The analysis of A1 level speaking exam in terms of syntax: The effect of general competence on syntax in A1 level speaking

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Abstract

This study aims at discovering the relevance of general competence of Turkish and Arab learners who have an A1 level of English proficiency in preparatory school of University of Turkish Aeronautical Association (UTAA) to their speaking skill in terms of syntax by analyzing the recordings of speaking exams in the first semester. One can ask why learners could ever perform a great variety in syntactic structure in spoken performance while the university ensures that all learners get a standardized language education based on the same syllabus and course books to succeed their future academic studies. The answer may seem easy; however, it is difficult to get out thoroughly. Therefore, the paper will try to explain this connection between better performances in terms of syntactic structures in spoken performance comparing to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) A1 level expectations and these learners' attitudes, motivation, background of education, and world knowledge. During the process, the information falling within the scope of general competence (declarative knowledge and existential competence) is held by one-to-one interviews with 22 randomly chosen learners. The results mainly showed that the learners who invested in developing general competence have their own independent ***wordrobe*** and a higher level and variety of syntactic structures in their speaking whereas the rest and also the majority of the learners who are not as competent regarding declarative knowledge and existential competence (attitude and motivation) show a standard level of syntax (commonly used structures as defined in ALTE) in speaking.

Keywords: Syntax; A1 level speaking; speaking performance; general competence; existential competence; declarative knowledge; CEFR; ALTE

1. Introduction

Speaking is a productive skill, and Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) defines the amount of production to different levels accordingly. According to Breakthrough Stage (A levels) in CEFR, the expectation from an A1 level learner in productive skill namely speaking is limited to

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delivering a very short, rehearsed statement (e.g. to introduce a speaker or propose a toast), and a brief speech on a familiar topic to a sympathetic audience, using the specified language, recording a short message on an answerphone or voicemail system and reading aloud a written text produced for them, all in given time for preparation (Council of Europe, 2001). On that account, preparatory schools assess and evaluate A1 level students in this limited context, and the nature of the exams develops accordingly. In this study, A1 level students' recordings of speaking exams are taken into consideration within the framework of defined expectations in terms of syntax.

Oxford dictionary defines syntax as the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language. Speakers must ensure that their utterance accords with the rules of their language's grammar (Branigan et al., 2006). Therefore, speakers apply the rules of a language when speaking in order to reach the accurate syntactic structure. For an A1 level speaker, the expected procedure is to combine a subject, main verb, and one or several objects. However, as the findings of this study reveal, regarding that account, most of the speakers in the spoken exam did more than that. The results demonstrated that some learners employ compound and complex sentences more than expected; for example, *"I see a lot of people who enjoy in a concert." or "If we do exercise, we will be fit, and we will have a nice body."*

In this learning process, they start over from the beginning and develop competences to carry on learning sensibly. These competences either come with them or are mainly gained within the foreign language learning process. What are the competences mentioned? Each unique person owns General Competence and Communicative Language Competence in general term, though this study will only address declarative knowledge (*savoir*) and existential competence (*savoir-être*); attitudes and motivation in our case within the framework of 'General Competence,' which have a great role in learning the target language. The two competences comprise many selfhood factors connected with both the settled personal identity that learners could always rely on and the personal identity they attempt to create for L2. Humanist conceptions of the individual presuppose that every person has an essential, unique, fixed, and coherent core (Norton, 2013). The core is nurtured and meticulously developed within motivation, interests, and social context. In these contexts, learners expectedly become more competent in terms of declarative knowledge, which derives from the educational background, experiences, or sources and facilities available to the person, and aware of existential competence (*savoir-être*); attitudes and motivation in language learning.

In parallel with the way they have gone through in self-creation- the competences developed-learners will inevitably show great variety in spoken performance in L2, particularly in A1 level in which they highly depend on their teachers and course books as syntactic sources. In this paper, the primary concern is to discover how these competences play an essential role in a higher level of syntactic structures in spoken performance, and whether learners acquire an ability to discover syntactic rules in target language or not.

1.1. Limitations of the study

The study includes 75 students' recording of speaking. However, the interviews are completed with only 15 students representatively to figure out whether these competences play an essential role in a higher level of syntax in spoken performance, and learners acquire an ability to discover syntactic rules in target language or not. It would be way better to have some tree diagrams of examples or weight more on preferences or choices of word order and syntactic structures. However, since A1 level is rather limited in terms of syntactic choices, and learners highly depend on the course books or what teachers present except for some who perform better for various reasons, I took well-formed

structures as an indicator of grammatical competence in speaking English instead of evaluating various choices of syntax and word order and the reasons lying behind it.

1.2. Literature review

1.2.1. Assessment of Speaking Skill

CEFR is a framework that is based on can-do statements as a positive impact of the pedagogical use in five skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Spoken production and spoken interaction) for each defined level. It is guidance with coherent and comprehensive CAN-DO statements addressed to related levels. In A1 exams, assessment and evaluation of skills depend on whether learner CAN manage these statements. To illustrate, ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) defines the content of A1 Speaking of assessment and evaluation as below.

Table 1. ALTE Breakthrough speaking skill

ALTE level		CAN-DO statements	
ALTE Breakthrough	CAN ask simple questions of a factual nature and understand answers expressed in simple language.	CAN understand simple notices and information, for example in airports, on store guides, and on menus. CAN understand simple instructions on medicine and simple directions to places.	CAN leave very simple messages for a host family or write short simple 'thank you' notes.
ALTE Breakthrough	CAN understand basic instructions or take part in basic factual conversations on a predictable topic.	CAN understand basic notices, instructions, or information.	CAN complete basic forms, and write notes including times, dates, and places.
ALTE Breakthrough	CAN take and pass on simple messages of a routine kind, such as 'Friday meeting 10 a.m.'	CAN understand short reports or product descriptions on familiar matters, if these are expressed in simple language and the contents are predictable.	CAN write a simple routine request to a colleague, such as 'Can I have X please?'

ALTE's determined syntactic variety has not anticipated more than some simple, short, and basic forms as seen in the chart above. If it was for ALTE, all the learners should have performed the same variety of grammar in the very standardized education system. However, this has not always been the case for speaking among students. At this point, Hui (2013) had a very pertinent remark by asking the following questions. Why students" grammar levels are quite different even under the same learning environment, and what kinds of individual differences mainly influence foreign language learners" grammar learning and grammatical output competence (Hui, 2013)? To answer these questions, first of all, it will be significant to discuss the degree of variety of syntax in speaking and then research underlying reasons for better syntax in spoken performance. Here the relationship between a higher

syntactic variety and learners' *declarative knowledge (savoir)* and *existential competence (savoir-être)* -attitudes and motivation- to learn a language in CEFR are to be concerned.

1.2.2. The variety of syntax in speaking

What is syntax? Syntax is the part of the grammar that represents a speaker's knowledge of sentences and their structures (Fromkin et al., 2003). Mostly when talking about syntax, it usually means word order and sentence structure. Every sentence is a sequence of words, but not every sequence of words is a sentence because syntactic structures make language speaking well-formed or grammatical whereas violating them causes ill-formed and ungrammatical speaking (Fromkin et al., 2003). Linguists are highly concerned with the analysis of English syntax. The father of syntax studies, Chomsky (1965) with his book *Aspects of the theory of syntax* has been very helpful for the scope of the base of syntax. Accordingly, Robert Freidin in his book *Syntax* in which he often refers to Chomsky with a special bibliographical note has been a great help for comprehending basic concepts and applications of syntax. Similarly, Radford (1997) studied syntax to introduce the recent developments in syntactic studies and particularly Chomsky's Minimalist program with an overview of theoretical concepts and descriptive devices. These concepts and devices at work, help CEFR and ALTE categorize the required complexity of syntax in each defined level properly, which is a great help for both teachers and learners in regards to objectives and expectations of each proficiency level.

The studies that investigate the syntactic variety in written language might have already been abundant whereas syntactic variety in L2 speech has not received the same attention, though there is a growing number of studies that examine syntactic variety via analysis of speech samples (Iwashita, 2010). For example, Skehan and Foster (1999) examined the variety through analyzing performance on a narrative retelling task while Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth (2000) worked on variety by transcribing data, which were various recordings of native and nonnative English speakers comprehensibly. Furthermore, Iwashita (2010) investigated syntactic variety in learner language by using storytelling tasks. The study has used a speech coding system using production units and syntactic variety measures. Common to all of these kinds of studies, the variety measures such as "length of production unit (e.g., T-units, clauses, verb phrases, and sentences), the amount of embedding, subordination and coordination, the range of structural types, and structural sophistication" are used (Iwashita, 2010). Clearly, researchers brought principled ways (or tools) of syntactic parsing of learners' speaking, which helps evaluation of speaking skill as much as grammar teaching. In this regard, how do we evaluate the syntactic variety that will differentiate the learners' grades and characterize the overall proficiency? The answer may be hidden in individuals' general competence in language learning.

1.2.3. Language learners' general competence

Speaking exams include a part for grammar evaluation, usually worth 1/3 or 1/4 of the total grade. By grammar, we mean students' using appropriate grammatical structures and satisfactory level of syntactic variety at a certain proficiency level. The 'satisfactory' level is defined in ALTE as we mentioned earlier. However, some students not only achieve the target level but also go beyond it. The degree of variety in syntax in speaking performance amongst students can result from general competence of an individual. General competence includes the 5 *savoirs* introduced by Byram (1997). The first *savoir* is knowledge. The relationship between knowledge and spoken performance should be carefully considered because the knowledge a language learner has already acquired is directly relevant to language learning (CEFR, 2001). The knowledge can be 'empirical' and 'academic'. As one's knowledge (e.g. declarative knowledge- general knowledge, world knowledge, and sociocultural

knowledge) builds up, communicative competence improves correlatively (CEFR, 2001). One's communicative competence consists in particular of linguistic competences such as grammatical competence and language awareness, that is, knowledge of language. Therefore, building on the learners' *knowledge* can be influential in improving spoken performance.

The second *savoir* which is even more relevant to spoken performance is *savoir-être*- existential competence in CEFR. The most influential factors among existential competences are learners' attitudes and motivation. Researchers generally attempt to link these two terms. Motivation is defined in terms of learner's goal, orientation, and attitudes to pursue learning a language, and attitudes are defined as a social factor affected by various motivational factors (Schumann, 1978a; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1979). There is good number of research discussing that motivational and attitude factors actually are the reasons for a better speaking proficiency. For example, Jindathai's study that presents the factors affecting English-speaking problems among engineering students discusses motivational and attitude factors and suggests implications for achieving a higher level of English speaking proficiency (Jindathai, 2015). Such factors are better indicators of the real effects of individual factors on speaking performance.

CEFR actually defends a similar opinion about speaking performance and its relation to individuals' selfhood factors. The framework highlights interrelated factors with attitudes and motivation as well as suggests various factors shaping learners' communicative performance.

> *The communicative activity of users/learners is affected not only by their knowledge, understanding, and skills, but also by selfhood factors connected with their individual personalities, characterized by the attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types which contribute to their personal identity (Council of Europe, 2001).*

Table 2. Selfhood factors

Socio-cultural	Psychological	Experiential
Beliefs and values	Cognitive styles	Education
Attitudes	Personality factors	Communication experience
Ritual behaviors	Memory	World Knowledge
Intercultural awareness	Emotions	Residency
Family	Motivation	Exam experience
Leisure		Technology use

(Adapted from CEFR, pp. 101-130)

Selfhood factors are too many to consider all at the same time as factors affecting communicative activities, and one could only have a well-formed research if she manages to take the present context into account and focus on the most related factors hindering or encouraging the learners' speaking performance. In our case, we figured that positive attitudes and high motivation, which account for existential competence, and one's interest in widening world knowledge in particular, are key factors promoting the use of better grammatically constructed utterances in speaking despite the A1 level of proficiency in English.

1.3. Research questions

The present study identifies the answers to the questions below to achieve a better understanding of the variety of syntactic structure in students' spoken performance and its relation to general competences as in *savoir* and *savoir-être*.

1- What is the variety of syntactic structure in spoken performances of A1 level students at the preparatory language school?

2- What is the effect of general competences of A1 level students at the preparatory language school on the variety of syntactic structure in their spoken performances?

3- Do A1 level students at preparatory language school equipped with general competences achieve a higher level of syntactic variety in their spoken performance?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The study involves 75 students who enrolled in the preparatory school in University of Turkish Aeronautical Association to get a proficiency exam required before they start their academic studies in their departments. 59 of them are Turkish who will have English education for a year to start Bachelor Degree while 16 of them are Arab students who are Bachelor degree holders and get English education to be able to continue their master studies. Of 75 students, 18 are female and 57 are male. The average age of Turkish students is 20, and 30 for Arab students. Both Turkish and Arab students are provided the same syllabus and the resources namely Top Notch 1 and MyGrammarLab A1-A2, and expected to achieve the determined level.

2.2. Instruments

The data required for the study was collected through the recordings of the A1 level speaking exam, a part of the English language proficiency test, and semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix A for the interview questions). The procedure of the use of the instruments is described in detail in the following paragraph.

2.3. Data collection procedures and analysis

The speaking exam procedure is hereby considered important in order to describe how exam recordings as data were collected in the first place. In the speaking exam in University of Turkish Aeronautical Association, there is a 3 column-scale to assess and evaluate consisting of i) Grammar and Vocabulary use (5 points), ii) Pronunciation (5 points), and iii) Interaction (5 points). The criterion is shared with students earlier in the class.

The exam includes the following procedure. The jury includes 2 teachers: one of them listens and takes notes and the other instructs for the whole process. Examinees are paired up earlier randomly with a person from the same level (A1). Then they are expected to come at a scheduled time and sit on the chair set up for them. The exam takes about 20 minutes in total. The speaking exam for A1 students in preparatory school consists of 3 parts. The first part is considered as a warm up. Students are expected to introduce themselves in a free manner and answer a warm-up question addressed by the teacher. These questions are either very general or personal such as "What do you think of the traffic in your city or what is your favorite season and why?" Each student has 1.5 minutes to talk about them. The second part includes "Picture Description." Each student is given a picture on the board and 1 minute to get ready to describe what s-he sees on the picture. Notepaper and pencil are provided in case they want to take notes to organize their speech. After a minute of preparation, each is asked to start talking about his/her own picture for about 1.5 to 2 minutes. The pair is also asked to comment on his/her partner's picture in a few sentences. The last part consists of a topic within a word

such as happiness or transportation. They are again given a minute to be prepared for the speech and 2 minutes to talk about it. They see a few questions on the board that they do not need to answer. They are there to help or give some ideas in case the word does mean nothing to the student. The last part is guided in this sense. After they share their ideas, the partner is also expected to add a few sentences to interact. In the whole process, teachers are silent and do little or nothing to help or encourage, but give the instructions. Therefore, students become independent and more responsible and productive about their own spoken production. Spoken interaction is limited, though. The whole exam is recorded for the sake of test takers and consists %5 of the overall evaluation for the semester.

After obtaining these recordings, 75 of the recordings are transcribed in detail. The syntactic structures listed below are taken into consideration to evaluate the speakers' syntactic knowledge:

1. *Use of affirmative, negative, and question structures*
2. *Adjective and adverb use and their positions*
3. *Word order (preferences noted)*
4. *Sentences (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex)*

The data transcribed and categorized into a systematic chart of syntactic knowledge shows the overall use of abovementioned structures by A1 level students in spoken performance.

22 of total subjects are interviewed with 19 questions and recorded to get detailed information about their background in English language education, interests, and their social contexts, which would inform us about their general competence. The transcribed exam result of a certain student's syntactic performance was matched with her answers to the interview questions. This matching procedure was performed for each interviewee. The results are at most important since they will show whether learners' individual competences affect the overall performance of speaking in terms of more advanced syntactic structure for an A1 learner. Since the interviews carry educational purpose, the students are ensured that the information will never be shared under any circumstances.

3. Results

In this paper, all these factors given in Table 1 are considered to be interrelated; hence they are assumed to establish a base for the use of various syntactic structures. As observed above in Table 1, a great number of variables can be listed whereas the interviews for this study aim at establishing a connection with few of them. In this regard, test takers are interviewed with some questions to discover their background of their language education, world knowledge (including interest and fondness of technology), attitudes, and motivation. I believe that these factors will help to dismantle their preferences of syntactic structures in their spoken performance. The numbers given in order replaces the participants' names in Table 3.

Table 3. Syntax analysis of students' spoken performance

Syntactic structure	Example utterances
Purpose of -to	This is one of the lessons that mothers teach their children to deal

	with the life and to be ready. (59)
	I went to study.
Wh-movement	I don't understand what the meaning is. (55)
	We don't know what we are going to face. (59)
	What I see is that they are having a good time. (59)
	They learn how they can play. (48)
	I don't know why. (17)
	I am telling what I understand. (39)
Sentences with 'because'	I want to go to America because America is very special country.
(Compound sentence)	
	I think they are in Europe because the direction of traffic is on the right. (29)
	Those people should buy pets because pets are good friends. (32)
Sentences with 'but' (Compound sentence)	I don't know their first names, but I know the last names.
	I don't like fish, but I like sushi.
	I like pets, but I am afraid of dogs.
Sentences with 'so' (Compound sentence)	I like meat so I go to a restaurant.
Sentences with 'and'	I read books and try to sing, and I think it improves my English.
When, While, Before, After sentences	When it is sunny, I go bicycling. (26)
	People are relaxing when they go on holiday. (49)
	While people are driving, they make bad gestures. (23)
	Before I came to Turkey, I didn't know anything. (57)
Noun phrase complement	Some people think that holidays are very important and others think that holidays are not important. (32)
	I strongly believe that holidays are important.
	I think they are both beautiful.
	I can see the man is drinking tea. (67)
Compound-Complex sentences	When she doesn't respect me, I get angry, and I don't respect her. (42)
	I think it is a good idea, but I think it shouldn't ……(48)
Modals	It might be a musical theater or play. (28)
	They might be singing. (28)
	I think they shouldn't eat junk food.(16)
	People can watch the movies with subtitles.
	Weather can be clear and good.
	Those people should buy pets because pets are good friends.
	We should help people, but we must be careful. (23)
Relative clauses	I see 4 people who are on a picnic. (13)
	I see a lot of people who enjoy in a concert. (13)
If clauses	If we have a world without books, it will be so bad.(6)
	If we do exercise, we will be fit, and we will have a nice body. (2)
(Only 9 learners: 2,4,5,6,7,43,44,47,57)	If you are ill, you got to doctor's, and they help you. (47)
Utterances to save time to think (fillers)	Let me see.
	Maybe…
	I think…
	In my opinion, …
	I am not sure…
	Of course.

Position of Maybe and I think by many learners	Maybe the weather is cold. They are together maybe 13 years. (15) These people are going to different countries maybe. I think these people are Arabs. People can change their habits I think.
Frequently used transitions	However, But, And, Because, So, Then, In addition, For example, Firstly, Also, In fact, First of all, Therefore.

4. Discussion

The underlying reason for the differences in variety of syntactic structures in spoken performances is found to be students' certain general competence: Existential Competence *(savoir-être)* and Declarative Knowledge *(savoir)*.

4.1. Existential Competence (savoir-être): Attitude and motivation

Considering the learners get the same language education, when we divide the learners' performances in speaking exam in terms of syntactic variety into 3, the 1st group includes the ones that have the expected performance, 2nd group below the expected performance, and 3rd group better performance than expected. In accordance with the recorded interviews with the test takers, it is observed that 3rd group learners who achieved a higher level of syntactic variety are with the highest motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed two different language learning motivation: instrumental and integrative motivation. Teachers and researchers have recognized that motivation plays an important role in language learning. In this study, I consider that formulation of syntactic structure in speaking is to be more advanced than expected from A1 level when they have either instrumental or integrative motivation from the beginning of English studies. It is a fact that they go through the same language learning process, but 'only by studying learners' motivation to grammar learning, can we give a more reasonable explanation of the gap among different learners under the same learning environment' (Hui, 2013). Also, Brown (2001) and Ellis's (2003) research proves the same point that non-intelligence factors (motivation and attitudes) have an important role in learners' process and achievement. Learners with a higher level of syntactic performance in speaking stated that they are highly interested in learning how to speak English with acceptable grammar for several reasons such as;

"I watch a lot of English TV shows. I like English movies, especially thriller and war." (2)

" Actually, when I was a child, I read English books." (6)

" I like playing games on the Internet, and I get a lot of foreign friends from games. Also, I like reading English forums, especially forums that include movie comments." (7)

"I love watching English TV shows. In fact, I watch just English ones because I don't like Turkish TV shows." (13)

"English music is really important for me." (23)

"I listen to songs and watch movies with English subtitles. I enjoy it." (2)

"I don't like listening for the exam or in the class, but I love listening to foreign music." (4)

"I have always been into English during my whole life. I watch and listen to English and study it. I don't even know why I like English so much, but I know that English is a part of me." (16)

"When I was a child, I learnt Russian, French, and German a little bit." (6)

"I am a professional e-sport player, so I spend time on the Internet in English very much." (42)

It is seen that these students try to improve grammar via listening materials to make an improvement in their speaking. They say that they have been into English for a long time and prefer to improve speaking to other skills. They also stated that their priorities have always been grammar and vocabulary to be able to speak better. The attitudes towards the English language are positive enough to lead them success in the grammar of the language they want to speak. As we can deduce from Lui's research (2014), in contemporary ESL context among the non-intelligence factors, the value of motivation and attitude in terms of success or failure cannot be undervalued and can also be applied to syntactic improvement in speaking skill. Therefore, it is important for language educators to recognize the value of these factors if quality outcomes in terms of English learning are to be delivered (Liu, 2014).

4.2. Declarative Knowledge (savoir)

Mature human beings have a highly developed and finely articulated model of the world and its workings, closely correlated with the vocabulary and grammar of their mother tongue (CEFR, 2001). Declarative knowledge has a major influence on syntax in spoken performance as this study proposes. It highly depends on the social context in which one grows up and roots in time. In so-called global village, people are expected to exceed the limits of declarative knowledge. There is no longer an ideal amount of knowing since the technology spreads knowledge of other worlds and makes individuals' job rather easy in terms of learning by traveling, reading or discovering the worlds individuals are solely interested in. When it comes to language learning, learners unsurprisingly perform a much better level of formation of grammatical sentences and phrases from words in target language. When a learner starts to the journey of language learning, s-he seeks for every opportunity to use the knowledge that s-he acquired from the past experiences. While learners are expected to produce only isolated phrases about people, places, and basic topics for A1 level oral production, learners with better declarative knowledge are observed to have a tendency of use of more complex syntactic structures in the A1 speaking exam. For example, although nearly all students use technological devices for social media, forums, movies etc., only the students with the better score of grammar and vocabulary mentioned that they only seek for movies with English subtitles, always listen to English music in certain genres, read news daily online, play computer games, read forums on the topic they are personally into, and surf on chatting websites or games to find foreign friends. However, nearly %80 of the students with whom I had interview said they do not like or enjoy reading English books or reading at all as a source of learning.

As the interviews demonstrate, learners with different special talents or interests have a tendency to perform better and various syntactic structures since they are also interested in the terminology of their interest area and talents (music, sports, art etc.) in target language. They are willing to transfer their L1 personal identities to their L2 by having complex sentences and advanced word choice and making use of technological sources in the English language. For example, according to the interviews, the students who performed better grammar use in speaking exam have various talents such as making a model airplane, professional basketball, volleyball, tennis, handball, and swimming, acting, painting, playing musical instruments, aikido, and kickboxing. Seeing that these students have major talents without exceptions, we can conclude their interests in different areas unlike their peers must have an

effect on their attitude and motivation of improving and learning. They have already been aware that learning requires practicing and patience, and they could easily put this knowledge into practice in language learning.

5. Conclusions

The major goal of this investigation was to begin to characterize the syntax in speaking by a representative sample of preparatory school learners and find a connection between the performances in terms of syntax in speaking with regard to CEFR A1 level expectations and these learners' general competence. The results suggest that when learners gain general competence, they have a better level of speaking skill within a higher level of syntactic variety.

This line of study may help learners see better that investment on their competences will lead them to develop better spoken performance in terms of syntax. Learners may need to understand pragmatic aspects of owning competences to speak grammatically and freely to the extent permitted by the syntax of English language. They also should be aware of the fact that in speaking mistakes or errors of syntax does not hinder the learning process. On the contrary, they are welcomed to make contributions to the process as "individual use of syntactic structures" in spoken performance.

Before all, parents should support their children to discover their interests and talents since it is extremely advantageous to have one in terms of motivation and their psychological status. Students usually feel stressed and nervous when they deal with getting into a world of another language, namely a wholly different way of thinking and living. Therefore, it is utmost important to discharge regularly with something they enjoy. Furthermore, L2 teachers may need to incorporate many competences in order to give students more than what the books suggest, namely what they are more interested in. Learners are like sponges when they are A1 level, so L2 teachers should avoid fixed expressions that sound unnatural or make very little sense in speaking. They should let learners know that they are free to own their favorite expressions that they acquire outside of the school and encourage them to improve general competence and/or transfer them to their new language learning experience. Learner autonomy has a vital role in this sense. Rather than depending solely on teachers and course books, it is encouraging to see students put an effort to learn a language outside of the class and create second language identities with high general knowledge and certain competences on their own.

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Appendix A.

Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where did you grow up? Did you grow up in a big city?
4. What do your mother and father do?
5. What do you like to do in your free time?
6. Do you like watching English movies? What kind of movies do you enjoy watching?
7. Do you like reading English books? What kind of books do you enjoy reading?
8. Do you watch English TV shows? What kind of shows do you enjoy watching?
9. Do you like listening in English? What do you like to listen to in English?
10. Are you a fan of any kind of English music? What kind of music do you enjoy?
11. When did you start learning English? How old were you?
12. Did you like your English teacher when you first started to learn English? Why or why not?
13. Did you have a native (American, British, Canadian, Australian etc.) teacher during your

English language education? If yes, where was s-he from?

14. Have you ever been abroad? Which country or countries?
15. Do you read or watch daily news around the world? What do you read in particular?
16. Do you have a talent (in music, sports etc.) or any hobbies?
17. Do you know any other languages? If yes, which one?
18. How are you with technology; games, websites, forums, and similar sources on the Internet?
19. Do you want to tell more about yourself?

A1 seviyesi konuşma sınavının sözdizimi açısından analizi: Genel yeterliliğin A1 seviyesi konuşmada sözdizimine etkisi

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türk Hava Kurumu Üniversitesi'nin (THK) Hazırlık Okulu'nda A1 düzeyinde İngilizce yeterliliğine sahip Türk ve Arap öğrencilerin genel yeterliliklerinin, birinci dönem konuşma sınavlarının kayıtları analiz edilerek, sözdizimi açısından konuşma becerileriyle olan ilgisini incelemeyi hedefler. Üniversitenin, öğrencilerin gelecek akademik çalışmalarında başarılı olmaları için aynı müfredat ve ders kitaplarıyla standart bir dil eğitimi almalarını sağlamasına rağmen, öğrencilerin konuşma performansları neden önemli derecede sözdizimsel çeşitlilik göstersin diye sorulabilir. Cevabı basit görünebilir, fakat detaya girildiğinde işin içinden çıkmak zordur. Bu sebeple bu çalışma, Ortak Avrupa Dil Referans Çerçevesinde A1 seviyesinden beklentilere kıyasla öğrencilerin sözdizim açısından daha iyi konuşma performansları ile onların tutumları, motivasyonları, eğitim

geçmişleri ve dünya bilgileri arasındaki bağlantıyı açıklamaya çalışacaktır. Süreç boyunca, genel yeterlilik (bildirimsel bilgi ve varoluşsal yeterlilik) kapsamına giren bilgiler, rastgele seçilen 22 öğrenciyle bire bir görüşmelerle toplanmaktadır. Sonuçlar genel olarak, genel yeterliliğe yatırım yapan öğrencilerin konuşmalarında kendi bağımsız kelime haznesine ve yüksek seviyede ve çeşitlilikte sözdizimine sahip olduğunu, ve çoğunluğu oluşturan ve bildirimsel bilgi ve varoluşsal yeterlilik (tutum ve motivasyon) bakımından ayni derecede yetkin olmayan diğer öğrencilerinse konuşmada standart bir sözdizimi düzeyine sahip olduğunu (ALTE' de tanımlanan yaygın yapı kullanımları) ortaya koyuyor.

Anahtar sözcükler: Sözdizimi; A1 seviyesi konuşma; konuşma performansı; genel yeterlilik; varoluşsal yeterlilik; bildirimsel bilgi; CEFR; ALTE

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