

A Research on Speech Anxiety of Prospective Turkish Teachers

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ABSTRACT This research aims to find whether prospective teachers' speech anxiety changes in accordance to various factors (gender, grade level) with meaningful difference. The research uses the descriptive research method of shading. The research group consists of 142 prospective teachers who were studying in the Marmara University, Educational Faculty as a part of the Turkish Teaching program in the spring term of 2012-2013. In the research, the Speech Anxiety Scale, which comprises of 20 factors, was used. The scale's internal consistency measure was found to be (Cronbach-Alfa) .91. According to the research, from the point of gender, various male prospective teachers were seen to be more talkative with less speech anxiety environmentally. From the point of the university grade level, within the dimensions of the environment and speaking psychology, the prospective teachers from the fourth and second grade had meaningful differences.

INTRODUCTION

Speech anxiety is a kind of anxiety and also is a phobia. When examined under a wider category as communication anxiety, it consists of two main elements, namely, daily anxiety felt during general communication and speech anxiety during public speaking (Yaman and Sofu 2013). To Clevenger, (cited: Yaman and Sofu 2013) speech anxiety during a speech in public is separated from general communication since it emerges in front of a particular crowd. However, some researchers have defined this situation as communication apprehension because it develops during the action of addressing more people. Even the people who are extremely well equipped, have developed themselves culturally, and are highly successful in discourse can be observed to have a serious fear of talking in front of people (Gurzap 2010). "The research conducted in the United States reveals that seventy-five percent of the American people have glossophobia" (Arikan 2004). Again, a survey aimed at university students suggests that most of the students want to speak in public but have concerns for certain reasons. They seem to avoid speaking in public even if given a chance, due to reasons such as, a lack of command over the Turkish language, learning Turkish later on in life, hesitating to give incorrect or incomplete information, cynical behaviors of the audience,

lack of confidence, shy temperament, diction problems, and anxiety of not being understood (Arslan 2012).

Studies about speech anxiety are majorly collected under the title of speech anxiety in foreign language education. Studies towards the Turkish teachers' speech anxiety are limited. Sevim (2012), Yaman and Sofu (2013), Katranci and Melanlioglu (2013), and Kinay and Ozkan (2014) developed the speech anxiety scale for prospective teachers. After getting views of prospective teachers pertaining to the speech problems, Akkaya (2012) conducted a study using the results from data content analysis, which he obtained from an open-ended questionnaire to 101 senior year students of the Faculty of Education, Adiyaman University in the 2011-2012 academic year. The question was: "What are your speech problems?"

In this research, the following question has been sought after: "Does speech anxiety in prospective Turkish teachers show a significant difference according to gender and grade level?" The research is prepared to determine whether the prospective Turkish teachers' speech anxiety shows a significant difference by gender and grade level. The current situation in learning the speech area, one of the basic learning areas, is directly related with the qualifications and skills of Turkish teachers. In this context, determining the prospective teachers' anxiety levels towards

speaking will both, provide to obtain important tips on teaching Turkish and examine the factors that affect the speech abilities, which is one of the basic skills of the teaching profession. The findings will also make a significant contribution to this field.

METHODOLOGY

The paper uses a descriptive research method. This method discusses the cases that continue their existence, it does not interfere with the facts or events, does not prevent their flow and does not insert in a new variable; the event is treated and examined as exactly how it processes (Kaptan 1998; Bogdan and Biklen 2003; Yildirim and Simsek 2005; Karasar 2011). In the research conducted with this method, a scanning model was used to conduct a literature scanning. Scan models are research approaches aiming to describe a situation which already exists or existed in the past. The events, individuals or objects are depicted by observations in their own conditions. The scan searcher can examine directly the object or the individual, and is bound to interpret the scattered data, which it will obtain by referring to experts in the field and records that were previously held, integrating them in a system (Bilgin 2006; Bailey 2007; Yildirim and Simsek 2008).

Research Sample

The sample study comprises of 144 prospective teachers who have been studying in their 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years in the Turkish Department at the Ataturk Faculty of Education, Marmara University.

Data Collection Tools

The Speech Anxiety Scale (PIS), which was developed by Sevim (2012), was used as a data collection tool in the research. This scale has a three-factor structure consisting of 20 factors—19 positive and one negative, all of which are negative in terms of meaning. The first factor is speaker-focused anxiety, the second one is environment-oriented anxiety and the third factor is called conversation psychology. The coefficient of material's internal consistency (Cronbach-Alpha) of the scale, whose validity and reliability studies were already conducted, is .912.

The Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data obtained from the PIS, the SPSS 20 software package was used. For the interpretation of the data, the arithmetic average, standard deviation, t-test and one-way variance analysis were used. To determine the prospective teachers' answers to PIS, the arithmetic average and standard deviation were examined.

To determine whether the departments of prospective teachers have significant effects on the scores given by the PIS, a one-way variance analysis was used. To determine whether these scales show changes by the gender of prospective teachers, the t-test was applied and the significance level was considered as $p < .05$.

RESULTS

The research group consists of 142 prospective teachers who studied in Marmara University, Educational Faculty, in the Turkish Teaching program in the spring term of 2012-2013. In the research, "Speech Anxiety Scale" that has 20 factors and that was developed by Sevim (2012), was used as a data collection tool. The scale's internal consistency measure was found to be (Cronbach-Alfa) .91. The Speaking Anxiety Scale is composed of three factors: speaker-oriented, environment-oriented and conversation-psychology-oriented.

Prospective Turkish Teachers' Speech Anxiety by Gender

The t-test was applied in order to determine whether the averages for speaker-oriented, environment-oriented and conversation-psychology-oriented anxiety obtained from prospective Turkish teachers' attitudes showed significant differences by gender, and the findings are given in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, when the data is analyzed, prospective Turkish teachers' speaker-oriented anxiety does not show a significant difference by gender ($t = -2.4$, $p < .05$). In the analysis, the male teachers' speaker-oriented anxiety is $\bar{X}=40.9$, while female teachers' is $\bar{X}=37.2$. These findings indicate that male and female prospective teachers perceived the substances under the speaker-oriented anxiety factor similarly. The

Table 1: The independent samples t-test results of speech anxiety of prospective Turkish teachers by gender

Factors	Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Speaker-oriented Anxiety	Female	79	37.2	10.4	140	-2.4	.019
	Male	65	40.9	7.8			
Environment-oriented Anxiety	Female	79	20.5	5.8	142	-2.7	.008
	Male	65	22.8	4.3			
Conversation-Psychology-oriented anxiety	Female	79	10.4	2.7	142	-1.3	.198
	Male	65	11	2.5			

environment-oriented speech anxiety of prospective teachers does not show a significant difference by gender. According to the results, the environment-oriented anxiety of male teachers is $\bar{X}=22.8$, while the environment-oriented anxiety of female teachers is $\bar{X}=20.5$. These findings indicate that male and female prospective teachers perceived their environment-oriented anxieties in a similar way. The anxiety of prospective teachers towards conversation psychology does not show a significant difference by gender ($t = -1.3, p < .05$). According to the results, the anxiety of male teachers towards conversation psychology is $\bar{X}=11$, while the anxiety of female teachers towards the same is $\bar{X}=10.4$. This finding shows that both male and female perceive anxieties of conversation psychology in a similar way.

Speaking Anxiety of Prospective Turkish Teachers in terms of Grade Variables

In order to determine whether the averages of prospective teachers' speech anxiety show

significant differences by grade level, the one-way variance analysis was applied and the obtained results are given in Table 2.

When the data in Table 2 is reviewed, it is seen that the prospective teachers' speaker-oriented anxiety shows a meaningful difference by grade levels ($F=2.3, p < .05$). In other words, the anxiety level of all participants who answer the scale at all grade levels is similar. However, sophomore students are at the highest anxiety level, while senior students are at the lowest anxiety level. Environment-oriented anxiety of prospective teachers shows a meaningful difference by the grade level ($F=4.2, p < .05$). In order to determine its source, one of the post hoc tests, the Tukey-HSD test was conducted, and the results show that there is a significant difference between senior and sophomore students. These findings have indicated that the environment-oriented anxiety levels of senior and sophomore prospective teachers are higher. In other words, their speech anxiety has been affected by environmental factors. Conversation psychology

Table 2: One-way variance analysis results of prospective Turkish teachers speaking-oriented anxiety by grade level

Size	Grade	N	\bar{X}	Source of variance	Total of squares	SD	Average of squares	F	P	Significant difference
Speaker Oriented	1	38	38.2							
	2	29	35.9	Inter groups	591.6	3	197.2	2.3	.085	No
	3	50	39.3	Intra groups	12091.6	138	87621			
	4	25	42.4	Total	12683.2	141				
Environment Oriented	1	38	21.1							
	2	29	19.6	Inter groups	329.1	3	109706	4.2	.007	4. Class
	3	50	21.5	Intra groups	3644.9	140	26			2. Class
	4	25	24.4	Total	3974.0	143				
Conversation Psychology	1	38	11.0							
	2	29	9.8	Inter groups	55.8	3	18.6	2.9	.039	4. Class
	3	50	10.4	Intra groups	911.1	140	6.5			2. Class
	4	25	11.7	Total	966.9	143				

anxiety of prospective teachers shows a meaningful difference by the grade level ($F = 2.9, p < .05$). In order to determine its source, one of the post hoc tests, the Tukey-HSD test was conducted, and the results show that there is a meaningful difference between senior and sophomore students. According to these findings, the psychological states of senior and sophomore prospective teachers have been affecting their levels of anxiety.

DISCUSSION

According to the results obtained from the research, Turkish teachers' speaking-oriented, environment-oriented and conversation psychology anxiety by gender variance do not show a meaningful difference. In this context, gender is not an important factor that affects speech anxiety. In Sevim's research (2012) related to foreign language, speaking anxiety found similar results and showed that speech anxiety is not an effective factor on gender. A similar result was also introduced in the survey conducted by Sallabas (2012). Gender variance in this research did not create a meaningful difference on the Turkish teachers' speaking anxiety. In Johnson's (2012) research on the high school level, the students' gender and self-esteem have been determined as the important variances, which affect their speech anxiety level.

In reference to the grade level variance of prospective Turkish teachers and the results obtained in the study, speaking-oriented anxiety levels of prospective teachers do not show a meaningful difference in terms of this variance, while their environment-oriented anxiety and conversation psychology anxiety levels indicate a meaningful difference by grade level. According to these results, when anxiety levels of prospective teachers were analyzed in terms of grade level variance, it is seen that a person's psychology and environment at the time of speaking were important. With regard to these results, the environment-oriented anxieties and psychological status of prospective teachers who are in senior and sophomore years have been affecting their speech anxiety levels. In the study by Sofu (2012), teachers' speech anxiety levels show a meaningful difference based on their grade level. These anxiety levels have decreased over the years, but the socio-economic level has a significant impact on speech anxiety. The results obtained from this study revealed that the environment is an important factor on speech anxiety.

Another research supporting this conclusion is the study carried out by Karakaya (2011). Learning experiences of foreign language instructors, and their having lived in a foreign-speaking country, in short, their social environment significantly affects their speech anxiety levels. In the studies about foreign language anxiety levels of students conducted by Sevim (2012), Dogan (2008), Oner and Gedikoglu (2007), it is seen that students do not hesitate to talk to people who speak their native languages and demonstrate to participate in a conversation voluntarily when they are ready.

In Akkaya's (2012) study wherein teachers' views on the speech problem are detected, an open-ended question was asked to 101 senior students of Adiyaman University, Faculty of Education, in the 2011-2012 academic year, and the study's data was obtained. The question was, "What are your speech problems?" According to the survey, prospective teachers have these problems, voice, tone, accent and pronunciation mistakes, psychological problems (cannot speak in the public, cannot speak in one-to-one relationships), speech hesitation, inability to apply the rules of language, lack of information, inability to focus on speech, and speech problems caused by social barriers and physical reasons. Based on the definition of speech, Taser (2000) reveals the necessity of the use of various modern methods and techniques for reducing the speech anxiety and developing this skill. Ucgun (2007) argues that the speaking skills of today's students and developments of the world surrounded by visuals should be taken into consideration and in order to improve this skill, photos and visuals should be also used. In studies conducted by Orhan (2010), and Orhan et al. (2012) suggest that in the six hat thinking techniques supported by visuals, there was a significant difference in students' speaking skills in favor of experimental group and this technique was a significant factor for the development of their speaking skills.

Kantarci and Kusdemir (2015) determined that a reduction in the level of verbal expression class speech concerns of teachers. The anxiety level of the speech made by the female gender in comparison after the application has been found to be lower than men.

CONCLUSION

When the results obtained in the relevant literature review and research are analyzed, it is seen that speech anxiety is a multidimensional

concept affected by multiple factors, and therefore studies to be held should be presented by a pluralistic perspective covering various disciplines in this regard. As for the studies mentioned above, a limited number of studies have been conducted on speech anxiety and they were found to develop particularly a speech anxiety scale. In addition, as the examples given above, the researches on speech anxiety have been usually performed at the sample level related to the Turkish education of foreign students or English learners. Speaking—one of the four main language skills—is a means of communication and interpersonal relations, and is also one of the main areas of Turkish learning. When the researches on review of literature are analyzed in this context, the necessity of studies related to Turkish education at the levels of primary school, middle school and university are revealed.

In the field review, this issue has been discussed as speech anxiety in learning a foreign language. Since no studies have been conducted on speech anxiety issue of Turkish teachers, this paper is considered as a contributor to fill this gap in the field.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Not only the use of visual elements in the development of speaking skills but also a variety of modern methods and techniques will create a significant impact. Drama encourages the students to speak by motivating them and it also significantly decreases speech anxieties in the students who learn English as a foreign language by positively impacting them. Creative drama contributes to fluent speaking. Drama studies reduce speech anxieties of students and they have a positive effect on increasing students' confidence and courage to speak English in public. Considering the speaking skill concerns of learners who learn Turkish as a foreign language, speech practices should be enhanced in classes.

In addition, this process should be developed with various activities that will be held at the university level in a systematic way, and by determining the inadequate points of lesson content, prospective teachers should be improved with the courses on this subject at universities. Verbal expression classes at the faculties and listening classes in the Turkish Teaching Department should be converted into practical courses based on verbal exams, instead of written exams

and these courses should be supported by the activities in which students can be active and are aimed at reducing the speech anxiety of students and improving their speaking skills. The latest technological tools used by the new generation should be used to renew this course content.

On the other hand, the studies with different samples need to be conducted in this field by analyzing the events in depth and from different ways along with empirical, qualitative, and mixed content studies. Besides the changed technological tools, sound booths should be also established for students to record their own voices during adaptation process of schools and these booths should also take place at all levels from primary schools to university.

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