

Correlation between Self-confidence and Speaking Skill of English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature Preparatory Students

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Abstract

Self-confidence has a key characteristics to start any action especially for speaking in L2. Among all other language skills, speaking is of an exclusive place to have effective communication, and self-confidence is one of the facilitators to start conversation. In this regard, this study aims to find out whether there is a relationship between self-confidence and speaking skill achievement in speaking courses of the preparatory students attending both English Language Teaching (ELT) Department and English Language and Literature (ELL) Department and it also aims to determine if there is a difference between the departments and gender. Participants were 77 male and female preparatory students from both departments and all the students got English speaking courses throughout the fall semester in 2014-2015 academic year. Within a correlational research model, self-confidence questionnaire (SCQ) was applied to the participants. The collected quantitative data were analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 program. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and independent sample *t*-test were used to analyze the data. Results indicate that there is significant correlation between self-confidence and speaking skill within the level of .01. Moreover, speaking achievements reveal significant differences according to department but not gender. Self-confidence levels have significant differences regarding to the gender but not department.

Keywords: Self-confidence, Speaking skill, Correlation, Communication, English Language Teaching (ELT)

İngilizce Öğretmenliği ve İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Hazırlık Öğrencilerinin Özgüven ve Konuşma Becerileri Arasındaki İlişki

Öz

Öz-güven herhangi bir eyleme başlamak için özellikle de konuşmaya başlamak için kilit bir özelliğe sahiptir. Diğer dil becerileri arasında konuşmanın etkili iletişim açısından kendine has bir yeri vardır. Öz-güven konuşmayı başlatacak tetikleyicilerden biridir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü ve İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü hazırlık sınıfına devam eden öğrencilerin öz-güven ve konuşma becerisi başarısının arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığı, eğer bir ilişki varsa bu ilişkinin cinsiyet ve bölümlere göre farklılaşp farklılaşmadığını bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Katılımcılar her iki bölümden 2014-2015 akademik yılı birinci yarıyıl boyunca İngilizce konuşma dersleri alan toplamda 77 erkek ve bayan hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. İlişkisel araştırma modeli kullanılarak Öz-güven ölçeği (SCQ) katılımcılara uygulanmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS 20.0 istatistik programında analiz edilmiştir. Veri analizinde Pearson çarpım-moment korelasyon katsayısı ve bağımsız örneklem *t*-testi kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar .01 seviyesinde öz-güven ve konuşma becerisi arasında anlamlı bir ilişkinin olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ek olarak, konuşma başarısı bölüme göre farklılık arz ederken cinsiyete göre farklılık gözlemlenmemiştir. Öz-güven ise cinsiyete göre farklılık oluşturup bölüme göre farklılık oluşturmamıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Öz-güven, Konuşma becerisi, İlişki, İletişim, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi

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1. Introduction

Speaking, among the four basic language skills – speaking, listening, writing, reading-, is of an exclusive importance in daily life and it is a vital complementary tool in communication (Darcy, Ewert and Lidster, 2001; Derwing, Munro and Wiebe, 1998; Morley, 1991; Praton, 1971). As a practical output, speaking has so many barriers such as psychological, physiological, physical, systematic and attitudinal. Some of them are internal as psychological and attitudinal barriers while some are external physiological, physical, systematic barriers. Lack of self-confidence can be thought under the both titles of psychological and attitudinal barriers that makes learner hard to speak in foreign language and even in mother tongue. McIntyre (2004) suggested that self-confidence significantly contributes to the learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language. Speaking requires a high level of self-confidence that means the state of being sure of doing something, and not being shy and aggressive in social situations (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English). Thus, in order to be a native like speaker in a foreign language, self-confidence is one of the keys that unlocks some important communication barriers.

Looking at the existing studies on English Language Teaching (ELT), there is an excessive amount of studies on language skills and on how to teach them. It can be inferred from the previous literature that speaking skill has a close relationship to psychological and attitudinal facts that constitute the inner world of a learner (Covington, 1984; Hanton, Mellalieu and Hall, 2003; Otacıoğlu, 2008). Though speaking requires the physiological competence and physical appropriateness of the environment, grouping the studies under speaking skill and self-confidence subtitles would be more suitable to investigate.

Self-confidence is defined as an individual's recognition of his own abilities, loving himself and being aware of his own emotions (Gençtan, 1984; Özbey, 2004). Akagündüz (2006) divides self-confidence into two sub-categories as intrinsic self-confidence and extrinsic self-confidence and continues his explanation as follows: Intrinsic self-confidence is the thoughts and emotions about individuals' being reconciled or pleased with themselves. Self-esteem, self-love, self-knowledge, stating concrete aims and positive thinking are the elements of intrinsic self-confidence. Extrinsic self-confidence is also the behaviour and attitude towards others. The constructing elements of extrinsic self-confidence are communication and controlling the emotions. In a study to develop a self-confidence scale conducted by Akin (2007), two factors as extrinsic and intrinsic self-confidence were determined.

In another study by Sar, Avcu and Işıklar (2010) these two factors are found from their study and they describe these factors as follow: "Self-confidence can be classified into two groups as inner confidence and outer confidence. The elements that form inner confidence are comprised of the love of own self, self-knowledge, setting explicit goals and thinking positively. Inner-confidence is the ideas and

feelings of an individual that shows how much a person is pleased and at peace with himself. The factors that constitute outer-confidence are communication and the capability of controlling feelings. Individuals who are highly inner-confident are pleased with themselves and have high self-esteem.

Although there are huge number of conversation and other speaking course books in the market (Richards, 2008), in some countries as Turkey where speaking English plays no significant role in a society and has no relationships from historical or governmental perspectives as in our country is a very problematic course as Paker (2012) stated in his study that was conducted with the use of ten years of internship observation reports of three Turkish state universities. This study reflects the reality of speaking skill in English Language Teaching (ELT) context. According to this study he stated that students start to learn English in the fourth grade; they get 700 hours in primary education and 700 hours in high school totally 1400 hours English lessons. But, 90% of the students still remain in the starter level. This study also shows another perspective about the reality of the levels of language learners in Turkey. After years of learning period many students from high school or faculty students are not able to communicate in foreign language even in starter level; only academicians among them can only understand what they read. So, this present education system produces the ones that cannot listen and speak in foreign language and write about the thoughts or emotions, but just can understand some paragraphs with the help of dictionary.

In another study conducted by Gan (2012) nearly the same findings are reported in comparison with the findings in Turkey. This research indicates that majority of the students who are attending Bachelor of Education (English Language) failed the speaking component of Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers of English (LPATE) held by Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. It can be understood from the results that shed light upon realities of speaking that in a great amount of bachelor degree student in English Language Department in Hong Kong are not proficient enough to speak in English and cannot pass the oral examination.

Latham (2005) presents an evaluation report showing that even in the United Kingdom (UK) '*advances in the use of oral language were often constrained by lack of opportunities which teachers provided for pupils to speak at length and to engage in role-play and similar activities*' (p. 63) so she added to this report that in general, there was a widespread lack of organization in forming a structural framework for speaking and listening.

There are also so many studies showing a positive relationship between self-confidence and success (Covington, 1984; Laird, 2005; Otacıoğlu, 2008). In a qualitative study, Hanton, Mellalieu and Hall (2003) reveal how low self-confidence level affects performance and they extract a sentence form one of the participants' response to their interview as: "*If self-confidence is low, then the*

feelings start to edge towards the negative which would be very bad for performance.” (p. 481). Another extraction in the same study reveals how effective the high level of self-confidence is: “High self-confidence increases the intensity of thoughts and feelings that you can control... If you’re confident you stay in control of your thoughts...” (p. 481).

As the communication and travel opportunities develop and the borders between countries are removed, speaking, as a general neglected area in language teaching process, has to be one of the main concerns in EFL context. Self-confidence, as a facilitator to speak fluently and accurately both in mother tongue and target language, is gaining importance in communication especially in speaking. So, considering all aspects stated above, present study aims to retest if there is relation between self-confidence and speaking skill is going to be examined within the example of Atatürk University, English Preparatory Classes of both ELT Department and ELL Department. After exploring the correlation, some precautions could be taken to reduce or boost the level of self-confidence appropriate to the findings of the research. This study will also show if there is any difference between different departments in which the students are included and whether students’ self-confidence levels have any relationships with the speaking skill performance. In sum, the following questions are tired to be answered within the respect of this study.

1. What is the relationship between self-confidence and speaking skill of the undergraduate students in English preparatory classes?
2. To what extent does the correlation between self-confidence and speaking grades change according to gender?
3. To what extent does the correlation between self-confidence and speaking grades change according to departments of preparatory classes?

2. Methodology

This chapter is expanded by four dimensions as participants, instrumentation, design and procedure.

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study are consisted of 77 voluntary students who are attending preparatory class of both ELT Department ($N=56$) and ELL Department ($N=21$). Among the participants, 23 of them are male and 54 of them are female. Table 1 gives some descriptive information about the participants.

Table 1. Participants’ features

	ELT	ELL	Female	Male
N	56	21	54	23

2.2. Instrument

In order to collect quantitative data, a self-confidence questionnaire (SCQ) which was developed by Akin (2007) and used in some studies (Gürler, 2013; Sarıçam and Güven, 2012; Sarıçam, Akin, A., Akin, Ü., Çardak, 2013; Uçar and Duy, 2013) was used.

SCQ is a five point-likert scale having 33 items and is used to determine self-confidence level of the participants. Without having any negative items the highest point shows the high level of self-confidence. According to Akin (2007) internal consistency coefficient for the whole questionnaire is .83 and the Cronbach alpha is .94.

The descriptive information and English speaking achievement grades of the participants are also stated within the questionnaire. Students were expected to fulfil their speaking grades they had got before. Speaking grades were given by the course instructors and evaluated within the level of lexical knowledge, fluency, accuracy and meaning.

2.3. Research Design

In this study, under the non-experimental research design, correlational research model -one of the quantitative research methods- is used. If the aim is not to effect the variables with independent variables as in the experimental design but to define the relations between them, then this kind of research is called correlational research (Tekbıyık, 2014). Correlational study describes the degree to which two or more quantitative variables are related (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2010).

Correlational researches are divided into three subtitle as bivariate correlation studies, prediction studies and multi correlation studies according to McMilan and Schumacher, (2014). As the correlational research has two purposes such as explaining important human behaviors or phenomena (explanatory) or predicting the probable outcomes (prediction), this study aims to explain if there is any relationship between variables.

2.4. Research Procedure

In correlational research studies the data have to be collected simultaneously (Tekbıyık, 2014). So, the questionnaires are collected from the departments in different dates; but, the questionnaires from the same departments are collected at the same time within 15 minutes time. The questionnaires were distributed to those who got speaking grades from their speaking courses as this study is trying to examine the relationship between speaking achievement and the self-confidences levels.

The statistical analyses were done by the help of statistic program named SPSS 20.0. As Tekbıyık (2014) stated that when examining the relation level of an independent variable on other variables Pearson correlation analysis should be used. So, in order to find out the correlation between self-confidence and speaking achievements

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis was done.

Independent sample *t*-test was used to analyze the data to determine the differences between self-confidence levels and achievement scores according to the participants' genders and departments.

3. Results

According to the analyzed data some descriptive information were gathered. Table 2 below gives information about the results of descriptive statistics.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Speaking Grades	75,57	13,95	77
Self Confidence Level	3,90	,51	77

Having looked at the table above, from the total 77 participants the means and the standard deviation for speaking grades, and for the self-confidence levels of total participants are found.

3.1. The Relationship between Self-confidence and Speaking Skill of the Undergraduate Students in English Preparatory Classes

Normality tests were completed before starting the analyses. According to the normality tests, it is seen that the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov for both self-confidence levels and speaking grades are suitable for the normality ($p > .05$). The values for the skewness and the kurtosis are determined between -1 and +1. Q-Q plot (quantile-quantile plot) shows that the normality is in the expected level. So, while looking these normality results Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis was done to examine the correlation between self-confidence and speaking achievement. The results for this correlation are stated in the table below.

Table 3. Results of the correlation

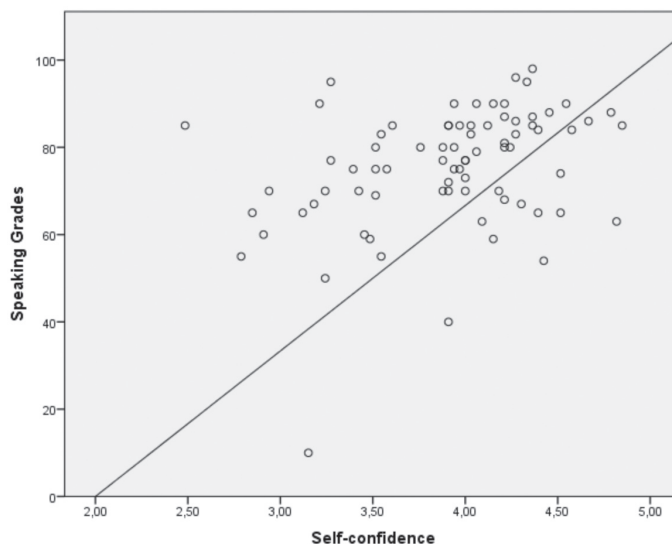
	Speaking Grades	Self-confidence
Speaking Grades	Pearson Correlation	,35**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002
	N	77
Self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	,35**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002
	N	77

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates that there is a positive statistically significant correlation in the level of .01 between self-confidence and speaking achievement. This case can be interpreted that if the level of self-confidence increases,

speaking grades of the students are expected to increase too. The Pearson correlation between self-confidence level and speaking achievement is determined ($r = .35, p < .01, D = 13$).

Graph 1. Correlation in scatterplot



Graph 1 shows this positive correlation and it is more helpful to determine the correlation and its direction. The points cluster in a band running from lower left to upper right so there is a positive correlation.

3.2. To What Extent does the Correlation between Self-confidence and Speaking Grades Changes According to Gender?

In order to understand whether gender, as an independent variable, is a distinguishing factor in the speaking grades,

independent sample *t*-test was applied. There is not a statistically significance at the level of ($p < .05$) according to gender in total participants.

Table 4 reveals that there is not a significant difference in speaking achievement according to gender but, when looking at the self-confidence level according to gender, it is seen in table 4 above that there is a statistically significant difference between males and females. This table states that gender is a determining element in the level of self-confidence. The result shows that the difference is significant at the level of $p < .05$.

Table 4. Speaking Grades and Self-confidence Levels According to Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SS	<i>t</i>	sd	p
Speaking Grade	Male	23	78,17	14,26	1,06	75	.28
	Female	54	74,46	13,80			
Self-Confidence	Male	23	4,15	,46	2,88	75	.005
	Female	54	3,79	,50			

3.3. To What Extent does the Correlation between Self-confidence and Speaking Grades Change According to Departments of Preparatory Classes?

To see whether department, as an independent variable, is a distinguishing factor in the speaking grades, independent

sample *t*-test was applied. There is a statistically significance at the level of ($p < .05$) according to department in total participants.

Table 5 also indicates that self-confidence levels show no significant changes according to the departments. Participants from ELT department have higher grades that

Table 5. Speaking Grades and Self-confidence Levels According to Department

	Department	N	Mean	SS	<i>t</i>	sd	p
Speaking Grade	ELT	56	77,79	14,95	2,33	75	.02
	ELL	21	69,67	8,65			
Self-Confidence	ELT	56	3,85	,53	-1,32	75	.18
	ELL	21	4,03	,43			

can be significant at the level ($p < .05$). On the contrary, participants from ELT department have lower level of self-confidence then the other.

4. Discussion

This study was designed to find out the relation between self-confidence and speaking achievements, and to determine if there is any difference in self-confidence levels and speaking achievements of the participants according to department and gender. Within the lights of the findings that were examined in this study, it was observed that there is a statistically significant correlation between self-confidence and speaking achievement. Furthermore, there are some differences according to the departments and gender. Participants who are aware of their own abilities, love themselves or aware of their own emotions (Gençtan, 1984; Özbey, 2004) have higher marks from their speaking

courses than those who are unwilling to communicate and lack enough self-confidence (McIntyre, 2004). This positive correlation, as Şar, Avcu and Işıklar (2010) stated the individuals who constitute confidence have effective communication skills, especially in speaking.

Speaking fluently and accurately have always been an important concern and shortcomings in Turkey (Paker, 2012), and in other countries (Gan, 2012) and also in United Kingdom (Latham, 2005). This speaking problem is thought to be overcome by constructing moderate level of self-confidence of the individuals. As there are various studies about self-confidence and success (Covington, 1984; Laird, 2005; Otacioglu, 2008), self-confidence and performance (Hanton, Mellalieu and Hall, 2003), the positive correlation found in this study support previous findings.

In addition to support previous findings, this study also reveals some differences by looking at the descriptive

information of the participants. In speaking achievement, departments are determining variable that participants from ELT department have higher speaking achievement. On one hand, gender is a distinguishing variable in self-confidence level; on the other hand, it has no significant relationship according to the departments.

Even the collected data presents these findings, some extraneous variables such as individual differences in teacher evaluation and their exclusive grading system that cannot be controlled by the researcher are also determined. Different evaluation techniques of different teachers can be taken into consideration.

Considering the correlational research's nature, some experimental studies can be developed to raise self-confidence level or speaking achievement with regard to the findings of this present study. Some special classroom activities or tasks to be revised or organized to construct moderate level of self-confidence and speaking ability in the further researches.

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