

## An Examination of Teacher Candidates on the Turkish Consciousness

**Assist Prof. Dr. Havva YAMAN**

Sakarya University  
Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Teaching, 54300  
Hendek, Sakarya/Turkey  
hyaman@sakarya.edu.tr

**Assist Prof. Dr. Erkan YAMAN**

Sakarya University  
Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Administration, 54300  
Hendek, Sakarya/Turkey  
eyaman@sakarya.edu.tr

**Abstract:** This study was undertaken to assess identify the state of Turkish consciousness in the teacher candidates. In study were applied “Turkish Consciousness Scale” (TCS) that developed by Yaman (2010). Students receive their scores from Turkish Consciousness Scale, the arithmetic mean and standard deviations were considered to be taken into consideration. In order to identify the effect of individual variables, Mann Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Tests. Analysis showed that the variables of Turkish love of course, attended by teacher candidates resulted in significant differences in teacher candidates perceptions whereas the variables of gender, class and socioeconomic status did not affect the perceptions of teacher candidates.

**Key Words:** Teacher candidates, Turkish consciousness

### Introduction

Language is the most powerful institution that socializes people and makes them a member of the society. Human beings are a part of firstly family and then the area and nation. Common languages have the power to provide solidarity and each individual has to benefit from this power in a sufficient level. A common language is an indispensable means by which human beings can define and understand each other, and easily express their opinions to the addressee. The most significant aspect of the language is its function of regulating the relations within a society. Especially in our modern advanced societies, this aspect of the language is closely intertwined with the liberal and democratic maintenance of the relations not only between individuals and public institutions but also between state administration and citizens (Gokturk, 1989:222; Sagir, 2002:8-9).

Mother tongue is one of the most important factors in binding individuals together and turning a society from a random mass of people into a nation. A sense of intimacy arises among those who have adopted the atmosphere of the same mother tongue within their sub-consciousness. This is the result of the effect of a mother tongue on shaping personality and their worldviews being common. This partnership, as well as the power of a mother tongue to bend individuals together, is called sense of mother tongue”. (Ozdemir, 1983:21). Being the conveyor of a culture, language also reflects the worldviews of the individuals adopting that culture. Since information technologies and globalization are increasingly becoming widespread, languages, which ensure communication between people, have drawn near to each other and words from dominant cultures have started to be used in other languages.

Words and suffixes/prefixes borrowed from foreign languages are either intended to fill a conceptual and formal gap in a language or caused by a widespread admiration for and thus a tendency to imitate foreign words. The cultural dominance of English is felt in Turkey, too. The names of stores and goods, and various terms and concepts regarding certain fields are borrowed without an attempt to seek for new Turkish equivalents for any given English word, and it sometimes becomes a matter of “prestige” to use such words (Korkmaz, 1995:625; Parlak, 2000:2).

A language is a reflection of a nation’s way of life and, in the broadest sense, its worldview, certain stages it has undergone throughout the history and the relations it has established with other societies. All the changes a nation has undergone over time are reflected on language in different ways. The civilization of a nation in a particular era might shed light on a whole series of events concerning its vocabulary in that era (aksan, 1997; Gulensoy, 1995; Vendryes, 2001).

Those individuals who are detached and isolated from collective consciousness through images which are unfamiliar to their own culture are so deprived of the world of consciousness required by a language that they cannot reproduce it even when they are using it and dragged into the world of images. It should be noted here that the images which have coexisted with a language over ages go beyond their own capacity and start to be as effective in shaping the conscious as language. The human mind, which has both shaped and been influenced by cultural and belief environment since before now, has always used language not only in verbal but also in written form. Used throughout the sense of reality and unreality, language has always been descriptive. In this sense, language plays a key role in thinking and human interaction (Celik, 2002:767).

Language consciousness could be defined as “the sensitivity concerning the usage of the common language used in the society, which the individual is a part of”. The Turkish language, which is being spoken in a vast geographical region, has a significant function in providing the integrity of the country as well. Having the position as a conveyor for the national culture, the Turkish language has conveyed the emotions and ideas of the Turkish society for centuries until today by means of oral and written works, whereby it has empowered the creation of national unity and brotherhood from this perspective.

An individual’s consciousness of his/her mother tongue is mostly developed through formal education. Therefore, the importance of teachers in making children and youngsters gain an consciousness of their mother tongue is undeniable. Development of a staunch consciousness of the Turkish language by prospective teachers will have a positive effect on the future generations’ consciousness of it. Within this context, the purpose of this study is to determine the prospective teachers’ consciousness of the Turkish language and present the correlation between this consciousness and certain variables.

## **Method**

Description-based quantitative study model was employed in the study. Study models attempt to describe a past or present condition as it was or is. The study was conducted through the use of correlational study model, a comparative one. This model makes an attempt to determine the existence or the level of covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2000).

## **Population and Sample**

The population of the study is comprised of the prospective teachers who studied at the Faculty of Education, University of Sakarya, during the Educational Year 2008-2009. The sample consists of 602 prospective teachers selected through random sampling, a type of simple random sampling. 42% (255) of the prospective teachers are male whereas 58% (347) of them are female. As for their socioeconomic level, 5% (27) of the prospective teachers are included within low economic group; 92% (544) of them within intermediate economic group; and 3% (21) within high economic group. 37.2% (222) of the prospective teachers always like Turkish Language Lesson; 32% (196) of them often like it; 25% (148) of them occasionally like it; 5% (29) of them rarely like it; and 1% (7) of them never like it. As for their level of foreign language, 43% (259) of the prospective teachers have a low level; 53% (321) of them an intermediate level; and 4% (22) of them a high level.

## **Instruments for Data Gathering**

In study were applied “Turkish Consciousness Scale” (TCS) that developed by Yaman (2010). The factor analysis, 17 points gathered under three factors, which are named as “individual usage”, “the importance of unity of the country”, and “correct usage of Turkish in mass media”, and which indicate the 50,8% of the total variance. The inner consistency reliability coefficients of the scale was .88 for the whole scale; .85 for the “individual usage”, .69 for the “the importance of unity of the country”, and .87 for the “correct usage of Turkish in mass media”. In the affirmative factor analysis made for verifying the three factor structure of the scale, it was seen that the Ki-square value is significant ( $\chi^2=348.96$ ,  $sd=110$ ,  $p=0.00$ ), while the fitness index values were found to be RMSEA=.051, CFI=.98, IFI=.98, GFI=.95, AGFI=.94 and SRMR=.047.

## **Processing the Data**

*The normality of the variable distribution was investigated in order to determine which tests to apply. A Shapiro Wilk Test indicated that not all variables were normally distributed, and therefore non-parametric tests were used in the further data analysis. Students receive their scores from Turkish Consciousness Scale, the arithmetic mean and standard deviations were considered to be taken into consideration. In order to identify the effect of individual variables, Mann Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Tests.*

**Findings**

Dimensions	N	$\bar{x}$	ss	Sh $_{\bar{x}}$
Individual Usage	602	26,95	6,33	0,25
The Importance of Unity of the Country	602	17,53	2,62	0,10
Correct Usage of Turkish in Mass Media	602	21,14	3,72	0,15
Total	602	65,62	12,67	0,50

**Table 1. The Dimension of the Turkish Consciousness Scale Belong to the Mean, Standard Deviation and Standard Error Values**

As can be concluded from Table 1, the arithmetic mean of the total score obtained by the prospective teachers from the Scale for the Consciousness of the Turkish Language is 65,62. When this figure is divided by 17, the total number of the items included in the scale, we have 3,8. This figure suggests that the prospective teachers are highly conscious of the Turkish language.

Dimension	Groups	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$\sum_{sira}$	U	z	p
The Importance of Unity of the Country	Male	255	263,80	67269,00	34629,000	-4,634	,000
	Female	347	329,20	114234,00			

**Table 2. The Dimension of the Importance of Unity of the Country Differ According to Gender Variant Configuration to Determine Mann-Whitney U Test Results**

According to Table 2, there is a meaningful difference between female and male students, in favor of female ones, concerning the importance of the Turkish language to national integrity ( $U=34629,000$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Female students ( $\bar{X}=329$ ) have a higher level of consciousness of the importance of language to national integrity than male ones ( $\bar{X}=264$ ). On the other hand, no meaningful correlation has been observed between individual use and gender.

Dimension	Groups	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$\sum_{sira}$	U	z	p
Correct Usage of Turkish in Mass Media	Male	255	274,79	70072,50	37432,500	-3,254	,001
	Female	347	321,13	111430,50			

**Table 3. The Dimension of the Correct Usage of Turkish in Mass Media Differ According to Gender Variant Configuration to Determine Mann-Whitney U Test Results**

According to Table 3, there is a meaningful difference between genders in the consciousness of the correct use of the Turkish language in mass media ( $U=37432,500$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Female students ( $\bar{X}=321$ ), have a higher level of consciousness of the correct use of the Turkish language in mass media than male ones ( $\bar{X}=275$ ).

Score	Groups	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$\sum_{sira}$	U	z	p
TCS Total Score	Male	255	274,57	70016,50	37376,500	-3,258	,001
	Female	347	321,29	111486,50			

**Table 4. The Turkish Consciousness Scale Total Score Differ According to Gender Variant Configuration to Determine Mann-Whitney U Test Results**

As can be concluded from table above, the variable “gender” has a differentiating effect on the total score obtained by the prospective teachers from the Scale for the Consciousness of the Turkish Language. It can be observed that female students ( $\bar{X}=321$ ) have a higher level of consciousness of the Turkish language than male ones ( $\bar{X}=275$ ).

Dimension	The of love of Turkish Course	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$x^2$	sd	p	Significant Difference
Individual Usage	Always	222	369,55	66,284	4	,000	always-rarely
	Often	196	288,76				
	Occasionally	148	224,60				
	Rarely	29	279,97				
	Never	7	215,21				

**Table 5.** The Dimension of the Individual Usage Differ According to the of Turkish Love of Course Variant Configuration to Determine Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

According to Table 5, there is a meaningful correlation between the individual use of the Turkish language and the level of liking Turkish Language Lesson [ $\chi^2(4) = 66,284; p < .01$ ]. According to the Mann Whitney U Test that was conducted to find the source of the meaningful correlation, there is a statistically meaningful difference between those prospective teachers who always like Turkish Language Lesson ( $SO=130,65$ ) and those who rarely like it ( $SO=90,40$ ), in favor of those who always like it ( $U=2186,500; p < .01$ ).

Dimension	The of love of Turkish Course	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$x^2$	sd	p	Significant Difference
The Importance of Unity of the Country	Always	222	357,42	50,441	4	,000	always-rarely
	Often	196	298,43				
	Occasionally	148	232,67				
	Rarely	29	262,97				
	Never	7	228,79				

**Table 6.** Dimension of the The Importance of Unity of the Country Differ According to the of Turkish Love of Course Variant Configuration to Determine Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

As can be concluded from Table 6, there is a meaningful correlation between the consciousness of the importance of the Turkish language to national integrity and the level of liking Turkish Language Lesson [ $\chi^2(4) = 50,441; p < .01$ ]. According to the Mann Whitney U Test that was conducted to find the source of the meaningful correlation, there is a statistically meaningful difference between those prospective teachers who always like Turkish Language Lesson ( $SO=130,68$ ) and those who rarely like it ( $SO=90,21$ ), in favor of those who always like it ( $U=2181,000; p < .01$ ).

Dimension	The of love of Turkish Course	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$x^2$	sd	p	Significant Difference
Correct Usage of Turkish in Mass Media	Always	222	354,10	34,555	4	,000	always-rarely
	Often	196	281,72				
	Occasionally	148	255,88				
	Rarely	29	270,59				
	Never	7	279,79				

**Table 7.** Dimension of the The Correct Usage of Turkish in Mass Media Differ According to the of Turkish Love of Course Variant Configuration to Determine Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

As can be concluded from Table 7, there is a meaningful correlation between the consciousness of the correct use of the Turkish language in mass media and the level of liking Turkish Language Lesson [ $\chi^2(4) = 34,555; p < .01$ ]. According to the Mann Whitney U Test that was conducted to find the source of the meaningful correlation, there is a statistically meaningful difference between those prospective teachers who always like Turkish Language Lesson ( $SO=130,04$ ) and those who rarely like it ( $SO=95,10$ ), in favor of those who always like it ( $U=2323,000; p < .01$ ).

Score	The of love of Turkish Course	N	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$x^2$	sd	p	Significant Difference
TCS Total Score	Always	222	374,42	75,305	4	,000	always-rarely
	Often	196	288,30				
	Occasionally	148	219,53				
	Rarely	29	267,45				
	Never	7	232,86				

**Table 8.** The Turkish Consciousness Scale Total Score Differ According to the of Turkish Love of Course Variant Configuration to Determine Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

*As can be concluded from Table 8, there is a meaningful correlation between the scores obtained by the prospective teachers from the Scale for the Consciousness of the Turkish language and the level of liking Turkish Language Lesson [ $\chi^2 (4) = 75,305; p < .01$ ]. According to the Mann Whitney U Test that was conducted to find the source of the meaningful correlation, there is a statistically meaningful difference between those prospective teachers who always like Turkish Language Lesson (SO=131,33) and those who rarely like it (SO=85,21), in favor of those who always like it (U=2036,000;  $p < .01$ ). No meaningful correlation has been determined between the variables socioeconomic level and level of foreign language, and the total score obtained from the Scale for the Consciousness of the Turkish Language and the sub-dimensions of the scale.*

## Conclusion

*The purpose of the present paper is to determine the prospective teachers' consciousness of the Turkish language and to present the correlation through certain variables. On the basis of the scores obtained from the Scale for the Consciousness of the Turkish Language, the study concluded that the prospective teachers had a high level of consciousness of the Turkish language.*

*It was observed that female prospective teachers expressed more positive opinions than male ones regarding the importance of the Turkish language to national integrity and its correct use in mass media.*

*On the other hand, liking Turkish Language Lesson was a factor in the prospective teachers' consciousness of the Turkish language. The fact that those prospective teachers who always like Turkish Language Lesson scored better in the Scale for the Consciousness of the Turkish Language than those who rarely like it has demonstrated the importance of Turkish Language Lesson to making children and youngsters gain a consciousness of the Turkish language.*

*Conducting this study in the Faculties of Education across Turkey and a comparison of the findings could be recommended for future researchers.*

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