levels of secondary school students increase, their speaking anxiety decreases. In the study conducted by Gedik

(2015), it was determined that there was no significant difference between the speaking anxiety mean scores of the students according to the grade level. Many studies have shown that speaking anxiety levels do not differ significantly between grade levels. When the studies in the literature are examined, it is concluded that the relationship between the grade level and the level of speaking anxiety does not differ significantly (Sevim & Gedik, 2014; Yıldırım, 2015; Kavruk & Deniz, 2015; Durmuş & Baş, 2016; Baki & Kahveci, 2017). On the other hand, in the study conducted by Gündüz (2020), a significant difference was found between the speaking anxiety of non-gifted secondary school students and their grade level.

In the study, speaking anxiety of gifted students was examined according to the type of school they studied. According to this, while the speaking anxiety level of the students studying in the public school is 50.44, the anxiety level of the students studying in the private school is 49.80. It has been determined that gifted students' speaking anxiety is very close to each other and does not differ according to school type. In a study examining the speaking anxiety of non-gifted students according to the type of school they attend (Sevim & Gedik, 2014), it was determined that students' speaking anxiety did not differ in this context. The writing anxiety of gifted students was analyzed according to the type of school they attended. While the writing anxiety level of the students studying in the public school is 37.21, the writing anxiety level of the students studying in the private school is 34.81. According to the anxiety level mean scores, it was determined that the writing anxiety of gifted students studying in private school was lower than the writing anxiety of those studying in public school. However, it was determined that this result did not differ according to the type of school. These findings show that the type of school attended is not effective on the writing and speaking anxiety levels of gifted students.

It was investigated whether the speaking and writing anxiety of gifted students differed according to the BİLSEM program they studied. While the speaking anxiety level of the students studying in the program of recognizing individual talents is 48.20, the speaking anxiety level of the students studying in the special talent development program is 52.90. While the writing anxiety level of the students studying in the program of awareness of individual abilities is 34.41, the level of writing anxiety of the students studying in the program of developing special abilities is 38.57. These results show that the writing and speaking anxiety levels of gifted students do not differ according to the BİLSEM program they are studying. In Özsoy's (2015) study, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the writing anxiety mean scores of gifted students according to the BİLSEM program they attend.

When the studies in the literature are examined, it has been determined that there are very few studies on the writing and speaking anxiety of gifted students. In this context, a healthy discussion could not be made. More studies should be conducted to investigate the writing and speaking anxiety of gifted students, especially in Turkey. It is recommended to determine the general anxiety states of gifted students and the factors that affect their writing and speaking anxieties in a practical way.

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