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# An investigation of anxiety and attitudes of university students towards English courses



<sup>a</sup> Bitlis Eren University, Foreign Language Dept., Bitlis 13000, Turkey
<sup>b</sup> Atatürk University, Faculty of Education, Erzurum 25100, Turkey

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#### **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to examine the anxieties and attitudes of university students towards English language courses. It is a survey type study of quantitative research methods. The population of the study consists of students from a state university in Turkey. The sample consists of 700 students determined by stratified sampling method. In the study, as data collection tools, English language anxiety scale and English language attitude scale were used. In this study, it was concluded that students with preparatory education had less anxiety scores than the students without preparatory education. It was found that freshman students feel less anxious about English lessons than junior and senior students. It was also found that females' attitude scores towards English were higher than males' and freshman students have higher attitude scores towards English lesson.

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Keywords: Anxiety; attitude; English language; language learning; university students

#### 1. Introduction

Mankind and societies need to learn foreign languages other than their mother tongue in order to establish and engage in various fields nationally and internationally both at the individual and institutional levels (Demircan, 2002). With the rapid developments and changes that we experience today, it is not enough for a person to adapt to these developments and changes with only their mother tongue. For this, people need to learn and use different languages (Erdoğan, 2010).

Due to factors such as developing technology in modern age, communication possibilities, and advancing social and economic relations, many individuals in the society need a foreign language in order to communicate. As inter-community relations and cooperation have become more widespread and communication channels have increased rapidly, the need for individuals to learn a foreign language has grown even more and knowing a foreign language has become one of the most important qualities an individual must possess (Crystal, 1997).

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<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: +090-442-213-7013/146 *E-mail address*: adnantasgin@gmail.com

Knowing at least one foreign language has become a necessity in social, education and business life. Having proficiency in English, can be considered as a way of guaranteeing access to science and technology and access to the international business community and education in a globalized world. Due to these reasons, in the Turkish education system, necessary policies are followed to teach foreign language to every student. English has become the preferred foreign language in the Turkish education system in order to keep up with the world in the direction of technological and economic developments that has been going on in the Western world for a long time.

Gardner (1985) stated that it is important to investigate individual differences in foreign language learning because it is important that the foreign language lessons are not the same as other courses in the curriculum, that all other courses have at least a cultural element, but that students in a foreign language course encounter a completely different culture and need to reflect it in their behavior. In addition, it was also stated that in terms of individual differences, success in foreign language learning is influenced by affective and cognitive factors (Sparks, Ganschow & Javorsky, 2000; cited by Bain, McCallum, Bell, Cochran & Sawyer, 2010).

The emotionally affirmative evaluation of an experience encourages an approach to similar experience in the future, but a negative evaluation that can develop against the same phenomenon leads to avoidance behavior. It is understood that what is meant in emotional variables in second / foreign language learning are the concepts like motivation, attitudes, anxiety, self-efficacy, self-perceptions, emotions, beliefs, uncertainty tolerance and self-confidence (Dörnyei, 2005; Ehrman, 1996; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003; Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Garrett & Young, 2009; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 2000). In this study, it was aimed to investigate the anxiety and attitude of affective variables in foreign language learning. Because the low attitude scores towards foreign language make it difficult to learn a language, as well as increasing the anxiety score.

# 1.1. Foreign Language Anxiety

Many individuals have difficulty in learning a foreign language. There are various factors that make the foreign language learning process difficult for the learners. Mental, cultural and affective factors can be considered as factors that make this process difficult. One of these factors is 'anxiety'. The anxiety factor has been researched for many years and is a variable that has not yet lost its significance in the researches of this area (Acun Kapıkıran, 2006).

Horwitz et al. (1986) firstly addressed that foreign language anxiety is a phenomenon unique to foreign language learning and developed the conceptual structure. In 1986, Horwitz et al. carried forward their views on anxiety and put forward the concept of "Foreign Language Anxiety", which they see as the cause of the negative emotional reactions of foreign language learners. As a result of these studies by Horwitz et al. (1986), the relationship between anxiety and foreign language learning has been highlighted. Foreign language anxiety is defined by Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127) as "a different complex structure consisting of self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions and behaviors related to intra-class language learning stemming from the specific nature of the language learning process". In other words, foreign language anxiety is a term that includes feelings of anxiety and negative, fearful feelings associated with the individual's learning or use of a non-native language (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

McCroskey (1977) suggests that communication anxiety, which plays an important role in interpersonal interactions, is largely related to foreign language anxiety. Communication anxiety indicates timidity when communicating with other people. The difficulty in talking to others individually or in front of a community or difficulty in listening and understanding verbal information

is included in the communication anxiety. People who have difficulties in talking in a group feel much more anxious about foreign language classes in which their performance is constantly monitored and their control within the communication environment is low.

In the studies both in Turkey and abroad (Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz, 2010; Batumlu, 2006; Chan & Wu, 2004; Demirdas, 2012; Demirdas & Bozdoğan, 2013; Gülözer, 2010; Hao, Liu & Hao, 2004; Horwitz, 2001; Köroğlu, 2010; Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999; Sparks et al., 2000; vonWorde, 2003; Wang, 2011), it has been reported that there is a negative relation between foreign language anxiety and foreign language achievement and competence. The subjective feelings and behavioral responses of foreign language learners with high levels of anxiety are similar to those of other anxious situations. Foreign language learners feel stress and anxiety. They have difficulties concentrating on foreign language lessons, they quickly forget and even they do not do homework.

A number of students' thoughts increase their anxiety during their foreign language lessons. If some students are not sure that they will use the right structures when expressing themselves or if they can't find the word they need to use, they think they should not say something and prefer to be silent. As communication is essential in foreign language courses, this kind of thinking of the students increases their level of anxiety.

# 1.2. Attitude toward Foreign Language

As a socio-psychological factor, the role of attitude in the process of foreign language learning needs to be considered. Students' attitudes towards foreign languages are directly related to the success or failure of the foreign language learning process. When examining the studies done in the field (Fishman & Cooper, 1977; Gardner, Ginsberg & Smythe, 1976, Genesee & Hamayan, 1980), it was noted that the importance of attitude in foreign language learning was emphasized. Many researchers mention certain factors that influence attitudes in the foreign language learning process. According to Chambers (1999, p. 25), students do not come to foreign language lessons as 'tabula rasa'. They bring with them their families', their friends', the media's and their own attitudes towards the foreign language. According to Brown (2000), attitudes occur as a result of communicating with family, peers, and other people in the neighborhood during childhood, or being affected positively or negatively by various affective factors.

The experience, psychological structure and living conditions of each individual are different from each other, and these differences can affect foreign language teaching positively or negatively. Therefore, while constructing the language policy, the foreign language attitude, which is among the important individual differences, should be taken into consideration (Çimen, 2011). Because, according to Abidin, Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012), the factor determining success in foreign language teaching is the attitude towards foreign language learning as much as the individual's capacity. The attitude of the learners towards foreign language learning influences the level of its success and at the same time learners are also affected by this success. In other words, the positive attitude of the learners towards the foreign language is reinforced by the success in the foreign language lessons. In the same way, the negative attitude of learners results in failure to learn a foreign language.

When examining the results of some studies on foreign language attitude it is found that students generally have a positive attitude towards learning English (Estliden, 2017; Lau, 2006; Pineda, 2011), female students have more positive attitude than male students (Abidin et al., 2012; Burgucu, 2011; Çelikkaya, 2013; Çimen, 2011; Eshghinejad, 2016; Kobayashi, 2002), students with negative attitudes towards English experience more test anxiety (Aydın & Yeşilyurt, 2009); and the positive attitude towards English has a positive effect on the success (Gülözer, 2010).

The aim of this study is to investigate Turkish university students' anxieties and attitudes towards English lessons. Research questions are as follows;

- Do university students' anxiety levels for English lessons differ according to gender, school type, whether they have preparatory education, and grade level?
- Do university students' attitudes towards English lessons differ according to gender, school type, whether they have preparatory education, and grade level?
- Is there a relationship between university students' level of anxiety for English lessons and their attitude towards the English lesson?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

The research features a survey design. A survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, or opinions in a population through studies on a selected sample from that population. In this design the researcher makes generalisable inferences from the data obtained from the sample (Creswell, 2013). In this study, a survey model was adopted because it was aimed to describe trends, attitudes and anxiety states of the sample as they existed.

## 2.2. Sample / Participants

The population of the research consisted of the students studying in all faculties (faculty of engineering, faculty of architecture, faculty of art and sciences *etc.*) and vocational schools of higher education programs at a state university in Turkey, and taking English lessons. There were 2100 students taking English lesson at the mentioned university. English lesson were conducted 4 hours in a week in A1 and A2 level and all the students attended the lessons at least 12 weeks in 14-week-semester.

The sample of the study consists of 700 students who are determined according to the stratified sampling method on voluntary basis. According to Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991), stratified sampling is a type of sampling in which the subspecies in the population are guaranteed to be represented in the sample. For this, the population is divided into two or more layers- sub-population- sub-group. Then a simple unbiased sample is taken from each layer and the sub-samples are combined to obtain the total sample (Balcı, 2009, p. 93). The population representation rate of the study group in which the study conducted was approximately 30%. The demographic characteristics of the sample group are given in Table 1.

Variables	Characteristics	f	%
Gender	Female	393	56.1
	Male	307	43.9
	Total	700	100.0
	Faculty	510	72.9
School Type	Vocational School of Higher Education	190	27.1
	Total	700	100.0

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Group

Pre-university	Preparatory	Yes		32	4.6
Training Status		No		668	95.4
			Total	700	100.0
Grade		Freshman year		270	38.6
		Sophomore year		271	38.7
		Junior year		80	11.4
		Senior year		79	11.3
			Total	700	100.0

# 2.3. *Instrument(s)*

<u>English Language Attitude Scale</u>: The chosen scale was developed by Aiken in 1979 to measure students' attitudes towards mathematics and science; and adaptation to Turkish was done by Tuncer, Berkant and Doğan in 2015. The scale consists of 24 items in the 5-point Likert format. These values obtained as a result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the scale of the adaptation study has validity and reliability criteria. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient calculated for this study is .85.

<u>English Language Anxiety Scale</u>: English Language Anxiety scale was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to measure the level of anxiety that foreign language learners experience in the classroom. The scale consists of 33 items in the 5-point Likert format. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish was made by Aydın (1999). The validity and reliability study of the scale was performed by Horwitz et al. (1986), and the internal consistency of the scale was found to be 0.93. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient calculated for this study is .89

#### 2.4. Data collection and analysis

In the data collection process, firstly, students were informed about the purpose of the research. It is reiterated that participation is voluntary. Guarantee was given that the data will not be shared with third parties and that the participants will not be decrypted in any form. The data collection process took about 20 minutes.

Prior to analysis of the data, it was checked whether the data were normally distributed. The assumptions of the parametric hypothesis tests are as follows (Kalaycı, 2009): (a) the data must be intermittent or proportional. (b) The data should comply with normal distribution. (c) The group variances must be equal.

In order to be able to decide which tests to use in the analysis of the data, it was first examined whether the scores obtained from the data collection tools met the basic assumptions of the parametric tests and it was detected that the data showed normal distribution. The Independent-Samples t-test was used for the comparison of two groups, the one-way ANOVA was used for the comparison of the more than two groups, and the Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between the variables.

# 3. Results

Table 2 shows the data obtained as a result of the independent samples t-test to determine whether the university students' anxiety scores for English lessons differ according to the gender variable.

Dependent Variable	Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	df	t	р
English Lesson	Female	393	87.22	22.94	698	1.250	.212
Anxiety Score	Male	307	84.97	24.56	070	1.230	.212

Table 2. Independent samples t-test results for anxiety differences according to gender

The data in Table 2 confirm that no statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of anxiety scores of females ( $\overline{X} = 87.22$ ) for English lessons and the anxiety scores of males ( $\overline{X} = 84.97$ ) for English lesson [ $t_{(698)} = 1.250$ , p>.05]. In other words, according to the gender variable, there is no difference in the anxiety scores of the university students about the English lessons.

Table 3 shows the data obtained as a result of the independent samples t-test to determine whether the university students' anxiety points for English lessons differ according to the school type variable.

**Table 3.** Independent samples t-test results for anxiety differences according to school type

Dependent Variable	Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	df	t	p
English Lasson	Faculty	510	86.06	23.89			
English Lesson Anxiety Score	Vocational School of Higher Education	190	86.69	23.16	698	311	.756

The data in Table 3 confirm that no statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of the anxiety scores of faculty students ( $\overline{X} = 86.06$ ) for English lessons and the anxiety points of vocational school of higher education students ( $\overline{X} = 86.69$ ) for English lessons [t  $_{(698)} = -.311$ , p>.05].

Table 4 shows the data obtained as a result of the independent samples t-test to determine whether the university students' anxiety scores for English lessons differ according to the pre-university preparatory education variable.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test results for anxiety differences according to preparatory education

Dependent Variable	Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	df	t	p
English Lesson Anxiety	Yes	32	77.72	20.19	698	-2.088	.037
Score	No	668	86.64	23.77	090	-2.000	.037

The data in Table 4 demonstrate that there is a statistically significant difference between the average scores of the anxiety scores of students having a preparatory education ( $\overline{X} = 77.72$ ) for English lesson and average scores of the anxiety scores of students not having a preparatory education ( $\overline{X} = 86.64$ ) for English lesson [ $t_{(698)} = -2.008$ , p<.05]. It is understood from the average scores that this difference is in favor of students having a preparatory education ( $\overline{X}_{Yes} = 77.72$ ,  $\overline{X}_{No} = 86.64$ ).

One-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether the university students' anxiety scores for English lessons differ according to the grade level variable. Descriptive statistics for

university students' anxiety scores for English lesson according to their grade level are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for university students' anxiety scores for English lesson according to grade level

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd
Freshman Year	270	83.60	23.14
Sophomore Year	271	85.68	23.36
Junior Year	80	91.53	25.89
Senior Year	79	91.80	22.89
Total	700	86.23	23.67

It is apparent from the data in Table 5 that the average level of anxiety scores of English lesson of freshman year university students is 83.60, the average level of anxiety scores of English lesson of sophomore year university students is 85.68, the average level of anxiety scores of English lesson of junior year university students is 91.53 and the average level of anxiety scores of English lesson of senior year university students is 91.80. Table 6 shows the results of the one-way analysis of variance for whether there is any difference between university students' anxiety points for English lessons in terms of grade level variables.

Table 6. One-way analysis of variance results for anxiety differences in terms of the students' grade level

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p	Meaningful difference
Between groups	6647.914	3	2215.971			Emaghman v. (Junion v.
Within Group	385139.130	696	553.361	4.005	.008	Freshman y. <junior td="" y.<=""></junior>
Total	391787.044	699				Freshman y. <senior td="" y.<=""></senior>

As seen in Table 6, there was a significant difference between the average scores of the groups (F  $_{(3-696)} = 4.005$ , p<.05). As a result of the multiple comparison test, it is found that the significant difference is in favor of freshman year students between freshman year students ( $\overline{X} = 83.60$ ) and junior year students ( $\overline{X} = 91.53$ ); and in favor of freshman year students between freshman year students( $\overline{X} = 83.60$ ) and senior year students ( $\overline{X} = 91.80$ ). This result can be interpreted as the fact that the freshman year students have less anxiety than the junior year and senior year students for the English lesson. The effect size of the dependent variable indicating the ratio of the variance explained by the independent variable was found to be  $\eta^2 = .017$  and showed that the grade level variable had little effect on the levels of anxiety in the English class.

Table 7 shows the data obtained as a result of the independent samples t-test to determine whether the average scores of university students' attitudes toward English differ according to the gender variable.

Table 7. Independent samples t-test results for attitudes toward English lessons differences according to gender

Dependent Variable	Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Attitudes toward	Female	393	63.43	11.68	698	2.330	.020
English	Male	307	61.30	12.40	070	2.330	.020

As seen in Table 7, there is a statistically significant difference in favor of female students [t  $_{(698)}$  = 2.330, p<.05] between female students 'attitude points for English ( $\overline{X}$  = 63.43) and male students' attitude points for English ( $\overline{X}$  = 61.30).

Table 8 shows the result of the independent samples t-test to determine whether the average scores of university students' attitudes toward English differ according to the school type variable.

**Table 8.** Independent samples t-test results for attitudes toward English lessons differences according to school type

Dependent Variable	Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Attitudes toward	Faculty	510	62.76	12.08		.93	
English	Vocational School of Higher Education	190	61.80	11.93	698	3	.351

As seen in Table 8, no statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of the attitude toward English points of faculty students ( $\overline{X} = 62.76$ ) and the attitude toward English points of vocational school of higher education students ( $\overline{X} = 61.80$ ) for English lesson [ $t_{(698)} = .933$ , p>.05]. In other words, according to the school type variable, there is no difference in the attitudes of university students towards English.

Table 9 shows the data obtained as a result of the independent samples t-test to determine whether the average scores of university students' attitudes toward English differ according to the Preuniversity preparatory education status variable.

**Table 9.** Independent samples t-test results for attitudes toward English lessons differences according to preparatory education

Dependent Variable	Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Attitudes toward	Yes	32	61.97	14.20	698	253	.800
English	No	668	62.52	11.94	098	233	.000

As seen in Table 9, no statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of the attitude toward English points of the students having a preparatory education ( $\overline{X} = 61.97$ ) and the students not having a preparatory education ( $\overline{X} = 62.52$ ) for the English lesson [t  $_{(698)}$ = -253, p>.05]. One-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether the university students' attitude average scores for English differ according to grade level variable. Descriptive statistics for university students' attitude points for English lesson according to grade level variable are given in Table 10.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for university students' attitude points for English lesson according to grade level

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	
Freshman Year	270	63.64	11.93	_
Sophomore Year	271	60.88	12.48	
Junior Year	80	63.70	11.31	
Senior Year	79	62.91	11.13	
Total	700	62.50	12.04	

As seen in Table 10, it is seen that the average of attitude points for English lesson of freshman year university students is  $\overline{X} = 63.64$ , the average of attitude points for English lesson of sophomore year university students is  $\overline{X} = 60.88$ , the average of attitude points for English lesson of junior year university students is  $\overline{X} = 63.70$  and the average of attitude points for English lesson of senior year university students is  $\overline{X} = 62.91$ . Table 11 shows the results of the one-way analysis of variance whether there is any difference between university students' attitude points for English lessons in terms of classroom variable.

**Table 11.** One-way analysis of variance results for attitude points for English lesson differences in terms of the students' grade level

	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	p	Meaningful difference
Between groups	1187.156	3	395.719			Freshman y.>
Within Groups	100169.831	696	143.922	2.750	.042	Sophomore y.
Total	101356.987	699				

As seen in Table 11, one-way ANOVA was performed to test whether there were any differences between the grade levels of 700 university students and their attitude toward English lesson scores and it was observed that there was a significant difference between the average scores of the groups (F  $_{(3)}$   $_{(696)} = 2.750$ , p<.05). As a result of the multiple comparison test, it is found that the significant difference is in favor of freshman year students as compared with freshman year students ( $\overline{X} = 63.64$ ) and sophomore year students ( $\overline{X} = 60.88$ ). This result can be interpreted as the fact that the attitudes of the freshman year students towards English are more positive than those of the sophomore year students. The effect size of the dependent variable indicating the ratio of the variance explained by the independent variable was found to be  $\eta^2 = .012$  and showed that the grade level variable had little effect on the levels of attitude toward English lesson.

The Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Coefficient calculated to determine the relationship between the English attitudes of the university students and the anxiety related to the English course and the data obtained are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12.** The relationship between the attitudes towards English of the university students and the anxiety related to the English course

		Attitude	Anxiety	
Attitude	Pearson Correlation		053	
	p		.160	
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	053		
	p	.160		

In order to evaluate the relationship between university students' attitudes towards English and their anxiety, the Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Coefficient was calculated and there was no significant relationship between English attitudes and anxieties of university students [r=-.053, n=700, p>.01].

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

According to the Independent samples t-test analysis conducted to determine whether the university students' anxiety points related to English lessons differ according to the gender variable no statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of anxiety scores of females for English lesson and anxiety scores of males for English lesson. In other words, according to the gender variable, there is no difference in the anxiety scores of the university students about the English lesson. When the literature is reviewed, there are many studies reporting no statistically significant difference in this sense (Batumlu, 2006; Doğan, 2008; French & Richards, 1990; Karabıyık, 2012; Kılıç, 2007; Köroğlu, 2010; Öner & Gedikoğlu, 2007; Özdemir, 2013; Özütürk & Hürsen, 2013; Sarıgül, 2000; Shabani, 2012; Şakrak, 2009; Wang, 2010; Wang, 2011). On the other hand, Çimen (2011), in her study conducted on education faculty students, found that female students' anxiety scores were higher than male students' anxiety scores. As the reason for this situation she hypothesized that female students are more sensitive than boys and that females give more importance to other people's views. On the other hand, according to the results of Cui's study (2011), students had a relatively high level of anxiety in learning English, and anxiety scores of male students were higher than females. Some other studies which show the same result (Aydemir, 2011; Er, 2011; Karabey, 2011; Kitano, 2001, Nyikos, 1990) support this result.

According to the results of the analysis conducted to determine whether the university students' anxiety points for English lessons differ according to the school type, no significant difference was found. In other words, there is no difference in university students' English language anxieties according to the school type. These findings are parallel to the research conducted by Doğan (2016). In Balemir's (2009) study, it was found that there was no significant difference in anxiety levels of students according to their department. Çimen (2011), in her study, found a significant difference at average anxiety points for English lesson according to the school type variable. According to the study, students who are studying in the Turkish Teaching Program have the highest level of English anxiety; students who are studying in the Primary Mathematics Teaching Program have the lowest anxiety. As the reason for this situation she hypothesized that, as the Math's students have numerical intelligence they can easily master English sentences, grammar rules, meanings of words and translating them into Turkish so that they don't feel fear and failure.

The results of the analysis conducted to determine whether university students' anxiety scores for English lesson differ according to pre-university preparatory education variable show that there is a significant difference in favor of students who have had appropriate preparatory education. The study of Çimen (2011) supports this result but the results of Öner and Gediklioglu (2007) and Doğan (2008) contradict this result. As the reason for the current results, it can be said that pre-university English preparatory education is the basis of the English course to be taken during the university education; and as the basic structures and rules related to the English course are taken in the preparation education, the student's academic confidence in the foreign language course has presumably been strengthened.

According to the result of the analysis to determine whether anxiety scores differ according to the grade level variable, it was concluded that the freshman year students had less anxiety than the junior year and senior year students towards their English course. Additionally, Kaçar and Zengin's (2009) research showed that with the increase in the grade level in education so the negative attitude toward foreign language increased. Likewise, in the report prepared by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) and the British Council in the 2014, it is stated that as the grade level increased, the students' level of attitudes and motivations towards English decreased because they found English classes "boring" and "difficult". In addition, the results of this analysis may be

consistent with the suggestion that, the grade level increases, finding job anxiety rises for the students and an increase in the level of anxiety for foreign language lessons occurs.

As a result, it is revealed that the foreign language anxiety affects success but it affects motivation and attitude negatively. There are research results indicate that students who succeed in other courses fail in their foreign language courses. There are many factors that affect the anxiety about foreign language. These can be expressed as the use of listening and speaking skills in the course. Some factors such as; students insecure feeling, negative teacher behaviours and difficulty level of the lesson is known to increase anxiety level. As a result of this research, there was no significant difference between foreign language anxiety and students' gender and school type. However, there was a significant difference in favor of students with preparatory education and freshman students. That is, students with preparatory education and freshman students have less anxiety scores about foreign language. Having less anxiety scores of students with preparatory education may be explained as selfconfidence and with higher readiness level. Having less anxiety scores of freshman students may be due to the excitement of fresh start to the university.

The results of the analysis conducted to determine whether university students' attitude points for English lesson differ according to gender variable show that there is a significant difference in favor of females. Similar results have been found in the literature. (Aydın, 1999; Bilgin-Cebeci, 2006; Celikkaya, 2013; Gökçe, 2008; Görgün, 2013; Karahan, 2007; Özdinç-Delbesoğlugil, 2013; Pulat, 2010; Yıldıran, 2010). On the other hand, some studies have found that there is no significant difference between these two variables according to gender (Cimen, 2011; Durer& Sayar, 2013; Haitema, 2002; Hussein, Sakallı-Demirok & Uzunboylu, 2009; İnal, Evin & Saracaloğlu, 2009; Karabulut, 2013; Saracoğlu & Varol, 2007; Temur, 2013). The cause of positive attitudes of female students may be interpreted as that women having more concerns for the future than men, and being more keen to win their economic independence in our society.

According to the results of the analysis conducted to determine whether university students' attitudes differ according to school type variable no significant difference was found. In the research carried out by Cimen (2011), there were no differences between the students' attitudes towards the English Course and school type. Gökçe (2008) and Doğan (2016) stated that there was a difference between the school type and the attitudes towards English. There may be many reasons for the study results why some of them showed or didn't show difference between the school type and the attitudes towards English. All the factors involved in school variable may or may not have caused this difference. It can be said that the instructor, who has an important place in language learning, has a different place among these factors.

There was no statistically significant difference between the average attitude points of the students who took pre-university preparatory education and the average scores of the students who did not take pre-university education. With and without pre-university preparatory education, students' attitudes may be close to each other because students' main aim prior to university education is to prepare for and succeed in the university entrance exams. A similar result was found in the study of Hanci Yanar (2008). In his study, Pineda (2011) stated that attitudes toward English lessons of the students with preparatory education are more positive. Pineda (2011), in his study conducted on Mexican students, interpreted this result as showing that the students with pre-university preparatory education had a positive attitude towards English classes because they believed that they could succeed in English classes at university and that they could raise their grade point average through preparatory education.

According to the result of analysis conducted to determine whether the attitude toward English differ according to grade level variable, a significant difference was found in favor of freshman year students. While the studies of Al-Zahrani (2008) and Kaçar and Zengin (2009) support this result; Kazazoğlu's (2011) research reported a conclusion in the opposite direction. The reason for the more positive attitudes towards the English lesson of the freshman year students can be interpreted as the enthusiasm associated with the new start to the university as the students realize the importance of English for their future lives at the beginning of the university education. However, according to some results, there is no meaningful relationship between university students' attitudes towards English and their anxieties. Pan and Akay (2015) also reached similar results in their study. When the class variable is taken into consideration, it can be thought that such results emerge because the students are more concerned about finding a job and they became unable to focus on the importance of the lessons towards the end of the school. In addition, it can be said that it is not surprising that students get these results because the studies on the attitude towards English show that the students do not really want to learn English whereas they learn it mandatorily.

As a result, it can be said that the positive attitude of individuals has an important impact for permanent learning. In this study, there was no difference between the school type and preparatory education and attitude towards the English. Differences between gender and class variables and attitudes towards English was found.

In line with the findings of this study, as the anxiety and attitude did not occur in a short time, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal and experimental studies on the anxiety and attitude about the English lesson and to carry out extensive qualitative research on variables that affect attitude and anxiety.

#### Limitations

There are some limitations in this research. One of them is, as it is a screening type study, the reasons of the attitudes and anxiety of English lesson could not be explained in detail. Another limitation is that the students' anxiety and attitudes towards the course are limited to the scores obtained from the data collection tools. In addition, this research is limited to 700 students in a State University.

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# Üniversite öğrencilerinin ingilizce dersine ilişkin kaygıları ve tutumlarının incelenmesi

# Öz

Bu araştırmada üniversite öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersine ilişkin kaygıları ve tutumlarının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden tarama türünde bir araştırmadır. Araştırmanın evreni Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Örneklemi ise tabakalı örnekleme yöntemine göre belirlenmiş 700 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak İngilizce ders kaygısı ölçeği ile İngilizceye yönelik tutum ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda İngilizce hazırlık eğitimi alan öğrencilerin kaygılarının hazırlık eğitimi almayanlara göre daha az olduğu, 1. sınıf öğrencilerinin 3. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerine göre İngilizce dersine yönelik daha az kaygı yaşadıkları, kız öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine ilişkin tutumlarının erkek öğrencilerden daha fazla olduğu ve 1. sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersine ilişkin tutumlarının daha yüksek olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Kaygı; tutum; İngilizce; dil öğrenme; üniversite öğrencileri

# **AUTHOR BIODATA**

Göksel Coşkun holds an MA degree in curriculum and instruction, and is currently doing his PhD in curriculum and instruction at Atatürk University. He is working as an English instructor at Bitlis Eren University Department of Foreign Languages. His research interests include teaching foreign language and curriculum and instruction.

Adnan Taşgın completed his MA in curriculum and instruction and also received his PhD in curriculum and instruction. He is working as an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Atatürk University. His research interests include curriculum & instruction, teacher education, teacher training and educational research.