

## Examination of Listening Anxiety of Turkish Language Teacher Candidates

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the listening anxiety of Turkish language teacher candidates in terms of various variables. "Listening Anxiety Scale" developed by Maden and Durukan (2016) was used as data collection tool in the study conducted by a survey model. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.88. The data of the research was obtained from randomly selected 168 Turkish language teacher candidates studying in Atatürk University in 2017-2018 academic years. The obtained quantitative data by the application of the scale was transferred to SPSS Windows 15 package software program. As the result of the research using statistical package program for data analysis, it was found that even it has not been high, Turkish language teacher candidates have listening anxiety above the average and it was determined that listening anxiety has not differed significantly according to gender, grade, most frequently used language skill, and status of reading books regularly.

**Keywords:** listening anxiety, teacher, survey model

### 1. Introduction

Communication is compromising of at least two individuals<sup>1</sup> by using different means such as written, verbal, non-verbal *etc.* Verbal communication is "the oldest and most effective communication type among these in which feelings and thoughts are conveyed through words" (Aziz, 2010, p. 43). In this communication type, the speaker is in the position of the sender and the listener is the receiver. Due to the feedback characteristic of communication, the speaker can be the listener and the listener can become the speaker.

According to the Turkish Language Association [TDK] (2011, p. 671), the word "listening" implies the action of listening while the word "listen to" implies paying attention in order to hear. In the literature (Arslan, 2017; Maden and Durukan, 2016; Melanlıoğlu, 2013; Topçuoğlu Ünal and Özer, 2014), it is highlighted that listening and hearing does not correspond to the same situation / action and that listening is the process of sense-making of what has been heard. In accordance with the stated opinion, the following statement is seen in one of the historical sources of the Turkish language *Köl Tigin Inscription*.

Tokuz Oğuz beğleri bodunı bu sabımın edgüti eşid katırdı tıngla: Nine Oghuz Beys (and) the public hear my words well (and) listen to them firmly (Tekin, 2003, p. 34-35).

The most commonly used language skill is listening in daily life / learning process (Mendelsohn, 1994). According to Göğüş (1978), while a student spends 2.5-4 hours a day to listen to his/her teachers and peers, Çiftçi (2001, p. 169) states that most of the knowledge is acquired through listening. Yıldırım and Yıldırım (2016, p. 2097) states that "listening has an important role not only in daily life but also in classroom settings." It is considered that the listening skill playing a very significant role in people's life has also important contributions to the issues such as accumulation of knowledge, the transfer of knowledge to the next generations and development of technology (Tyagi, 2013; Yıldız and Albay, 2015; Picard and Velautham, 2016)

<sup>1</sup> Cybernetics is the communication of living and non-living creatures other than human beings. For further information see. Akman, T. (1977). Bilimler bilimi siberetik. (In English: Science of all sciences, cybernetics) İstanbul: Milliyet Publishing. Wiener, N. (1982). Cybernetics. İstanbul: Say Publishing. Systems exhibiting the most appropriate behavior according to the conditions they are in is called cybernetic. For further information see. Kund, E. (1975). Kibernetik felsefe ve bilimler arasında köprü. (In English: Cybernetics philosophy and bridge between the sciences.) İstanbul: Kund Publishing.

The skill of listening is not meaningful by its own as the language skills of speaking, reading, and writing. What makes it meaningful is its relationship with the other language skills. Listening has especially a strong relation with speaking. Listening is in the position of precondition for speaking. “A child learns to speak by listening. Children who rapidly develop the skill of listening, develops the skill of speaking as well” (Gündüz and Şimşek, 2014, p. 24).

There are many factors that affect listening including age, living environment, previous diseases, biases, attitudes, anxieties *etc.* Anxiety among them; exams, listening, speaking, writing, reading, failure *etc.* is directly related with every subject in educational life.

Anxiety “is an emotional state in which the sensation of weakness perceived during preparation for a perceived danger is experienced in a broad manner” (Aydın and Zengin, 2008, p. 84). According to TDK (Turkish Language Association) (2011, p. 1363) anxiety is “sadness, thought that brings concerns and worry”. Based upon these definitions, it can be said that anxiety is the emotion of not being able to cope with a new situation.

According to Melanlıoğlu (2013), “listening anxiety is a response developed towards listening”. Listening anxiety increases during new encounters and decreases during similar experiences. Listening anxiety increases in cases where what has been said is not understood or misunderstood. According to Daly (1991), genetic predisposition, reinforcement of past experiences and punishment cases, learned helplessness, not learning the prerequisite information on time, and lack of proper communication models causes listening anxiety.

There have been a few studies carried out in the recent years related to the listening anxiety on teaching Turkish as a native language (Melanlıoğlu, 2013; Uçgun, 2016) and teacher candidate training (Maden and Durukan, 2016). Both the low number of studies performed in the field and that listening skills were taken into account in the “Teaching Program for Elementary Education Turkish Language Course (6th, 7th, 8th grades)” put into practice in 2006 for the first time has shown that this skill is not given the necessary importance. However, language skills cannot be considered separately. The inadequacy of a skill makes it difficult and even impossible to command a language as a whole.

Since the profession of teaching is based on raising human beings, the knowledge and skills to be acquired should firstly be adopted and used properly by the teachers. In this regard, it is believed that studies in order to identify and overcome the listening anxiety which can cause some favourableness towards listening skills should be carried out during teacher candidacy. Moreover, it has been noted that such studies will contribute to the reorientation and regulation of teacher training policies in a broad sense. It is aimed to determine the listening anxieties of Turkish language teacher candidates in order to contribute to this necessity.

The following questions were asked in order to fulfill the stated purpose of the study:

- What is the level of listening anxiety of Turkish language teacher candidates?
- Do the listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates change according to their gender?
- Do the listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates change according to the grade?
- Do the listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates change according to the language skill they mostly use?
- Do the listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates change according to whether they read books regularly or not?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Model

This study was conducted using a survey model within the scope of quantitative research. “Survey models are research approaches aiming to describe the past or present circumstances as the way they exist/existed” (Karasar, 2009, p. 77).

### 2.2 Population and Sample

The population of the study was constituted of the Turkish language teacher candidates studying at Atatürk University, Kâzım Karabekir Faculty of Education in the academic year of 2017-2018. The sample of the study was composed of 168 Turkish language teacher candidates. The random sampling method was used in this study.

Table 1. Distribution of research sample according to gender

Variable	N	
Gender	Female	118
	Male	50

Table 1 shows that 118 females and 50 males participated in the study. Majority of the sample of the research is composed of females.

Table 2. Distribution of research sample according to grade

Variable	N	
Grade level	1st grade	36
	2nd grade	73
	3rd grade	32
	4th grade	27
	Total	168

Table 2 shows 36 students from the first grade, 73 students from the second grade, 32 students from the third grade and 25 students from the fourth grade participated in the research. Most of the sampling of the research is constituted by 2nd-grade students. Table 3. Distribution of research sample according to the language skill they mostly use

Variable	N	
Most commonly used language skill	Listening	72
	Reading	28
	Speaking	53
	Writing	15
	Total	168

Table 3 shows 72 students stated that listening is their most commonly used language skill, 28 students stated that reading is their most commonly used language skill, 53 students stated that speaking is their most used language skill and 15 students stated that writing is their most commonly used language skill. The most frequently used language skills by students are listening and speaking.

Table 4. Distribution of sample of research according to whether they read books regularly or not

Variable	N	
Reading books regularly	Yes	84
	No	84
	Total	168

Table 4 shows 84 students stated that they read books regularly while 83 students stated that they don't read books regularly. The number of students who read books regularly and the number of students who don't read books regularly is close to each other.

### 2.3 Data Collection Tools and Data Collection Procedure

The "Listening Anxiety Scale" developed by Maden and Durukan (2016) was used as the data collection tool in the research. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was examined in order to determine the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.88. Maden and Durukan (2016) calculated the reliability of the scale as 0.87.

In the first part of the "Listening Anxiety Scale", a personal information form is available. This section consists of questions about gender, grade, most commonly used language skill and regular book reading status. In the second part, 22 items are found to calculate listening anxiety.

The data of the research was collected from 168 voluntarily participating Turkish language teacher candidates. The scale forms were submitted to Turkish language teacher candidates personally and a certain period of time was given them to fill the forms. Afterward, the scale was collected from the Turkish language teacher candidates by the researchers.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The obtained quantitative data by the application of the scale was transferred to SPSS Windows 15 package software program. The obtained results were presented in the findings and comments sections as tables.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which is referenced for examining the suitability of normality was used to determine whether the data were distributed normally in the study. The p-value was not found greater than .05 as the result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. This was interpreted as a significant (excessive) deviation from the normal distribution of the scores. Büyüköztürk (2008) emphasizes that when the distribution of scores show excessive deviation than the normal, parametric tests that require the assumption of normality should not be used. Therefore, non-parametric tests were used.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 What Is the Level of Listening Anxiety of Turkish Language Teacher Candidates?

Table 5. The average of listening anxiety levels of Turkish language teacher candidates

General Average	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd
	168	45.35	0.80

Table 5 has shown that the average of listening anxiety level of Turkish teacher candidates was found to be 45.35. This value is above the average with a minor score considering the highest score obtained from the anxiety scale can be 88. Thus, this finding indicates that Turkish language teacher candidates have a certain level of listening anxiety.

#### 3.2 Do the Listening Anxiety of the Turkish Language Teacher Candidates Change According to Their Gender?

Table 6. Listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates according to their gender

Groups	N	Mean rank	Total rank	M-Whitney U	Z	p
Female	118	82.68	9756.00	2735.000	-.746	.456
Male	50	88.80	4440.00			

Table 6 has shown that the U value of the difference between the listening anxiety of female and male Turkish language teacher candidates was 2735.000 and it was not found significant at  $p > 0.05$  significance level. This finding suggests that the anxiety of female and male Turkish language teacher candidates is similar.

#### 3.3 Do the Listening Anxiety of the Turkish Language Teacher Candidates Change According to the Grade?

Table 7. Listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates according to the grade levels

Grade level	N	Mean rank	df	$\chi^2$	p
1st grade	36	82.04	3	4.12	.248
2nd grade	73	88.48			
3rd grade	32	91.56			
4th grade	27	68.65			

Table 7 has shown that the Kruskal Wallis test result  $\chi^2$  ( $sd = 3$ ,  $n = 168$ ) = 4.12 was not found to be significant on the significance level  $p > 0.05$  for the difference between grade level and listening anxiety of Turkish language teacher candidates. This finding shows that there is not a difference between grade levels and listening anxiety of Turkish language teacher candidates, in other words they share similar anxieties.

#### 3.4 Do the Listening Anxiety of the Turkish Language Teacher Candidates Change According to the Language Skills They Mostly Use?

Table 8. Listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates according to the language skill they mostly use

Grade level	N	Mean rank	df	$\chi^2$	p
Listening	72	81.71	3	1.55	.671
Reading	28	94.36			
Speaking	53	82.26			
Writing	15	87.37			

Table 8 has shown that the Kruskal Wallis test result  $\chi^2$  ( $sd = 3$ ,  $n = 168$ ) = 1.55 was not found to be significant on the significance level  $p > 0.05$  for the difference between the language skill they mostly use and listening anxiety. This finding shows that there is not a difference between the language skills they mostly use and listening anxiety of Turkish language teacher candidates, in other words they share similar anxieties.

#### 3.5 Do the Listening Anxiety of the Turkish Language Teacher Candidates Change According to Whether They Read Books Regularly or Not?

Table 9. Listening anxiety of the Turkish language teacher candidates according to whether they read books regularly or not

Groups	N	Mean rank	Total rank	M-Whitney U	Z	P
Yes	84	78.96	6633.00	3063.000	-1.476	.140
No	84	90.04	7563.00			

Table 9 shows that the U value 3063.000 regarding the listening anxiety difference of the Turkish language teacher candidates who read books and don't read books was not found to be significant on the  $p > 0.05$  significance level. This finding suggests that the anxieties of Turkish language teacher candidates who read and do not read books regularly are similar.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

In this research, listening anxieties of Turkish language teacher candidates were examined accordingly to the variables of anxiety level, gender, grade level, most commonly used language skill and status of regular book reading.

In the study, firstly the anxiety levels of the Turkish language teacher candidates were determined. According to the obtained data, it has been revealed that Turkish language teacher candidates experience not a high level but a certain level of listening anxiety. It was seen that the average listening anxiety score of Turkish language teacher candidates was 45,35. Considering that the highest score of listening anxiety can be maximum 88, it was seen that Turkish language teacher candidates experience a listening anxiety. This result of the study is consistent with the relevant literature. According to Maden and Durukan (2016), Turkish language teacher candidates have an average level of listening anxiety as well. This may be stemming from teacher candidates having different listening styles. According to Maden and Durukan (2011), the difference in listening styles leads to extreme differences in people in the context of listening ability. On the other hand, listening anxiety of Turkish language teacher candidates may be due to their individual or learning environment deficiencies and problems. Likewise, Çiftçi (2006) states that there are a number of factors such as physical, physiological, psychological that affect listening. Aşılıoğlu (2009) and Emiroğlu (2013) have noted that Turkish language teacher candidates experience problems stemming from themselves and the instructors. Since the problems experienced will prevent an effective listening, Turkish language teacher candidates' listening anxiety may be increased.

In this study, it was found that Turkish language teacher candidates' listening anxiety has not shown any significant difference according to gender, grade, mostly used language skill and status of reading books regularly. While the result of the study regarding most commonly used language skill was parallel with Maden and Durukan's (2016) study, the result regarding gender and regular book reading were in contradiction. Maden and Durukan (2016) have found that gender and book reading habit reveals a significant difference in listening anxiety. Furthermore, Aşılıoğlu (2009), Ceyran (2016), Park and French (2013) have stated that gender is a factor affecting the listening skill. Even though these researches are not directly related to listening anxiety, a variable effective on the listening skill may be considered to have an influence on listening anxiety. However, this result of the study is not compatible with the related studies. As a conclusion, the result of the study regarding the listening anxiety does not have a significant difference according to the grade can be interpreted as the courses of language skills are inadequate, especially the listening training courses in the undergraduate programs of teacher candidates.

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