

STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING ANALYSIS OF
MEDIATOR ROLE OF FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

In this research main goal is to show the mediator role of the fear of negative evaluation in student's sense of self-efficacy in the effect of foreign language anxiety. For this purpose structural equation modeling was performed. Goodness of fit index of the model which is $X^2/df=1.665$; RMSEA= 0.08; SRMR=0.08 identified within acceptable limits. Fear of negative evaluation according to the structural equation model has been observed to have a mediator effect on foreign language anxiety. As a result of the model, it has been concluded that self- efficacy affects fear of negative evaluation negatively ($\beta=-0.79$); fear of negative evaluation affects foreign language anxiety positively ($\beta=0.50$), and achievement affects foreign language anxiety negatively ($\beta=-0.25$). However, it has been concluded that self- efficacy affects foreign language anxiety indirectly in a negative direction ($\beta=-0.33$). In this study among factors affecting foreign language anxieties of students, the fear of negative evaluation and self-efficacy have been found to have important effects.

Keywords: Structural Equation Modeling, Foreign Language Anxiety, Fear of Negative Evaluation, Self-Efficacy, Achievement.

JEL Codes: C10, C12, C13

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YABANCI DİL KAYGISINDA OLUMSUZ DEĞERLENDİRİLME KORKUSUNUN MEDIATÖR ROLÜNÜN YAPISAL EŞİTLİK MODELİ İLE ANALİZİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı öğrencilerin öz yeterlilik algılarının yabancı dil kaygısına etkisinde, olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun mediatör rolünün ortaya konulmasıdır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda tahmin edilen yapısal eşitlik modelinde, $X^2/df=1.665$; RMSEA= 0.08; SRMR=0.08; PGFI=0.53 olarak elde edilen modelin uyum iyiliği indekslerinin kabul edilebilir sınırlar içinde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Modele göre olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun yabancı dil kaygısında mediatör etkiye sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Model sonucunda, öz yeterliliğin olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunu negatif yönde ($\beta=-0.79$) direkt etkilediği ve olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun da yabancı dil kaygısını pozitif yönde ($\beta=0.50$) direkt etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte öz yeterliliğin yabancı dil kaygısını negatif yönde ($\beta=-0.33$) ve dolaylı olarak etkilediği ortaya konulmuştur. Öğrencilerdeki yabancı dil kaygısını etkileyen faktörlerin araştırıldığı bu çalışmada olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusu ve öz yeterliliğin önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi, Yabancı Dil Kaygısı, Olumsuz Değerlendirilme Korkusu, Öz Yeterlilik, Başarı.

JEL Kodları: C10, C12, C13

INTRODUCTION

Generally learning a foreign language is considered difficult for individuals. Certainly, there are a lot of factors that affect learning a language other than the mother tongue. Among these factors, anxiety is in the foreground. For this reason, there are many studies in literature trying to explain foreign language anxiety in individuals.

Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are important conceptual aspects of understanding foreign language anxiety and that foreign language anxiety is more than just a combination of these fears reflected into foreign language learning. On the contrary, foreign language anxiety is defined as a distinct complex of self-perceptions beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz et al, 1986:128). MacIntyre and Gardner (1993), on the other hand, defined the term foreign language anxiety as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically in second language context, including speaking, listening, reading and writing (Aydın, 2016: 17).

The fear of negative evaluation is one of the important factors playing a role in foreign language anxiety. Watson and Friend (1969) defined the fear of negative evaluation as “apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and expectation that others would evaluate them negatively” (Chan, Wu, 2004: 293).

Self-efficacy is one of the important concepts influencing the foreign language learning process. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances and suggested that self-efficacy is an important aspect of behavioral development. The author advocated that ideas have an influence on the courses of action, and that otherwise would be impossible (Çimen, 2011: 17).

In light of the information above, this study aimed to explore the factors playing a role in students' foreign language learning.

1. METHOD

Study Participants

Data has been collected through a questionnaire by using three different scales with demographic questions in a study with volunteer students studying in a private foreign language school. The study group consists of 102 participants who are students of private english language center. Approximately %65 of participants were female and %35 participants were male. The collected data has been analyzed with Structural Equations Modeling by using AMOS 16.0 program.

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Instruments

In order to evaluate the students foreign language anxiety Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et al. (1986), to present their self-efficacy level The Self Efficacy Scale by Sherer et al. (1982), and to see the tolerance of the individuals to negative or hostile evaluation by other people Leary (1983) Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale have been used.

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale consists of 33 items which are designed to measure the level of anxiety experienced in foreign language classes. Validity of the Turkish version of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was reported by Aydın (1999). Item 27 of the scale was excluded and a total number of 32 items were used. Reliability of the scale, on the other hand, was reported by Uslu Batumlu (2006). Reported to be valid and reliable by a number of researchers, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale uses a five-point Likert scale ("never" (1 point), "rarely" (2 points), "sometimes" (3 points), "often" (4 points), and "always" (5 points) with a neutral category in the middle. Item 5 of the scale is subject to reverse scoring. The total score of the scale varies between 32 and 165; higher scores are indicators of higher foreign language anxiety levels.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale: The General Self-Efficacy Scale was developed by Sherer et al. (1982). The validity of this scale was reported by Yıldırım and İlhan (2010). It was decided that all 17 items of the General Self-Efficacy Scale should be evaluated as a whole and

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that the scale should be interpreted using a total score. Each item of the scale is scored on the scale between 1 and 5; and items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 17 are subject to reverse scoring. The total score of the scale varies between 17 and 85; higher scores are indicators of increased belief in self-efficacy (Yıldırım, İlhan, 2010: 303).

Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNES): Developed by Leary (1983), Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale aims to measure one's tolerance for negative or hostile evaluation of others. The adaptation of the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale in Turkish culture was performed by Bilge and Kelecioğlu (2008), Çetin et al. (2010). Based on their analysis, the authors excluded Item 4 as it did not meet the requirements of any category, thus, the scale consists of 11 items. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). Items 2,7, and 10 were reverse-coded. Higher scores indicate that the participant tends to behave in ways designed to avoid being evaluated unfavorably.

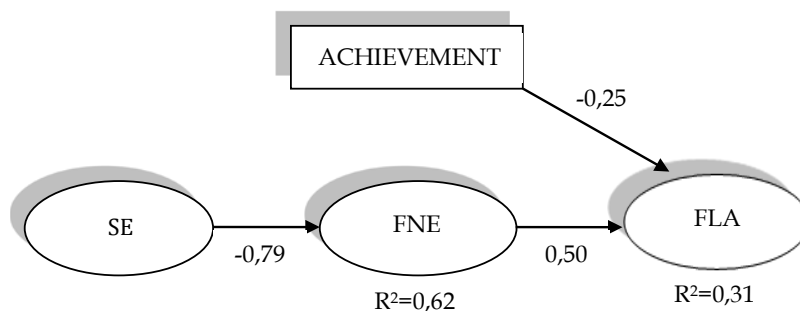
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2. FINDINGS

The results were $X^2/df=1.638$; $RMSEA= 0.08$; $SRMR=0.08$. The goodness of fit provided evidence that the hypothesized model was stable. The best fitting solution is illustrated in Figure 1. The path coefficients are the standardized estimates of direct effects which are interpreted as standardized regression coefficients. All estimated path coefficients were significant.

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model for Self-Efficacy (SE), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), Achievement



A closer look into the structural equation model in Fig. 1 showed that self-efficacy has a direct negative effect on fear of negative evaluation ($\beta=-0.79$), the fear of negative evaluation has a direct positive effect on foreign language anxiety ($\beta=0.50$) and student's level of success has a direct negative effect on foreign language anxiety ($\beta=-0.25$).

It was further found that self-efficacy has an indirect negative effect on foreign language anxiety ($\beta=-0.33$). The observations showed that student's perceived self-efficacy plays a mediator role in the fear of negative evaluation.

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62% of the variance in the fear of negative evaluation was accounted for by the direct effect of self-efficacy. 31% percent of the variance in foreign language anxiety was accounted for by the indirect effect of self-efficacy, mediated through fear of negative evaluation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the intent was to determine the factors which affecting foreign language anxieties of students. It was found that self-efficacy has an indirect negative effect on foreign language anxiety. Previous literature reports agree with the finding of a negative correlation between self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety. Anyadubalu (2010) reported that self-efficacy influences foreign language anxiety which has a negative impact on student's foreign language learning performance. Çimen (2011) suggested a negative and statistically significant correlation between students' English language anxiety levels and general self-efficacy levels. Oğuz and Baysal (2015) found that there is a negative and statistically significant relationship between students' beliefs about their self-efficacy as English language learners and their foreign language anxiety ($r=-0.27$). It was found that self-efficacy has a direct negative effect on the fear of negative evaluation. Berber Çelik and Odacı (2015) reported a negative and statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and fear of negative evaluation ($r=-0.37$; $p<0.01$).

In this study, we found that fear of negative evaluation has a positive effect on foreign language anxiety. In other words, foreign language anxiety increases as the students' fear of negative evaluation increases. Literature reports are in agreement with the finding

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suggesting that the fear of negative evaluation increases foreign language anxiety. Aydın (2008) found that foreign language anxiety is one of the important reasons behind the fear of negative evaluation and reported a positive correlation between fear of negative evaluation and foreign language anxiety. Shabani (2012) suggested a positive and statistically significant relationship between fear of negative evaluation and foreign language anxiety ($r = 0.45$). Aydın (2016) also found a positive and statistically significant relationship between fear of negative evaluation and foreign language anxiety.

In this study, we found that foreign language anxiety decreases as students' level of success increases. Previous literature reports agree with the finding of a negative correlation between students' level of success and foreign language anxiety. Chan and Wu (2004) reported a negative and statistically significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and successful English language learning ($r = -0.28$; $p < 0.01$). Uslu Batumlu (2006) found a negative and statistically significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and students' general level of success. Batumlu and Erden (2007) suggested a negative and statistically significant relationship between foreign language anxiety in the classroom and students' general level of success. Na (2007) emphasized the impairing role of high levels of anxiety in language learning. Öner and Gedikoğlu (2007) suggested that students' foreign language anxiety levels influence their success and that students with lower levels of foreign language anxiety tend to have better foreign language scores at the end of academic year. Doğan (2008) suggested that students with higher foreign language anxiety levels perform poorly in the classroom and that the students' level of foreign language anxiety influences their level of success. Demirtaş and Bozdoğan (2013) found a negative and statistically significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and language learning performance. Aydın (2016) found that foreign language anxiety decreases as students' level of success increases.

In conclusion, the findings of this paper are that self-efficacy has a negative direct effect on fear of negative evaluation and a negative indirect effect on with foreign language anxiety, while fear of negative evaluation has a positive effect on foreign language anxiety.

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ÖZET

Bireylerde yabancı bir dil öğrenmek genellikle zor bir durum olarak ele alınmaktadır. Elbette anadil dışında bir dili öğrenmeyi etkileyen pek çok faktör bulunmaktadır. Bu faktörler arasında kaygı ön planda yer almaktadır. Bu nedenle literatürde bireylerdeki yabancı dil kaygısının açıklanmaya çalışıldığı pek çok çalışma mevcuttur. Bu çalışmada da bu amaca yönelik olarak, öğrencilerin öz yeterlilik algılarının yabancı dil kaygısına etkisinde, olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun mediatör rolünün ortaya konulması hedeflenmiştir.

Özel bir yabancı dil okulunda eğitim gören öğrencilerin gönüllü olarak katıldığı çalışmada veriler, demografik sorular ile birlikte üç ayrı ölçek kullanılarak anket yoluyla toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerin yabancı dil kaygısını ölçmek için Horwitz ve ark. (1986) tarafından geliştirilen Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Kaygısı Ölçeği, öz yeterlilik düzeylerinin ortaya konulmasında Sherer ve ark. (1982) tarafından geliştirilen Öz Yeterlilik Ölçeği ve bireyin başkaları tarafından olumsuz ya da düşmanca değerlendirilmeye karşı toleransını ölçmeye yönelik olarak da Leary (1983) tarafından geliştirilen Olumsuz Değerlendirilme Korkusu Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler AMOS 16.0 paket programı kullanılarak Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli ile analiz edilmiştir.

Tahmin edilen yapısal eşitlik modeli sonucunda, $X^2/df=1.665$; $RMSEA=0.08$; $SRMR=0.08$; $PGFI=0.53$ olarak elde edilen modelin uyum iyiliği indekslerinin kabul edilebilir sınırlar içinde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Modele göre olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun yabancı dil kaygısında mediatör etkiye sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Model sonucunda, öz yeterliliğin olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunu negatif yönde ($\beta=-0.79$) direkt etkilediği ve olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun da yabancı dil kaygısını pozitif yönde ($\beta=0.50$) direkt etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte öz yeterliliğin yabancı dil kaygısını negatif yönde ($\beta=-0.33$) ve dolaylı olarak etkilediği ortaya konulmuştur.

Öğrencilerdeki yabancı dil kaygısını etkileyen faktörlerin araştırıldığı bu çalışmada olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusu ve öz yeterliliğin önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, öz yeterliliğin olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunu etkilediği ve olumsuz değerlendirilme korkusunun da yabancı dil kaygısını etkilediği tespit edilmiştir.

