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## **The Relationship Between 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' Autonomy Perceptions and Foreign Language Anxiety in Foreign Language Courses**

 Derya Ay, PhD Student, Corresponding Author  
Necmettin Erbakan University, Türkiye  
[derya.ay@yahoo.com](mailto:derya.ay@yahoo.com)  
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-0843-5506

 Ahmet Oğuz Akçay, Assoc. Prof. Dr.  
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Türkiye  
[aoguzakcay@gmail.com](mailto:aoguzakcay@gmail.com)  
Orcid ID: 0000-0003-2109-976X

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## **Abstract**

In this study, the English language learning autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety levels of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and the predictive power of this anxiety level on their autonomy perception were examined. 515 students participated in the study designed as the correlational design. The data were collected with the "Autonomy Perception Scale", "Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale" and "Demographic Information Form". In examining the autonomy perception levels of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students learning English as a foreign language, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the scores obtained from the scales, t-test, one-way variance, regression and correlation analyzes were used. According to the results of the research, the autonomy perceptions of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in English class were at a medium level. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students' autonomy perceptions show significant differences according to class types and gender. Also it was determined that female students had higher levels of autonomy perception. It was concluded that students studying in foreign language-oriented classes had higher autonomy perceptions, and as a result of the analysis, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between 7<sup>th</sup> grade students' autonomy perception in English class and foreign language learning anxiety. It is possible to say that foreign language learning anxiety explains the perception of autonomy.

**Keywords:** Anxiety in foreign language learning, autonomy in foreign language learning, learner autonomy, elementary education.

## **Introduction**

According to Bound, "The most fundamental purpose of education is to raise individuals who have the ability to make their own decisions about what they think and do" (as cited in Benson & Voller, 1997). Autonomy in foreign language learning has been considered an important concept in recent years, as the student-centered approach has gained popularity instead of traditional teaching. The concept of autonomous language learning has been defined by many scholars over the years to clarify the concept. Henri Holec (1981) defines it as: "the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning, to take responsibility for all decisions regarding all aspects of this learning".

Holec theorized that learner autonomy is the ability to take responsibility for one's learning and take responsibility for decisions, including setting goals, defining content and progress, choosing the methods and techniques to be used, and monitoring the acquisition procedure (as cited in Tseng, Liou & Chu, 2020). Learner autonomy is the capacity for objectivity, critical thinking, decision-making and independent action (Little, 1991). Specifically, it assumes and requires that the learner will develop a certain type of psychological relationship with the learning process and content. The capacity for autonomy can be observed not only in the way students learn but also in the way they transfer learning to broader contexts (Little, 1991). Benson and Voller (1997) claimed that autonomous learning is self-regulated responsibility in learning and that this is a sign of good academic performance. Furthermore, Little (2002) proposed a more holistic perspective on learner autonomy and stated that the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and interaction with others. It has been found that students prefer to be in control of their own learning process and may feel more competent and

motivated when they have the authority to make their own choices (Cotterall, 1995). Expanded definition of autonomy is described as below:

*In the context of second and foreign language learning, autonomy is defined as 'the capacity to take responsibility for one's own learning'. An autonomous learner can make conscious choices that require awareness and control of learning processes achieved through reflection (Mynard & Stevenson, 2017).*

It is a fact known by educators that many individual factors have an impact on learning and cannot be ignored. Ping Wang (2011) states the following about learner autonomy: "In order for students to take responsibility for their own learning processes, it is much more important to ensure that they are informed about their own learning styles." Supporting students' existing autonomy is considered an important foundation for continued success. Autonomy support is a central social-contextual construct that promotes a variety of positive psychological and behavioral outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2013). Especially in learning contexts, when students are provided with autonomy support, they participate in activities with greater interest and enthusiasm instead of feeling under pressure (Ciani et al., 2010). Higher levels of autonomy support are associated with higher levels of student interests (Black and Deci, 2000; Pazner, 2018), higher types of autonomous motivation (Chan et al., 2021; Núñez and Leon, 2016), higher academic success (Ahn et al., 2021; Patall et al., 2010) and has been associated with other positive learning outcomes.

Autonomous learning can only occur if students' motivation is high. Jingnan (2011) stated that motivation is believed to be one of the determining factors in developing learner autonomy. One of the psychological factors that affects learning motivation is anxiety. Anxiety can affect any individual and affects most, if not all, language learners to some degree, especially in the classroom setting (Núñez & Leon, 2016). Horwitz et al. (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as 'an individual complex of feelings, perceptions, beliefs and behaviors arising from the classroom situation in which the person learns and uses a foreign language'. Anxiety is also defined as worrying about an event in the past, present, or future, regardless of whether it will actually occur (Anisman, 2015). A student may have negative feelings towards a lesson in which he/she is anxious and may be disinterested in that lesson. Anxiety has a negative impact on students' personality, optimism, communication skills, and oral English performance (Abdullah et al., 2022). The character of the student is very important in the formation of these concerns. Since learning and using a language are collaborative practices that essentially rely on various interpersonal relationships, the process of second language learning is greatly influenced by the specific personalities of students (Hu & Wang, 2014). Students with less self-confidence may have a more anxious attitude towards lessons. In this case, it may lead the student to failure. It is thought that minimizing students' anxiety will positively affect their success rates in the course.

Holec defined learner autonomy as "the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning" and noted that this ability "is not innate, but can be developed by 'natural' means or (as is often the case) through formal learning" (Holec, 1981). Despite the ever-expanding literature, learner autonomy continues to be a minority pursuit, perhaps because all forms of 'autonomy' are a process that challenges the power structures of educational culture. When we

look at the research in the literature, it is important for students and educators to be familiar with this concept and to be knowledgeable because it is important for both personal development and as we continue to see increasing interest in language learning and language preservation for professional reasons, the importance of autonomous language learning will increase. In this respect, seeing studies on learner autonomy and multilingualism will contribute to the development of educational programs. It was thought that every study to be carried out with autonomous learning was very important in terms of improving education and providing new perspectives to instructors, and it was decided to conduct a study in this field.

The aim of this research is to explore the autonomy perception levels of primary school 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in English lessons and to examine the relationship between their autonomy perception levels and foreign language anxiety levels. For this purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

1. What are the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students' perceptions of autonomy in learning a foreign language?
2. Do the foreign language learning autonomy perceptions of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research differ significantly according to gender?
3. Do the foreign language autonomy perceptions of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research differ significantly depending on the type of classroom they study in?
4. What are the anxiety levels of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research in learning a foreign language?
5. Do the foreign language learning anxiety levels of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research differ significantly according to gender?
6. Do the foreign language anxiety levels of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research differ significantly depending on the type of classroom they attend?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the autonomy perception levels of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research and their foreign language anxiety levels?

## **Method**

In this research, the relational survey design was used within the quantitative paradigm. Relational survey design is a scientific research method that defines a situation or an event as it is and examines the relationship, effects and degree between the variables that cause this situation (Karasar, 2005). In this study, the relational survey design was preferred because it could obtain information about the existing situation and, as stated by Karasar (2005), although it does not provide definitive information about the cause-effect relationship, it can reveal significant clues about the possible cause-effect relationship. In the research, the relationship between autonomy perceptions and foreign language anxiety levels of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in Konya was examined. Students' language use knowledge and skills are at different levels. This method was preferred in order to establish relationships between different variables and make generalizations. In the research, the relationship between autonomous learning and its sub-dimensions and foreign language anxiety situations and its sub-dimensions was discussed with various statistical methods. The research model also has the

characteristics of a comparative method, as it addresses the differences that arise according to gender and class variables in terms of autonomous learning and foreign language anxiety.

### **Participants**

The setting of the research consists of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students studying in Konya, Meram. There are 5381 students attending the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in Meram. Sampling method was used due to economic reasons and accessibility. When determining the sample, the simple stratified sampling method was preferred because it can represent the universe and is the most generalizable method (Kurtuluş, 2010). The aim here is to prevent variables such as gender and language level from causing bias when representing the universe. For this research, 515 students were reached (254 girls, 261 boys). The sample constitutes 10% of the universe, and with a margin of error of .5 percent, it is thought that this sample has the ability to represent the universe and is suitable for obtaining valid and reliable data. The school where the research will be conducted was evaluated and chosen in terms of student diversity and accessibility. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in the schools selected for the research receive education in two different classroom types. While 7<sup>th</sup> grade students receive 3 hours of English lessons per week, students in foreign language classes receive 8 hours of English lessons per week.

### **Data Collection Tools**

During this research, Autonomy Perception Scale, Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale, and Demographic Information Form [DIF] were used as data collection tools. Necessary permissions were obtained for the use of the scales. Detailed information about each scale is given below.

#### ***Autonomy Perception Scale (APS)***

Before deciding on the scale, the relevant literature was examined. Two of the most important features in a data collection tool are validity and reliability. Therefore, for a document to be valid, it must test the construct it is intended to test; however, with these various definitions and the emphasis that departments place on the autonomy dimension, it is impossible to talk about the only way to evaluate student autonomy. One of the most commonly used tools to measure student autonomy is the student autonomy profile, based on extensive research by Confessore (1992). Confessore suggests that there are four intermediate structures based on autonomy. These; It is the person's individual desire, resourcefulness, initiative and continuity. After reviewing the literature, it was decided to use the Autonomy Perception Scale developed by Bayat (2007) in this research. The main purpose of choosing this scale is that the factors affecting the perception of autonomy may vary depending on the current culture. This scale, prepared by Bayat (2007), is a five-point Likert type and was conducted with undergraduate students. Bayat (2007) first conducted a preliminary study with 286 students to test the validity and reliability of the scale. As a result of this study, the scale was put into main application as a four-dimensional scale consisting of 38 items. The first dimension is the dimension of taking responsibility for language learning (17 items), the second dimension is the dimension of conducting English activities outside of school (7 items), the third dimension is the dimension of using metacognitive strategies (9 items), and the last dimension is associating the learned language with real life (5 items). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the

entire scale (38 items) was found to be .90, and for the subscales it was found to be .90, .80, .76, and .74, respectively. This scale, consisting of 4 dimensions, defines .45 of the total variability (Bayat, 2007). The highest score is 190 and the lowest score is 38.

This scale was later used by Kurt (2016) in a study conducted with secondary school students. Before using this scale, Kurt (2016) conducted a factor analysis to check its suitability for high school students, and the factor loadings of the items were between .41 and .84. According to the data obtained, the total variance explained by the four factors in the scale is 45% and he found the validity and reliability of the scale suitable for application to high school students. As a result of the application, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the entire scale was found to be .90 (Kurt, 2016).

The factor analysis was conducted to determine the validity and reliability of the items before applying the "Autonomy Perception Scale" to primary school students. The scale was first applied to 150 students and exploratory factor analysis was conducted to reveal its factors. These students were not included in the actual application. Factor analysis can be used to determine what theoretical constructs underlie a given data set and to what extent these constructs represent the original variables (Henson & Roberts, 2006). Since the applied sample was different from the first applied sample population of the scale, the factors were reconstructed according to their loadings. In the exploratory factor analysis, the limit value for the loadings of the items in the scale was taken as .30. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the factor loading of an item on a factor should be at least .32. However, as a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was determined that the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> statements were not collected under any factor and their loadings were collected in more than one dimension and were removed from the scale. It was thought that the expressions in the scale may not be appropriate for the environment in which the research is conducted and that including these expressions in the research may negatively affect the validity. According to Pallant (2010), Corrected Item-Total Correlation values indicate the extent to which each item of a scale correlates with the total score of the scale as a whole, while low values (less than .30) indicate that the item measures something different from the scale and removing these items should be considered. Büyüköztürk (2013) also underlined that the item-total correlation of values greater than .30 is high and that items with item-total correlations between .20-.30 need revision.

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the total variance explained by the four factors was 52%. When looking at scale development studies in social sciences, it can be said that this value is at an acceptable level (Büyüköztürk, 2013; Özdamar, 2013). The KMO value was found to be .91. A KMO value of .60 and above is a desired result (Şencan, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). As a result of explanatory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to see whether the structure of the scale was confirmed or not. AMOS 16.0 package program was preferred to test the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the scale and the fit indices obtained according to the analysis results are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.***Model Fit Values Results*

	<i>CMIN/DF</i> ( <i>x2 /sd</i> )	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMSA</i>
F autonomy perception scale	1.455 (751.124/516)	.800	.810	.854	.05

When the table is examined, it can be seen that the CFA values of the scale are at a sufficient level for scale development and adaptation studies. Chi-square and degrees of freedom values were obtained as 1.455 (df =516,  $p < .00$ ) and the ratio  $x^2/df=1.45$  was reached. While some sources accept the value of  $\chi^2/df=5$  for model fit (Wheaton et al., 1977), some sources accept the value of  $\chi^2/df=2$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). According to the results obtained from the selected sample, it was concluded that this ratio was below 3, and it can be said that this result indicates perfect fit in scale development studies (Kline, 2005; Sümer, 2000). Additionally, it is concluded that the closer the CFI value is to .90, the better the fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Another fit index commonly used in CFA is the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value. In recent years, this statistic has been evaluated as one of the statistics that provides the most reliable information about the model (Diamantopoulos, 2000). In the CFA analysis, an RMSEA value of .05 or less indicates a good fit; According to Jöreskog and Sorbom (1993), RMSEA values below .08 indicate a good fit for the model. The values that RMSEA can take within the 95% confidence interval can be between .03 and .08, values above .08 will indicate a poor model fit (Rigdon, 1996). The RMSEA value obtained as a result of this analysis is .05. According to the results of explanatory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, the validity and reliability of the scale were found suitable for application to primary school 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale in this research was found to be .91.

### ***Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)***

Anxiety is an emotional state that has been researched by many researchers in the field of education for many years and is seen as an important variable in learning. It is very difficult to analyze anxiety with statistical data, as it is to measure other emotional states. When the literature is examined, research on anxiety in foreign language learning generally includes Horwitz et al. (1986) seems to be preferred. Anxiety has many sub-causes, and it has been thought that scales taken from foreign sources to measure a condition such as foreign language anxiety may not be culturally accurate. Oxford (1999) stated that “behaviors vary across cultures, and what appears to be anxious behavior in one culture may be normal behavior in another.”

This scale used in the research was developed by Baş (2013) and was used in the study conducted with the participation of 374 primary school students. The sample of the research consists of students studying in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. There are a total of 27 items in the five-point Likert type scale. As a result of the factor analysis, it was concluded that the items in the personality sub-dimension of the scale had factor load values between .817 and .433, the items in the communication sub-dimension had factor load values between .741 and .455, and finally the items in the evaluation sub-dimension had factor load values between .711 and .444 (Baş, 2013). Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the entire scale was found to be .93. A high score

from the scale means that the anxiety of learning a foreign language is also high. In this study, the Cronbach alpha value for the entire scale is .81. Table 2 gives information about the reliability coefficients of the factors and the reliability coefficient of the total scale.

**Table 2.**

*Cronbach Alpha Values for FLLAS Factors*

Factors	Number of items	Cronbach alfa
Factor 1	9	.60
Factor 2	10	.68
Factor 3	8	.75
Total	27	.81

As seen in the table, the Cronbach Alpha number of the sub-dimensions of the scale varies between .60 and .75. The total reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .81. To decide the reliability of the scale, the Alpha value is expected to be between .60 and .80. An alpha value between .70 and .80 indicates that the scale has acceptable reliability; it can be observed when this value falls below .70 in scales containing psychological values (Kline, 1999). The results of the analysis regarding the validity and reliability of the scale used in this research show that the scale can be used safely with secondary school students.

### ***Demographic Information Form***

Demographic Information Form was used to obtain information about the students participating in the research. This form is a form prepared by the researcher to obtain data about the variables included in the research. In this form, students were asked to provide information about their gender and class type.

### ***Collection of Data***

Necessary permissions were obtained before data collection and data began to be collected in line with the research permission. Due to the age range of the students, parental consent forms were delivered to the parents before the surveys were administered, and students who received permission from their parents on a voluntary basis were included in the research. Data were collected online due to health conditions during the period of the research. Surveys were sent online to students and they were asked to fill them out. Apart from the information contained in the demographic information form, no personal information was requested in the study for confidentiality reasons.

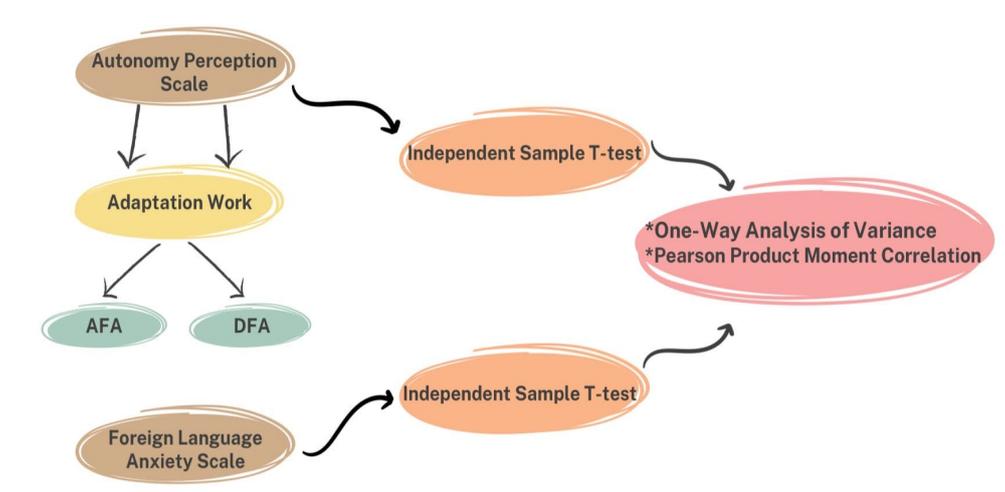
### ***Analysis of Data***

Before starting the data analysis, the data collected online were reviewed. Since the surveys are conducted online, it is not possible for students to mark more than once or leave something incomplete. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package program was preferred to analyze the data after the survey returns. Normality analyzes were performed for the scales used before proceeding with statistical procedures. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), for the normal distribution of the test, the skewness and kurtosis values should be between -1.5 and +1.5. In this study, skewness and kurtosis values were determined as .10 and .21 for the foreign language anxiety scale and the autonomy perception scale. Accordingly, parametric analyzes were used in the study. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique

was used to see the distribution of students' answers to the expressions in the scale. T-test was used to examine the relationship between autonomy perception status and foreign language anxiety and the gender of the students participating in the research. Pearson Product Moment Correlation method was used to examine the relationships. In order to describe some relationships in the research, values such as mean and standard deviation were also calculated during the analysis process. Tables were used to concretize the analysis results. The research design of the study is visually given in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.**

*Research Design of the Study*



In addition, effect size analysis was performed to determine the effect of the difference between groups for the scales used. Effect size is a quantitative measure of the magnitude of the experimental effect. The larger the effect size, the stronger the relationship between two variables. Cohen Statistical Power Analysis is one of the most popular approaches used in behavioral sciences. Cohen (1988) standardized effect sizes into small, medium, and large values, depending on the type of statistical analysis used. Effect sizes are .10, .30, and .50 for small, medium, and large, respectively.

### **Ethical Permits of Research:**

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were complied with. None of the actions specified under the heading "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, have been taken.

### **Ethics Committee Permission Information:**

Name of the committee that made the ethical evaluation = Eskişehir Osmangazi University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

Date of ethical review decision=14.11.2020

Ethics assessment document issue number=2020.20.14

## Findings

### Results of Autonomy Perception Levels

The Autonomy Perception Scale developed by Bayat (2007) was applied to determine the level of autonomy perception of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research. The results regarding the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the sub-dimensions of taking responsibility for language learning, carrying out out-of-school activities, using metacognitive strategies and finally associating the learned language with real life, which are the factors of the autonomy perception scale, are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

*Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Scores on the Perception of Autonomy Scale and its Subscales*

	APS total	Language learning responsibility	Extracurricular activities	Using metacognitive strategy	Relating the learned language to real life
Valid(n)	515	515	515	515	515
Average	112	59	15	21	12
Standart deviation	16.74	10.14	5.003	3.29	3.78
Minimum value	54	23	8	9	4
Maximum value	166	82	35	30	20

As shown in the table, the level of autonomy perception of the students participating in the research is at a medium level. While the highest total score obtained from the scale was 166, the lowest total score was 54 and the overall average of the participants was found to be 112.

### Results According to the Relationship Between Students' Autonomy Perceptions and Their Gender

Independent sample t-test technique was used to see the relationship between the autonomy perception levels of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research and their gender. The results of this test are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4.**

*T-test Results for Comparison of Autonomy Perception Scale and Factors according to Students' Gender*

Variable	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
1. Perception of Autonomy Scale	Female	254	114	16.75	2.699	.861
	Male	261	110	16.53		
2. Taking responsibility for learning the language	Female	254	61	10.17	3.047	.946
	Male	261	58	9.95		
3. Extracurricular activity	Female	254	16	5.18	.598	.165
	Male	261	15	4.82		
4. Metacognitive strategy	Female	254	21	3.06	.603	.014
	Male	261	21	3.51		
5. Relation to real life	Female	254	13	3.66	3.340	.447
	Male	261	12	3.83		

As shown in Table 4, the female students participating in the research had higher autonomy perceptions. There was no significant difference between the groups (p=.861).

However, when the subscales are examined, a significant difference is seen in terms of gender in the metacognitive strategy subscale ( $p=.014$ ). Effect size analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the difference in autonomy perception between groups. As a result of the analysis, the effect size of foreign language perception in terms of gender was determined to be .014. At a partial  $\eta^2$  value, .01 is considered low potency, .06 is considered average potency, and .14 and above is considered high potency. This result shows us that the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant, but it can be said that this small difference is in favor of female students.

### **Findings Regarding the Relationship Between Students' Autonomy Perception Levels and Class Type**

An independent sample t-test was applied to examine the relationship between the autonomy perception levels of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research and their classroom types in more detail. The results regarding the findings are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

*T-test Results for Comparison of Autonomy Perception Scale and Factors According to Students' Class Types*

Variable	Class type	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. Autonomy perception scale	Foreign L	187	115	15.6	4.056	.159
	Normal C	328	109	17.5		
2. Taking responsibility for language learning	Foreign L	187	61	8.97	3.172	.001
	Normal C	328	58	11.2		
3. Extracurricular activity	Foreign L	187	16	5.21	1.831	.148
	Normal C	328	15	4.69		
4. Metacognitive strategy	Foreign L	187	21	2.83	5.171	.000
	Normal C	328	20	3.63		
5. Relation to real life	Foreign L	187	13	3.78	4.159	.418
	Normal C	328	12	3.66		

As can be seen in Table 5, it was determined that the foreign language autonomy perceptions of the students studying in the foreign language class participating in the research were higher. No significant difference was found between the groups for the autonomy perception scale ( $p=.159$ ). However, when the sub-dimensions were examined, although there was no significant difference in terms of class type in the factors of participation in out-of-school activities ( $p=.148$ ) and associating with real life ( $p=.418$ ), the sub-dimensions of taking responsibility for language learning ( $p=.001$ ) and using metacognitive strategies. There is a significant difference in their dimensions ( $p=.00$ ). Effect size analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the difference in autonomy perception between groups. As a result of the analysis, the effect size of the perception of autonomy between the groups was found to be .031, and according to this result, it can be said that the difference between the groups is not significant and weak.

## Results Regarding the Examination of Students' Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Levels

The Foreign Language Learning Anxiety scale was applied to find out the level of foreign language anxiety of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research. The arithmetic means and standard deviation values of the answers given to the items related to personality, communication and evaluation factors, which constitute the sub-dimensions of the foreign language anxiety scale, are summarized in Table 6.

**Table 6.**

*Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Scores Related to the Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale Factors*

	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality	515	15	37	26.69	3.27
Communication	515	15	43	27.79	4.62
Evaluation	515	10	35	21.94	4.64
FLLAS	515	50	104	76.43	10.12

As seen in the table, it was determined that the average score of the personality factor of the scale was  $\bar{X}=26.69$ , the average score of the communication factor was  $\bar{X}=27.79$ , and the average score of the evaluation factor was  $\bar{X}=21.94$ . According to the data obtained from the scale, the arithmetic average scores of the sub-dimensions were examined and as a result, it was determined that the level of foreign language anxiety was generally high in the communication sub-dimension and at medium level in the personality and evaluation sub-dimensions.

## Results Regarding the Relationship Between Students' Foreign Language Learning Anxiety and Gender

The t test results conducted to examine the relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and gender are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.**

*T-test Results for Comparison of Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale and its Factors according to Students' Gender*

Variable	Gender	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. FLLAS	Female	254	7.39	9.47	-4.669	.333
	Male	261	78.47	10.3		
2. Personality	Female	254	26.35	3.09	-3.397	.724
	Male	261	27.03	3.41		
3. Communication	Female	254	27.01	4.59	-3.864	.922
	Male	261	28.57	4.53		
4. Evaluation	Female	254	21.02	4.22	-4.580	.002
	Male	261	22.86	4.86		

As seen in Table 7, the p value for the Foreign Language Learning Anxiety scale is greater than .05 and according to this result, there is no significant difference between the groups. When the sub-dimensions of the scale were examined, a significant difference was found in the evaluation sub-dimension ( $p=.002$ ) and this difference was in favor of men. When the averages are examined, it is seen that foreign language learning anxiety is in favor of men. According to the result of the effect size analysis, the effect size was found to be .041. It was

concluded that there was a significant difference in foreign language learning anxiety according to the gender variable and that this difference was not strong compared to the effect size result.

### Results Regarding the Relationship Between Students' Foreign Language Learning Anxiety and Class Type

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant relationship between the foreign language learning anxiety levels of the students participating in the study and their class types. T-test results regarding the differentiation of variables according to class type are given in Table 8.

**Table 8.**

*T-Test Results for Comparison of Foreign Language Learning Anxiety and Factors according to Students' Class Type*

Variable	Class Type	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. FLLAS	Foreign L	187	79.61	9.64	5.529	.657
	Normal C	328	74.62	9.95		
2. Personality	Foreign L	187	27.37	2.64	3.595	.000
	Normal C	328	26.30	3.53		
3. Communication	Foreign L	187	28.80	4.54	3.767	.895
	Normal C	328	27.25	4.58		
4. Evaluation	Foreign L	187	23.43	4.76	5.667	.120
	Normal C	328	21.09	4.36		

Table 8 represented that students studying in a foreign language class have higher foreign language learning anxiety score averages. According to the analysis results, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups according to FLLAS. When the sub-dimensions were examined, a statistically significant difference between the groups was found in the personality sub-dimension ( $p=.000$ ). In order to determine the level and importance of the difference in the t-test analysis results according to class types, effect size analysis was performed and as a result of the analysis, the effect size was found to be .056. It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and class type and that this difference was low compared to the effect size result.

### Results on the Relationship Between Autonomy Perceptions and Foreign Language Anxiety Levels

In order to determine the relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and learner autonomy of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the research, foreign language learning anxiety was determined as an independent variable and learner autonomy as a dependent variable, and a correlation analysis was conducted. Analysis results are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9.**

*Relationship Between Perception of Autonomy and Foreign Language Anxiety*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Perception of Autonomy	515	112	16.78	.708	.000
Foreign Language Anxiety	515	76	10.12		

According to the findings in Table 9, it was concluded that the role of foreign language learning anxiety in learner autonomy variability was significant ( $r=.708$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and that there was a significant relationship.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

A significant amount of past research has focused on the role of autonomy support in predicting learning outcomes (Mammadov & Schroeder, 2023). In this study, it was aimed to discover the autonomy perception levels of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and to examine the relationships between their autonomy perceptions and their anxiety in the foreign language course. For this purpose, it was also examined whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' autonomy perception of gender and class type and between foreign language anxiety of gender and class type.

What we know for sure is that the need for autonomy is innate and present throughout life (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and that creating autonomy learning environments is beneficial for all students. It was also seen in this study that the students participating in the research had a moderate level of autonomy perception. Students should be provided with autonomy support in this direction, and studies should be carried out to encourage them to learn autonomously. Autonomy-supportive teaching involves encouraging students to pursue personal interests and helping them internalize external regulations through acceptance of emotions (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). It is important that the foreign language education program becomes adaptable to support autonomous learning. It should not be forgotten that students will reach higher levels of autonomy in the future with an education that supports more autonomous learning.

There are studies in the literature (Baylan, 2007; Chan, 2003, Koçak, 2003, Yıldırım, 2000) that conclude that students do not spare time for different ethical activities other than English lessons. The findings in these studies are similar to the results of this research in that the sub-dimension of participation in out-of-school activities has the least average. In addition, Tursun (2010) concluded in his research with high school students that the rate of participating in activities to learn English outside of school was very low. In this study, students' autonomy perceptions were found to be at a medium level and the lowest average was in the dimension of conducting extracurricular activities, which shows us that students do not spend time on foreign languages outside of class due to various reasons such as their opportunities outside their school or their lack of knowledge on this subject. No matter how much students learn through lessons, there is always more to learn and they need to learn it by practicing on their own. However, when the studies were examined, it was seen that students' autonomy perception levels varied at different levels. As a result of his study, Yıldırım (2012) stated that learner autonomy is not a concept that can be said to be completely present or absent in an individual. To investigate how a group of students who differ in their level of perception of autonomy may benefit from autonomy support, future studies could design experimental studies in which teachers are trained to provide autonomy support and students are provided with autonomy support. By providing training in the field of learner autonomy, teachers can be informed about what learner autonomy is and how to support it, and teachers' awareness of this issue can be increased.

When looking at the relationship between the autonomy perception levels of the students participating in the research and their gender, a result was obtained in favor of female students. As a result of the impact analysis, a significant difference was detected, although the degree of difference was not large. When the literature was examined, Üstünlüoğlu (2009) obtained a similar result in his study with university students. He stated that ability and activity scores differ significantly according to gender, and that women find themselves more competent and more participatory than men in activities related to autonomous learning (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009). Similarly, in the study conducted by Gömleksiz and Bozpolat (2012) with 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, it was determined that the female students participating in the research had better self-direction in foreign language learning compared to male students. Gültaş (2019) found in his study that female students' scores on the autonomous learning scale, independent learning and study habits were higher than male students. Unlike the findings obtained in this study, Kurt and Acat (2016) stated that, contrary to the findings in this study, gender is not an effective factor when students' autonomy perceptions are evaluated in terms of gender variable.

When the relationship between class type and autonomy perceptions of the students participating in the research was examined, a significant difference was observed. It was concluded that the autonomy perception levels of students studying in foreign language classes were higher than those of students in regular classes, but this difference was not large. When the literature was examined, it was seen that the studies (Alkan, 2015; Evelyn, 2011; Gültaş, 2019; Kurt, 2016; Sesli & Demir Başaran, 2015; Yurdakul, 2016) focused on the class level and there was no study on categorized class types. No study was found. It is thought that this difference occurs because students are exposed to more of the target language in foreign language classes. This result supports findings from previous studies suggesting that student engagement plays a role as a mediating construct linking autonomous learning support to academic performance (Chen et al., 2005; Lin & Wang, 2021; Sun, 2023). The attitudes and behaviors of foreign language teachers in the classroom may have caused differences in autonomy perception levels between classroom types. A positive effect was also observed on the autonomy perception levels of students who spent more time with the target language. In this case, foreign language teachers can make students more engaged in the target language with extracurricular activities (such as watching movies and TV series with subtitles, working individually with English textbooks, and actively listening to English songs) in order to support students' autonomy perception levels. Successful students have more autonomous characteristics and perform more out-of-class activities (Aydın, 2023). It shows that students who perceive that their learning environment is autonomy supportive are more likely to support the development of their language mindset, feel more competent, and are more willing to communicate (Zarrinabadi et al., 2021).

When looking at the relationship between the foreign language anxiety levels of the students participating in the research and their gender, it was concluded that there was a significant difference and the anxiety levels of male students were higher than female students. In general, studies in the literature found that male students have higher foreign language anxiety (Coşkun and Taşgın, 2018; Elaldı, 2016; Hasan and Fatimah, 2014) and studies concluded that female students have higher foreign language anxiety (Çakıcı, 2015; Oruç,

2020; Thornton, 2004). Tunçel (2014) found in his study that there was no significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and gender, but that male students were more anxious in the sub-dimension of speaking anxiety. It is thought that the results may differ due to the culture of the environment in which the research was conducted and the diversity of age groups of the participants in the research.

When the foreign language anxiety levels of students studying in a foreign language class and a regular class were examined, it was concluded that although there was no big difference, the anxiety levels of the students in the foreign language class were higher. According to Scovel (1978), a moderate level of anxiety motivates students, increases student desire, and therefore increases student success. Tuncel (2014) similarly found in his study that a certain level of anxiety plays a role in increasing foreign language success. The fact that the anxiety levels of students in foreign language classes are higher than those of students studying foreign languages in regular classes may explain the higher level of competition and desire for success in the target language in foreign language-oriented classes. In order to keep the anxiety level in foreign language intensive classes to a minimum level, exams can be organized as process evaluations. Instead of high-stakes exams that create anxiety, teachers can focus more on in-class assessments that can reduce anxiety.

It was concluded that the relationship between foreign language anxiety and autonomy perception level was moderate. It was determined that there was a significant relationship between the perception of autonomy and foreign language anxiety. As the level of autonomy perception increases, the level of anxiety decreases. It has been observed that the rate of students with low autonomy perception level and the rate of students with high foreign language anxiety level are close to each other. As a result of his research, Chan (2001) suggested that students should be guided to reduce the amount of stress or anxiety-provoking factors in the learning context. While Merç (2015) found a negative and significant relationship between the level of autonomy perception and anxiety, Orakcı (2018) stated that there was a negative, high level and significant relationship between students' autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety. Ghorbandordinejad and Ahmadabad (2014) stated that foreign language classroom anxiety significantly mediates the relationship between autonomy and English language achievement. A similar study was conducted by Kurt and Acat (2016) with high school students, and as a result of the research, it was determined that there was a negative relationship between the perception of autonomy and foreign language anxiety. When the literature was examined, it was seen that Liu (2012) also reached similar results in his study. As a result of his research, Liu (2012) found that there is a negative relationship between learner autonomy and foreign language learning anxiety. The lack of a learning-friendly environment will likely lead to anxiety in language learners. Therefore, having a student-friendly and motivating environment that supports autonomy will also reduce anxiety. It would be reasonably impossible for teachers to develop the learning autonomy of low-motivation and high-anxiety students without first paying attention to them.

## **Recommendations**

A significant amount of past research has focused on the role of autonomy support in predicting learning outcomes (Mammadov & Schroeder, 2023). In this study, it was aimed to

discover the autonomy perception levels of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and to examine the relationships between their autonomy perceptions and their anxiety in the foreign language course.

Creating educational environments that support learner autonomy will both increase students' learning motivation and enable them to recognize learning strategies and apply self-assessment techniques. To investigate how a group of students who differ in their level of perception of autonomy may benefit from autonomy support, future studies could design experimental studies in which teachers are trained to provide autonomy support and students are provided with autonomy support. By providing training in the field of learner autonomy, teachers can be informed about what learner autonomy is and how to support it, and teachers' awareness of this issue can be increased.

In this study, quantitative data was collected only from a certain group of participants. Analyzing more qualitative data in future research will provide different contributions to this field.

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

### **Contribution Rate of Researchers**

Author 1: 50%

Author 2: 50%

### **Support and Thanks**

We are grateful to the reviewers who provided invaluable feedback in the earlier versions of the manuscript.

### **Conflict Statement**

There is no conflict of interest in the research.



# İlköğretim 7. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Yabancı Dil Dersinde Özerklik Algıları ve Yabancı Dil Kaygıları Arasındaki İlişki

## Özet

Bu çalışma da ilköğretim 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce öğrenme özerklik algısı ile yabancı dil öğrenme kaygı düzeyleri ve bu kaygı düzeyinin özerklik algısını yordama gücü incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. İlişkisel tarama modelinde desenlenen çalışmaya 515 öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırmada veriler "Özerklik Algı Ölçeği", "Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Kaygısı Ölçeği" ve "Demografik Bilgi Formu" ile toplanmıştır. Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin özerklik algı düzeylerinin incelenmesinde ölçeklerden elde edilen puanların aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma değerlerinden, t-testi, tek yönlü varyans, regresyon ve korelasyon analizlerinden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre İngilizce dersinde 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin özerklik algılarının orta düzeyde olduğu görülmüştür. 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin özerklik algıları sınıf türlerine ve cinsiyetlere göre anlamlı bir farklılık göstermektedir. Yapılan t-testi sonucunda kız öğrencilerin özerklik algı düzeylerinin daha fazla olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Sınıf türü ve İngilizce özerklik algısı arasındaki ilişkiye bakıldığında ise yabancı dil ağırlıklı sınıflarda okuyan öğrencilerin özerklik algılarının daha yüksek olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır ve yapılan analiz sonucunda 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersindeki özerklik algısı ve yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısı arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısının özerklik algısını açıkladığını söylemek mümkündür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yabancı dil öğreniminde kaygı, yabancı dil öğreniminde özerklik, öğrenen özerkliği, ilköğretim.

## Giriş

Holec, öğrenen özerkliğinin, kişinin öğrenmesinin sorumluluğunu üstlenme ve hedeflerin belirlenmesi, içeriğin ve ilerlemenin tanımlanması, kullanılacak yöntem ve tekniklerin seçilmesi, edinim prosedürünün izlenmesi dâhil olmak üzere kararların sorumluluğunu üstlenme yeteneği olduğunu teorileştirmiştir (aktaran Tseng vd., 2020). Öğrenen özerkliği tarafsızlık, eleştirel düşünme, karar verme ve bağımsız eylem kapasitesidir (Little, 1991). Spesifik olarak, öğrencinin öğrenme süreci ve içeriğiyle belirli bir tür psikolojik ilişki geliştireceğini varsayar ve gerektirir. Özerklik kapasitesi yalnızca öğrencilerin öğrenme biçiminde değil aynı zamanda öğrenmeyi daha geniş bağlamlara aktarma biçiminde de gözlemlenebilir (Küçük, 1991). Benson ve Voller (1997), özerk öğrenmenin, öğrenmede kendi kendini düzenleyen sorumluluk olduğunu ve bunun iyi bir akademik performansın işareti olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Dahası, Little (2002) öğrenen özerkliğine daha bütünsel bir bakış açısı önermiş ve öğrenen özerkliği uygulamasının iç görü, olumlu bir tutum ve kendi kendini yönetmede ve başkalarıyla etkileşimde proaktif olmaya hazır olmayı gerektirdiğini belirtmiştir. Öğrencilerin kendi öğrenme süreçlerinin kontrolünü elinde tutmayı tercih ettikleri ve kendi seçimlerini yapma yetkisine sahip olduklarında kendilerini daha yetkin ve motive hissedebilecekleri bulunmuştur (Cotterall, 1995). Genişletilmiş özerklik tanımı aşağıdaki gibi belirtilmiştir:

*İkinci ve yabancı dil öğrenimi bağlamında özerklik, 'kişinin kendi öğreniminin sorumluluğunu üstlenme kapasitesi' olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Özerk bir öğrenci, yansıtma yoluyla elde edilen öğrenme süreçlerinin farkındalığını ve kontrolünü gerektiren bilinçli seçimler yapabilir* (Mynard & Stevenson, 2017).

Özerk öğrenme ile yapılacak her çalışmanın eğitimin gelişmesi ve öğretmenlere yeni bakış açıları kazandırmak adına çok önemli olduğu düşünülmüş ve bu alanda bir çalışma yapılmasına karar verilmiştir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı ilköğretim 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersindeki özerklik algı düzeylerini keşfetmek ve özerklik algı düzeyleri ile yabancı dil kaygı düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu ana amaç çerçevesinde de aşağıdaki sorulara da cevap aranacaktır.

1. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin yabancı dil öğrenme özerklik algıları nasıldır?

2. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin yabancı dil öğrenme özerklik algıları cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılık göstermekte midir?

3. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerin yabancı dil özerklik algıları öğrenim gördükleri sınıf türüne göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılık göstermekte midir?

4. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin yabancı bir dili öğrenme kaygı düzeyleri nedir?

5. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin yabancı dil öğrenme kaygı düzeyleri cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılık göstermekte midir?

6. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerin yabancı dil kaygı düzeyleri gördükleri sınıf türüne göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılık göstermekte midir?

7. Araştırmaya katılan 7. sınıf öğrencilerin özerklik algı düzeyleri ile yabancı dil kaygı durumları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki var mıdır?

## **Yöntem**

Bu araştırma da ilişkisel tarama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İlişkisel tarama modeli, bir durumu veya meydana gelen bir olayı olduğu gibi tanımlayan ve bu duruma neden olan değişkenler arasındaki ilişki, etkileri ve derecesini de inceleyen bir bilimsel araştırma yöntemidir (Karasar, 2005). Bu çalışmada ilişkisel tarama yöntemi var olan durum hakkında bilgi edinebilmek ve her ne kadar neden-sonuç bağına dair kesin bilgiler sağlamasa da Karasar'ın (2005) da belirttiği üzere muhtemel neden-sonuç bağına dair kayda değer ipuçları ortaya koyabilmek nedeniyle tercih edilmiştir. Araştırma da Konya Meram ilçesinde bulunan 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin özerklik algıları ile yabancı dil kaygı durumları arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Öğrencilerin dil kullanımı bilgi ve becerileri farklı seviyelerdedir. Araştırmada, özerk öğrenme ve alt boyutları ile yabancı dil kaygı durumları ve alt boyutları arasındaki ilişki çeşitli istatistiksel yöntemlerle ele alınmıştır. Araştırma modeli, özerk öğrenme ve yabancı dil kaygı durumları açısından cinsiyet ve sınıf değişkenlerine göre ortaya çıkan farklılıkları ele alması itibarıyla karşılaştırmalı ilişkisel tarama modeli özelliklerini de barındırmaktadır.

Bu araştırma süresince veri toplama araçları olarak Özerklik Algı Ölçeği, Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Kaygısı Ölçeği, Demografik Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Ölçeklerin kullanımı ile ilgili gerekli izinler alınmıştır. Özerklik Algı Ölçeği, ilköğretim öğrencilerine uygulanmadan önce maddelerin geçerliği ve güvenilirliğini tespit etmek için faktör analizi yapılmıştır. Ölçek ilk olarak 150 öğrenciye uygulanmış ve faktörlerini ortaya çıkarmak amacı ile açımlayıcı faktör analizi yapılmıştır. Bu öğrenciler asıl uygulamaya dâhil edilmemişlerdir. Analiz sonucunda elde edilen dört faktörün açıkladıkları toplam varyans %52 olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Sosyal bilimlerdeki ölçek geliştirme çalışmalarına bakıldığında bu değer kabul edilebilir düzeyde olduğu söylenebilir (Büyükoztürk, 2013; Özdamar, 2013). KMO değeri ise .91 olarak bulunmuştur. KMO değerinin .60 ve üzerinde olması istendik bir sonuçtur (Şencan, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Açımlayıcı faktör analizi sonucunda ölçeğin elde edilen yapısının doğrulanıp doğrulanmadığının görebilmek amacıyla doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılmıştır. Açımlayıcı faktör analizi ve doğrulayıcı faktör analizi sonuçlarına göre ölçeğin ilköğretim 7. sınıf öğrencilerine uygulanması için geçerliği ve güvenilirliği uygun bulunmuştur. Ölçeğin bu araştırmada kapsamındaki Cronbach Alfa katsayısı .91 bulunmuştur. Araştırmada kullanılan Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Kaygısı Ölçeği, Baş (2013) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Ölçeğin toplam güvenilirlik katsayısı ise .81 olarak tespit edilmiştir

### **Araştırmanın Etik İzinleri:**

Bu çalışmada "Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi" kapsamında uyulması gerektiği belirtilen tüm kurallara uyulmuştur. Yönergenin ikinci bölümü olan "Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine Aykırı Eylemler" başlığı altında belirtilen eylemlerin hiçbiri gerçekleştirilmemiştir.

### **Etik Kurul İzin Bilgileri:**

Etik değerlendirmeyi yapan kurulun adı = Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu

Etik Kurul Etik inceleme karar tarihi= 14.11.2020

Etik değerlendirme belgesi konu numarası= 2020.20.14

### **Bulgular**

Yapılan analizler sonucunda araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin özerklik algıları düzeyi orta seviyede olduğu görülmektedir. Ölçekten elde edilen en yüksek toplam puan 166 iken en düşük toplam puan 54 olarak tespit edilmiştir ve katılımcıların genel ortalaması 112 olarak bulunmuştur.

Araştırmaya katılan kız öğrencilerin özerklik algılarının daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Gruplar arasında ise anlamlı bir farklılık görülmemiştir ( $p=.861$ ). Fakat alt ölçekler incelendiğinde biliş üstü strateji alt boyutunda cinsiyet bakımından anlamlı bir farklılık görülmektedir ( $p=.014$ ). Özerklik algısının gruplar arasındaki farkın etkisini tespit etmek için etki büyüklüğü analizi yapılmıştır. Yapılan analiz sonucunda yabancı dil algısının cinsiyet bakımından etki büyüklüğü .014 olarak tespit edilmiştir. Kısmi  $\eta^2$  değerinde .01 düşük etki gücü, .06 ortalama etki gücü, .14 ve üstü büyük etki gücü olarak değerlendirilir. Bu sonuç bize

iki grup arasındaki farkın istatistiksel olarak önemli büyüklükte olmadığını göstermektedir fakat bu ufak farkın kız öğrencilerin lehine olduğu söylenebilir.

Araştırmaya katılan yabancı dil sınıfında eğitim gören öğrencilerin yabancı dil özerklik algılarının daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Gruplar arasında ise özerklik algı ölçeği için anlamlı bir farklılık bulunamamıştır ( $p=.159$ ). Fakat alt boyutlar incelendiğinde okul dışı etkinliklere katılım ( $p=.148$ ) ve gerçek hayatla ilişkilendirme ( $p=.418$ ) faktörlerinde sınıf türü bakımından anlamlı bir farklılık görülmemesine rağmen dil öğrenme sorumluluğunu üzerine alma ( $p=.001$ ) ve biliş üstü stratejiler kullanma alt boyutlarında anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu görülmektedir ( $p=.00$ ). Özerklik algısının gruplar arasındaki farkın etkisini tespit etmek için etki büyüklüğü analizi yapılmıştır. Yapılan analiz sonucunda özerklik algısının gruplar arasındaki etki büyüklüğü  $.031$  olarak bulunmuştur ve bu sonuca göre gruplar arasındaki farkın önemli bir büyüklükte olmadığı zayıf olduğu söylenebilir.

Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Kaygısı ölçeği için  $p$  değerinin  $.05$ 'den büyük olduğu ve bu sonuca göre gruplar arasında anlamlı bir fark olmadığı görülmektedir. Ölçeğin alt boyutları incelendiğinde ise değerlendirme alt boyutunda anlamlı fark bulunmuştur ( $p=.002$ ) ve bu fark erkekler lehinedir. Ortalamalar incelendiğinde yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısının erkeklerin lehine bir yönde olduğu görülmektedir. Yapılan etki büyüklüğü analiz sonucuna göre etki büyüklüğü  $.041$  olarak bulunmuştur. Yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısının cinsiyet değişkenine göre anlamlı bir fark olduğu ve bu farkında etki büyüklüğü sonucuna göre kuvvetli olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Yabancı dil ağırlıklı sınıfta okuyan öğrencileri yabancı dil öğrenme kaygıları puan ortalamaları daha yüksek değere sahiptir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre YDÖKÖ'ye göre gruplar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark bulunmamıştır. Alt boyutlar incelendiğinde ise gruplar arasında istatistiksel anlamlı farkı kişilik alt boyutunda bulunmuştur ( $p=.000$ ). Sınıf türlerine göre yapılan t-testi analizi sonuçlarındaki farkın düzeyini ve önemini tespit edebilmek için etki büyüklüğü analizi yapılmış ve yapılan analiz sonucunda etki büyüklüğü  $.056$  olarak bulunmuştur. Yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısının sınıf türü arasındaki ilişkide anlamlı bir fark olmadığı ve bu farkında etki büyüklüğü sonucuna göre düşük olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Araştırma sonucunda yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısı öğrenen özerkliği değişkenliğindeki rolünün anlamlı olduğu ( $r=.708$ ,  $p<.05$ ) ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

## **Tartışma ve Sonuç**

Literatürde öğrencilerin İngilizce dersi dışında farklı etkilere zaman ayırmadıkları sonucuna ulaşan çalışmalar (Baylan, 2007, Chan, 2003, Koçak, 2003, Yıldırım, 2000) vardır. Bu çalışmalardaki bulgular ile bu araştırma sonucunda okul dışı etkilere katılım alt boyutunun en az ortalamaya sahip olması benzerlik göstermektedir. Ayrıca Tursun (2010) lise öğrencileri ile gerçekleştirdiği araştırmasında da araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin okul dışında İngilizce öğrenmeye yönelik aktiviteler içerisinde bulunma oranlarının çok düşük olduğu sonucuna varmıştır. Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin özerklik algılarının orta düzeyde çıkması ve en düşük ortalamanın okul dışı etkinlikler yürütme boyutunda olması bize öğrencilerin buldukları okul dışındaki imkânlarından veya bu konudaki bilgi eksiklikleri gibi çeşitli

sebeplerden dolayı yabancı dile ders dışında zaman ayırmadıklarını göstermektedir. Öğrenciler dersler yoluyla ne kadar öğrenirlerse öğrensinler, her zaman öğrenecekleri çok şey vardır ve bunları kendi başlarına pratik yaparak öğrenmeleri gerekir. Fakat araştırmalar incelendiğinde öğrencilerin özerklik algı düzeylerinin farklı düzeylerde değiştiği görülmüştür. Yıldırım (2012) yürütmüş olduğu çalışma sonucunda öğrenen özerkliğinin bireyde tamamıyla var veya yok denebilecek bir kavram olmadığını belirtmiştir.

Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin sınıf türü ve özerklik algıları arasındaki ilişki incelendiğinde anlamlı bir farklılık görülmüştür. Yabancı dil sınıflarında eğitim gören öğrencilerin özerklik algı düzeylerinin normal sınıftaki öğrencilerden daha yüksek olduğu fakat bu farkın büyük olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Literatür incelendiğinde yapılan araştırmaların (Alkan, 2015, Evelyn, 2011; Gültaş, 2019; Kurt, 2016; Sesli ve Demir Başaran, 2015; Ulusoy, 2016; Yurdakul, 2016) sınıf seviyesi üzerine yoğunlaştığı görülmüş ve kategorize edilmiş sınıf türleri ile ilgili yapılmış bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır.

Yabancı dil sınıfı ve normal sınıfta eğitim gören öğrencilerin yabancı dil kaygı durumları incelendiğinde büyük bir fark olmamasına karşın yabancı dil sınıfındaki öğrencilerin kaygı durumlarının daha yüksek olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Scovel'e (1978) göre orta düzeyde bir kaygı durumu öğrencileri motive edip öğrencinin isteğini artırır ve dolayısıyla da öğrenci başarısını artırır. Tuncel (2014) ise benzer bir şekilde çalışmasında belirli düzeyde kaygının yabancı dil başarısını arttırıcı rol oynadığını tespit etmiştir.

Araştırma sonucunda özerklik algısı ve yabancı dil kaygısı arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Özerklik algı düzeyi arttıkça kaygı düzeyi azalmaktadır. Özerklik algı düzeyi düşük öğrenci oranı ile yabancı dil kaygı düzeyi yüksek öğrenci oranının birbirine yakın olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Chan (2001) yapmış olduğu araştırma sonucunda da, öğrenme bağlamındaki stres miktarını veya kaygı uyandıran faktörleri azaltmak için öğrencilere rehberlik edilmesi gerektiğini öne sürmüştür. Merç (2015), özerklik algı düzeyi ile kaygı arasında ters yönlü ve anlamlı ilişki bulurken Orakcı (2018) ise öğrencilerin özerklik algısı ile yabancı dil öğrenme kaygıları arasında negatif yönde, yüksek düzeyde ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu belirtmiştir. Ghorbandordinejad ve Ahmadabad (2014) ise yabancı dil sınıf kaygısının, özerklik ile İngilizce başarısı arasındaki ilişkiye önemli ölçüde aracılık ettiğini belirtmişlerdir. Benzer bir çalışma lise öğrencileri ile Kurt ve Acat (2016) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiş ve araştırma sonucunda özerklik algısı ile yabancı dil kaygısı arasında olumsuz bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir ve literatür incelendiğinde benzer sonuçlara Liu (2012) da yapmış olduğu çalışma sonucunda ulaştığı görülmüştür. Liu (2012) gerçekleştirdiği araştırma sonucunda öğrenen özerkliği ile yabancı dil öğrenme kaygısı arasında negatif yönlü bir ilişkinin varlığını tespit etmiştir. Öğrenme dostu bir ortamın olmayışı büyük olasılıkla dil öğrenenlerde kaygıya yol açacaktır. Bu yüzden özerkliği destekleyici öğrenci dostu ve onu motive eden bir ortamın olması kaygı durumunu da azaltacaktır. Öğretmenlerin, öncelikle düşük motivasyonlu ve yüksek kaygılı öğrencilere dikkat etmeden onların öğrenme özerkliğini geliştirmeleri makul ölçüde imkânsız olacaktır.

## **Öneriler**

Geçmiş araştırmaların önemli bir kısmı, öğrenme çıktılarının tahmin edilmesinde özerklik desteğinin rolüne odaklanmıştır (Mammadov & Schroeder, 2023). Bu araştırmada ise 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin özerklik algı seviyelerini keşfetmek ve özerklik algıları ve yabancı dil dersindeki kaygı durumları arasındaki ilişkileri incelemek amaçlanmıştır. Özerklik algı düzeyleri bakımından farklılık gösteren bir öğrenci grubunun özerklik desteğinden nasıl yararlanabileceğini araştırmak için gelecekteki çalışmalar, öğretmenlerin özerklik desteği sağlamak üzere eğitildiği ve öğrencilerin özerklik desteği sağlandığı deneysel çalışmalar tasarlayabilir. Öğretmenlere öğrenen özerkliği alanında eğitimler verilerek öğrenen özerkliğinin ne olduğu ve nasıl destekleneceği konusunda bilgi verilebilir ve öğretmenlerin bu konudaki farkındalıkları artırılabilir.

Yabancı dil sınıfında ki öğrencilerin kaygı durumlarının normal sınıfta yabancı dil eğitimi alan öğrencilere göre daha yüksek düzeyde olması yabancı dil ağırlıklı sınıflarda hedef dile yönelik rekabetin ve başarı isteğinin daha yüksek olmasını açıklıyor olabilir. Yabancı dil ağırlıklı sınıflardaki kaygı durumunu minimum seviyede tutmak için yapılan sınavlar süreç değerlendirme şeklinde düzenlenebilir. Öğretmenler endişe yaratan yüksek riskli sınavlar yerine, kaygı durumunun azalmasını sağlayabilecek sınıf içi değerlendirmelere daha fazla odaklanabilirler. Bu çalışmada sadece belli bir grup katılımcıdan nicel veriler toplanmıştır. Gelecekteki araştırmalarda daha niteliksel verilerin analiz edilmesi bu alana daha farklı katkılar sağlayacaktır.