Investigation of Pre-service Teachers' Communication Skills

(Türkçe Öğretmeni Adaylarının İletişim Becerilerinin İncelenmesi)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the levels of Turkish language pre-service teachers' communication skills. Descriptive survey model was used in this study. 218 pre-service Turkish language teachers, who are studying at Department of Turkish Language Teaching at a university in the west of Turkey, participated in the study. Criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the choice of the participants of this study. As an instrument for data collection, this study used "Inventory of Communication Skills" finalized by Ersan and Balcı (1998) on some pre-service Turkish Language teachers. As the collected data exhibited normal distribution, t-test and one-way variance analysis were used in the study. Pre-service teachers of Turkish Language find themselves adequate in the followings in order; behavioral communication skills, cognitive communication skills and emotional communication skills. The findings of the study suggest that there has been a significant difference between pre-service teachers' communication skills, their gender and their class levels. It was also found in this study that there is no significant difference between communication skills of pre-service teachers and their grade-point averages and the high school that they graduated from.

Key Words: Communication skills, Turkish language pre-service teachers, Turkish education.

Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı Türkçe öğretmeni adaylarının iletişim beceri düzeylerini belirlemektir. Araştırmada betimsel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya Türkiye'nin batısında yer alan üniversitede Türkçe Eğitimi Anabilim Dalında öğrenim gören 218 Türkçe öğretmeni adayı katılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları amaçsal örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Ersan ve Balcı (1998) tarafından son hali verilen "İletişim Becerisi Envanteri" Türkçe öğretmeni adaylarına uygulanmıştır. Veriler, normal dağılım gösterdiği için araştırmada t-testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi kullanılmıştır. Türkçe öğretmeni adayları, kendilerini sırasıyla davranışsal iletişim becerileri, zihinsel iletişim becerileri ve son olarak duygusal iletişim becerilerinde yeterli görmektedirler. Araştırmanın bulgularından elde edilen sonuca göre Türkçe öğretmeni adaylarının iletişim becerileriyle cinsiyetleri ve sınıf düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğu görülmektedir. Türkçe öğretmeni adaylarının iletişim becerileriyle not ortalamaları ve mezuniyetleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılığın olmadığı görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İletişim becerileri, Türkçe öğretmeni adayları, Türkçe Eğitimi.

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Introduction

Language is an instrument which helps human understand the world and tell themselves to others (Sever, 1998: 51). Communication means sharing emotions, thoughts and skills; creating a common ground for thoughts and emotions (Sever, 1998: 51). People start to sense the world, build communication with other people and creatures, to explain and interpret the world. Communication is a social necessity for individuals to be parts of the society and to socialize (Akarsu, 1998: 36; Yalçın and Şengül, 2007: 749). Individuals need to communicate with their environment effectively so that they can be real parts of the society. To be able to communicate effectively, senders need to tell receivers the information that they want to share through appropriate channels. Having a shared language between senders and receivers makes it easier for them to communicate (Sever, 1998: 53).

The communication problems experienced by individuals result from lacking of language skills, not interpreting the messages accurately and appropriately (Sever, 1998: 53). There have been some obstacles preventing people from communicating with others. These obstacles are classified as physical, technical, psychological or social and organizational. Among the physical and technical obstacles are message, channel, noise and language related ones (Sabuncuoğlu and Gümüş, 2008: 175). Among the psychological and social obstacles are lacking of a purpose for a communication, prejudices, diversity of views, differences in sensing, attitudes and behaviors, socio-cultural differences and the level of knowledge owned (Türkmen, 2000: 19). As organizations form the most important part of the society, organizational obstacles are considered to be as communication obstacles. Organizational obstacles are suggested to be as time pressure, role relationships, hierarchy, management styles, statue differences, information overload, inadequacy of feedback, the size of organization and physical structure of the organization (Elgünler and Fener, 2011: 38). It is very important to consider environmental factors, relationships among individuals, special communication styles and the channels and environment used in eliminating the communication related obstacles (Yüksel, 2014: 5). To be able to eliminate communication related obstacles, the messages sent by the source need to be supported with visuals, to be adjusted depending on the receivers, the communication environment needs to be rearranged, the feedbacks need to be given to the received messages. The best way to eliminate the communication obstacles is to determine the communication obstacles and to take necessary measures against them (Tutar and Yılmaz, 2010: 87). Individuals of a democratic society are supposed to have already gained necessary communication skills. Communities need individuals who can express their emotions and thoughts effectively, who can interpret the messages accurately and who can solve problems through their communication skills (Sever, 1998: 54). Following the year 2005 when the curriculums of Education Faculties changed, the course of effective communication was added into the curriculum of each program related to teaching profession. The aim of this was to help pre-service teachers build effective teacher-parent-student communication, to find the least common denominator with the members of the society out of the school (Uzuntaş, 2013: 12). Therefore, curriculums were changed, and it was foreseen that students would gain relevant skills more than just theoretical information. Skill is defined as individuals' power to perform a job. Skill is the transfer of information into practice. The complex knowledge that individuals have gained is aimed to be

transferred into a skill in a systematic way. Skill is the process of restructuring mind, and this process continues in lifetime (Güneş, 2007: 57-59). The most basic aim of this constructive education approach is to help students effectively communicate through the guidance of their teachers, participate in group discussions and build their learning in a progressive stage. There are some basic skills which are supposed to be in education curriculums. These skills are the accurate, effective and nice use of Turkish, critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, problem solving, making research, decision making, using information technologies and entrepreneurship (MEB, 2006).

The goal of this research is to determine the levels of pre-service teachers' communication skills. The sub-goals of this study are determined as follows under the light of the research goal:

- Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and their gender?

- Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and their class levels at which they are studying?

- Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and their grade-point averages?

- Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and the high school that they graduated from?

- How is the level of pre-service Turkish Language teachers' communication skills?

- What are the opinions of pre-service Turkish language teachers about communication skills?

Method

Research Design

Descriptive survey model was used in this study. Descriptive researches help define a specific case in depth (Büyüköztürk et. Al., 2012: 22). It is the aim of this study to define the communication skills of Turkish language teachers.

Participants

218 pre-service Turkish language teachers, who are studying at Department of Turkish Language Teaching at a university in the west of Turkey, participated in the study. Criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the choice of the participants in this study. Observation qualities in a study may consist of some cases (Büyüköztürk vd., 2012: 22). The participants of the study are the pre-service teachers who took "Effective Communication" course in the 4th term at the Department of Turkish Language teaching. The data related to the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1

The introductory statistical information of Turkish language teachers in the research group

Class	f	%	Gender	f	%
2. Class	109	50	Female	133	61,0
3. Class	109	50	Male	85	39,0
Total	218	100,0	Total	218	100,0

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 61% of the research participants is female 8(=133), 33% of them male (n=83). 50% of the participant teachers is 2nd year students, 50% of them is 3rd year students.

Data Collection Instrument

This study used "Inventory of Communication Skills" finalized by Ersan and Balcı (1998) on some pre-service Turkish Language teachers as an instrument for data collection. The analysis carried out by the researcher suggest that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of the scale was found to be .807 and Barlett globosity test was also found to be significant (at p<0.01 level). Descriptive factor analysis suggests a three-factor structure, and it was found that the total factor structure explains 64% of the scale. Cronbach Alfa coefficient of the scale which was carried out to find out the reliability of the scale, was found to be .804. When all relevant analysis were examined, it is seen that the scale is a valid and reliable one.

Data Analysis

The analysis which were carried out in this study to find out if the data exhibited normal distribution suggests that kutosis and skewness values change between -1 and +1. As the data exhibited normal distribution, t-test and one-way variance analysis were used in the study.

Results and Discussion

This part of the study will present the data obtained through data analysis.

a) Is there a significant difference between the communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and their gender?

Table 2
Results of the t-test analysis carried out to examine the sub-dimensions of the Inventory of communication skills and pre-service teachers' genders.

Sub-dimensions	Gender	N	Arithmetical Means	S	sd	t	p
Cognitive	Female	133	3,47	,41055	216	,120	,905
	Male	85	3,46	,45110			
Emotional	Female	133	3,18	,42423	216	-2,455	,015
	Male	85	3,32	,44683			
Behavioral	Female	133	3,46	,43158	216	-,665	,507
	Male	85	3,50	,42544			

When the Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference between pre-service Turkish Language teachers' genders and their emotional communication skills [$t_{(216)}$= 2.455, p<.05] . It is also seen that the mean score of pre-service teachers' scores for sub-dimension of emotional communication skills (($\bar{X}$ =3.32) is higher than those of female participants ($\bar{X}$ =3.18).

b) Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and their class levels at which they are studying?

Table 3

Results of the t-test analysis carried out to examine the sub-dimensions of the Inventory of communication skills and pre-service teachers' classes at which they are studying.

Sub-dimensions	Class	N	Arithmetical Means	S	sd	T	p
Cognitive	2. Class	109	3,55	,39846	216	3,036	,003
	3. Class	109	3,38	,43661			
Emotional	2. Class	109	3,36	,45274	216	4,354	,000
	3. Class	109	3,11	,38683			
Behavioral	2. Class	109	3,53	,42127	216	1,994	,047
	3. Class	109	3,42	,43016			

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the classes of pre-service teachers and their cognitive [$t_{(216)}$= 3.036, p<.05], emotional [$t_{(216)}$= 4.354, p<.05] and behavioral communication skills [$t_{(216)}$= 1.994, p<.05]. The mean scores of the 2nd year students taken from the sub-dimensions of cognitive ($\bar{X}$=3.55), emotional ($\bar{X}$=3.36) and behavioral ($\bar{X}$=3.53) communication skills were found to be higher than the 3rd year pre-service teachers' mean scores taken from cognitive ($\bar{X}$=3.38), emotional ($\bar{X}$=3.11) and behavioral ($\bar{X}$=3.42) communication skills.

c) Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and their grade-point averages?

Table 4

The results of one-way variance analysis depending on the mean scores of pre-service teachers and the sub-dimensions of the inventory of communication skills

Sub-dimensions	variance source	Sum of squares	sd	Means of squares	F	p
Cognitive	Intergroup	,129	2	,064	,352	,703
	Within group	39,216	215	,182		
	Total	39,345	217			
Emotional	Intergroup	,226	2	,113	,587	,557
	Within group	41,432	215	,193		
	Total	41,659	217			
Behavioral	Intergroup	,287	2	,144	,779	,460
	Within group	39,585	215	,184		
	Total	39,872	217			

When the findings obtained through one-way variance analysis are examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference between pre-service teachers' cognitive [$F_{(2-215)}$=.352; p>.05], emotional [$F_{(2-215)}$=.587; p>.05] and behavioral [$F_{(2-215)}$=.779; p>.05] communication skills and their grade point average.

d) Is there a significant difference between communication skills of pre-service Turkish language teachers and the high school that they graduated from?

Table 5

The results of one-way variance analysis carried out between the sub-dimensions of the Inventory of Communication skills and pre-service teachers' high schools they graduated from

Sub-dimensions	Variance source	Sum of squares	sd	Means of squares	F	p
	Intergroup	,462	2	,231	1,278	,281
Cognitive	Within group	38,883	215	,181		
	Total	39,345	217			
	Intergroup	,470	2	,235	1,227	,295
Emotional	Within group	41,188	215	,192		
	Total	41,659	217			
	Intergroup	,513	2	,257	1,402	,248
Behavioral	Within group	39,358	215	,183		
	Total	39,872	217			

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference between pre-service teachers' cognitive [$F_{(2-215)}$= 1.278; p>.05], emotional [$F_{(2-215)}$= 1.227; p>.05] and behavioral [$F_{(2-215)}$= 1.402; p>.05] communication skills and their high school they graduated from.

e) How is the level of pre-service Turkish Language teachers' communication skills?

Table 6

Introductory statistical information related to the Inventory of Communication Skills

Sub-dimensions	$\overline{X}$	sd	median	Mode
Cognitive	3,46	,02884	3,4520	3,47
Emotional	3,23	,02968	3,1896	3,13
Behavioral	3,48	,02903	3,4667	3,40

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that pre-service teachers find themselves adequate in behavioral communication skills, cognitive communicative skills and emotional communication skills in turn

f) What are the opinions of pre-service Turkish language teachers about communication skills?

Table 7

Opinions of pre-service Turkish Language teachers regarding their communication skills.

Six items with the highest mean score from the scale	$\overline{X}$	sd
I am glad to be understood by the person I communicate with	4,27	,068
I generally recognize the person I communicate with.	4,21	,058
I try to understand people.	4,17	,062
I sometimes do not listen to the person I am communicating with although I am in eye contact.	4,16	,065
I respect the thoughts of the person I communicate with whereas I do not agree with him.	4,08	,066
I spare enough time to listen to the person I communicate with.	4,07	,060
Six items with the lowest scale mean score	$\overline{X}$	sd
I feel bored when I am listening to people.	2,52	,074
I feel I do not have to listen to others.	2,47	,082
I find it difficult to apologize.	2,46	,091
I feel uncomfortable when I am in communication with someone from opposite sex.	2,44	,093
I try to control people and shape them as I want.	2,42	,084
I cannot wait when others are speaking and I interrupt them.	2,26	,083

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that pre-service Turkish language teachers feel happy to be understood by the person they communicate with, that they generally recognize the person they communicate, that they try to interpret the person they communicate, that they sometimes listen to the person they communicate, that they respect opposing views, that they spare time to listen to people. Pre-service teachers were found not to be adequately effective in interrupting others, shaping others, communicating with others, apologizing and listening to others.

Results, Discussion and Suggestions

With the integration of constructivist education into curriculums, it has become more important for students to understand and interpret life. Listening skill is an important part of communicating with individuals, and it is also a skill which helps individuals understand and interpret life. With the rapid advancement of technology in the last century, listening skill has gained a big importance. Speaking is an important means of communication in life which helps individuals communicate with others and express themselves. Reading helps individuals access various sources to improve their relevant experiences and use their interpreting, discussing and critical thinking skills effectively. Writing skill helps students express themselves, their dreams and thoughts effectively using the facilities offered by the language. Basic skills in educational curriculum are very important in individuals' socialization as well as language skills. One of these basic skills is communication skill. Communication skill can always be thought, improved and gained no matter how old individuals are (Aspegren 1999).

The more individuals' empathy skill is improved, the better their communication skills get proportionally with their empathy skills (Akvardar et.al. (2002). It was the aim of this study to find out the communication skills of pre-service teachers who will help students gain such skills in the future, considering various variables. The result obtained through this study suggests that there is a significant difference between the communication skills of Turkish

Language teachers and their genders. It is also seen that male pre-service teachers had higher levels of emotional communication skills compared to those of female pre-service teachers. Male pre-service teachers were found not to feel happy to be criticized, and they daydream as they are listening to others, they feel bored as they are listening to others, they find it difficult to apologize, they turn a cold shoulder as they are listening to others, and they cannot be sure of their emotions. Acar (2009) found out in his study that there has been a significant difference in favor of male students with regards to behavioral communication skills. Nacar (2010) has found that female teachers communicate better with students compared to male teachers. Although the researches carried out related to pre-service teachers have come up with results in favor of male pre-service teachers, female pre-service teachers had higher communication skills, which can be explained with the age factor. Similar studies suggest that female teachers had higher level of communication skills compared to male teachers (Ceylan, 2007).

It was also found in this study that there is a significant difference between pre-service Turkish teachers' communication skills and their classes at which they study. It is also seen that 2nd year students are better with regards to their cognitive, emotional and behavioral communication skills. As 2nd year students had the course of "communication skills" in their second year, their communication skills were found to be higher. It is surprisingly seen that as class levels increase, communication skill levels decrease opposed to what is believed. It is also seen that there is no significant relationship between pre-service teachers' communication skills and grade point average, the high schools they graduated from. Pre-service teachers' grade point averages and their high schools that they graduated from affect their level of communication skills. Acar (2009) found out in his study that there is a significant difference between their behavioral and general communication skills when the high schools that they graduated from are considered. Therefore, it can be suggested under the lights of the findings of this study that the pre-service teachers who are graduates of Anatolian High school have higher levels of communication skills than the pre-service teachers who are graduates of vocational high school.

Pre-service Turkish language teachers find themselves adequate in the following skills in order; behavioral communication skills, cognitive communication skills and emotional communication skills. It is also seen with this study that pre-service Turkish language teachers' socializing processes have some universal characteristics. Pre-service teachers of Turkish language try to communicate with people, try to bear communication rules in mind and try to ignore communication obstacles.

To be able to raise individuals under the light of constructivist education approach, we need to raise qualified teachers appropriate to the skill based approach. With the advancement of technology, new generations enter into the service of new technologies, their interest into new technology negatively affect their communication skills. Pre-service teachers need to raised considering the 21st century technologies and individuals' inefficiencies in communication at Education Faculties.

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