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Article Name	Speaking Skills Knowledge Levels of Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract

An individual who has the ability to speak from birth continues the development of this skill in education and training environments after the family. In this regard, teachers have great responsibilities for the speaking skills to be acquired in educational environments. Teachers are expected to know about the development of children's speaking skills in order to transfer these skills to students. In addition, having a high level of knowledge about speaking skills is an indispensable element of effective teaching. Elementary school teachers, who spend the most time with students in the classroom, have a key role in helping students develop their speaking skills and easily transfer what they have learned to daily life skills. The study aims to determine the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills. The study was carried out with the survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The study group of the research consists of 302 elementary school teachers. The data were collected with the "Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills" and analyzed with descriptive statistics, Independent Samples t-Test, One-way ANOVA. According to the results of the research, the arithmetic average of the elementary school teachers' knowledge of speaking skills was found to be 13.74 out of 18 total questions. In addition, while elementary school teachers' knowledge of speaking skills did not differ significantly according to the variables of gender, graduation, and location of the school, it showed a significant difference according to the professional experience variable.

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Research Article**Speaking Skills Knowledge Levels of Elementary School Teachers***Ayşe UĞUR GÖÇMEZ¹  Emre ÜNAL² **Abstract**

An individual who has the ability to speak from birth continues the development of this skill in education and training environments after the family. In this regard, teachers have great responsibilities for the speaking skills to be acquired in educational environments. Teachers are expected to know about the development of children's speaking skills in order to transfer these skills to students. In addition, having a high level of knowledge about speaking skills is an indispensable element of effective teaching. Elementary school teachers, who spend the most time with students in the classroom, have a key role in helping students develop their speaking skills and easily transfer what they have learned to daily life skills. The study aims to determine the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills. The study was carried out with the survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The study group of the research consists of 302 elementary school teachers. The data were collected with the "Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills" and analyzed with descriptive statistics, Independent Samples t-Test, One-way ANOVA. According to the results of the research, the arithmetic average of the elementary school teachers' knowledge of speaking skills was found to be 13.74 out of 18 total questions. In addition, while elementary school teachers' knowledge of speaking skills did not differ significantly according to the variables of gender, graduation, and location of the school, it showed a significant difference according to the professional experience variable.

Keywords: Speaking skills, classroom teacher, knowledge level, speaking skill training.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main feature that distinguishes humans from other living creatures is that they can think. The individual who thinks in this direction feels the need to understand, be understood, and communicate. Communication is indispensable for the individual to continue life in the current environment and to meet various material and spiritual needs.

The concept of communication is to flow information by creating a common behavioral system between the sender and the receiver (Amadi & Paul, 2017) and to transmit any information from one source to a different source (Salamondra, 2021). Communication is the basis of all actions taken consciously or unconsciously in daily life. Babatunde (2015) stated that communication is a very important lifeline of all environments. Communicating is one of the ultimate purposes of being able to speak a language (Possú, 2021). Language is an important and powerful tool for the development and change of the world. To use this powerful tool effectively, it is necessary to develop mental skills well (Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017). Communication is one of the indispensable key elements of human life and is the basis of the activities we carry out.

According to Güneş (2016), communication is the process of transforming thoughts into a form that everyone can understand and consists of verbal and non-verbal skills. There are many means of communication, and one of them is speech. Expressing the thoughts during communication aloud occurs through the act of speaking. Speaking is one of the important factors of daily interaction, and

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the first impression about a person is often made dependent on his speech (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014).

Speech is a social, physical, mental, and emotional process that starts from the lungs and continues in the speech organs, occurs within the framework of certain rules, and is expressed with words (Altunkaya, 2017). Sound is produced when the air coming out of the lungs passes through the vocal cords in the larynx, and this sound turns into speech with the coordinated work of organs such as the mouth, nose, teeth, tongue, palate, and lips, including the mind (Altunkaya, 2017). Speaking is a skill that has very serious functions in expressing people's feelings and thoughts, meeting their needs, and gaining social acceptance. There are four language skills in the 2019 Turkish Course Curriculum: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2019).

Since listening and speaking skills are skills that an individual acquires through biological predisposition before or after birth, they are acquired earlier than reading and writing skills. For this reason, it is primarily aimed to provide school-age students with reading and writing skills (MoNE, 2020). Speaking, the most used skill after listening develops naturally through imitation, primarily in the family environment (Merimi, 2021). However, speaking skills are thought to be a more neglected skill compared to other skills (Potur & Yıldız, 2016). The reason may be due to the fact that speaking and listening skills are acquired, albeit to a small extent, before entering educational environments (Kesici, 2021). The speaking skills that children acquire at home are as much as they learn with the biological predisposition factor, without requiring any extra work. It is said that this critical period lasts until the age of 12-13 due to the flexible structure of the brain (Demirezen, 2003). The speaking skills acquired by the child in his natural environment cannot go beyond meeting a limited number of needs in daily life.

Speaking skills, one of the most important communication skills, are greatly needed in education and training environments. The child's self-expression, meeting his needs, social acceptance, evaluation, and all similar situations are situations that occur with the act of speech. In primary school education environments, elementary school teachers are the ones who will consciously help children acquire and develop speaking skills. Primary school children tend to learn by taking role models in line with the developmental characteristics of their period. The person they will take as role models in school environments is undoubtedly their elementary school teachers. Elementary school teachers need to be aware of the seriousness of the situation, review their own knowledge accordingly, and try to correct any deficiencies. Teachers' awareness of their own self-efficacy in speaking skills will shed light on their students by shaping the activities they will do in the lesson (Demirkol & Aytas, 2023).

Not paying attention to speaking skills as much as other skills will result in reduced classroom interaction and students not being able to convey themselves and their experiences effectively (Kasa-Ayten & Hatipoğlu, 2021). The information taught about speaking skills should be practiced extensively in classroom environments to gain various experiences. Various objectives have been added to the curriculum to help students acquire speaking skills effectively and efficiently. In order to effectively achieve the gains in speaking skills set out in the program, teachers must have knowledge about speaking skills and use them effectively in the classroom. Teachers, who are aware that speaking ability is innate, but speaking accurately and effectively is a skill that requires training, should approach this issue sensitively (Kavruk & Yıldırım, 2021).

Students will use the speaking skills they acquire effectively in the school environment in every aspect of their lives. Language skills used in the act of communication do not consist only of speaking skills. To fully master a language, it is necessary to use other language skills correctly (MoNE, 2019). Since basic language skills are interrelated, the development of one skill positively affects the development of other language skills (MoNE, 2020).

When the literature is examined, there are generally studies aimed at improving students' speaking skills (Anggraini, 2021; Fussalam, 2019; Halawa, 2022; Nasution, 2020; Supraba, 2020). In

addition, in the literature, there are studies on improving foreign language speaking skills (Kusmaryani et al., 2019; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Riadil, 2020), and studies on speaking skills with teachers and teacher candidates (Akongoh, 2021; Çerçi, 2015). When the studies in the literature were examined, it was seen that there were studies aimed at improving speaking skills. However, there is no study measuring the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers about speaking skills. To eliminate this deficiency, answers were sought to the following questions.

- 1) How is the level of teachers' knowledge of speaking skills?
- 2) Is there a significant difference in the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills according to the gender variable?
- 3) Is there a significant difference in the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills according to the graduation variable?
- 4) Is there a significant difference in the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills according to the professional experience variable?
- 5) Is there a significant difference in the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills depending on the location of the school?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study, which was developed to determine the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills, was carried out with the survey model, one of the quantitative research methods.

The survey model is a study that aims to detect a situation that existed in the past or today, as it is, and does not aim to make any changes to the subject, individual, or object that is the subject of the research (Karasar, 2020).

2.2. Working Group

The study group of the research consists of 302 teachers working as elementary school teachers throughout Turkey. The test created online was shared in various teacher groups across the country and on social media environments where teachers can reach, and the study group was reached.

Information on the demographic characteristics of the participants is included in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Variables		Number (n)	Per Cent(%)
Gender	Female	219	72.5
	Male	83	27.5
	Total	302	100
Graduation	Associate	5	1.7
	Bachelor D.	199	65.9
	Master D.	94	31.1
	Doctorate	4	1.3
	Total	302	100
Prof. Experience	1-5 Year	50	16.6
	6-10 Year	85	28.1
	11-15 Year	61	20.2
	16-20 Year	52	17.2
	20 Years and More	54	17.9
	Total	302	100
Location of school	Village	58	19.2
	Town	25	8.3
	City Center	219	72.5
	Total	302	100

When the demographic characteristics of the participants in Table 1 are examined, 219 of the 302 teachers participating in the research across Turkey are women, while 83 are male teachers. While the rate of participating female teachers is 72.5%, the rate of male teachers is 27.5%. When the graduation rates of the participants are examined, most participants are at the bachelor's degree level with 65.9%, while the least participants are at the doctorate level with 1.3%. This is followed by associate degree with 1.7% and master's degree with 31.1%. When the ratio of participants in terms of professional experience is examined, the highest number of participants are teachers with 6-10 years of experience with 28.1%, while the least participants are teachers with 1-5 years of professional experience with 16.6%. This is followed by teachers with 16-20 years of professional experience with 17.2%, teachers with 20 years or more of professional experience with 17.9%, and finally teachers with 11-15 years of professional experience with 20.2%. When examined in terms of location of the school, the highest number of teachers who participated in the research was from the city center with 72.5%, and the least teachers from the town with 8.3%. The rate of teachers joining from the village is 19.2%.

2.3. Data Collection and Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool was developed by the authors as a multiple-choice knowledge test. The data was collected online, and 2 control questions were added for the reliability of the data. The tests of participants who answered these control questions incorrectly were considered invalid. In order to collect complete data, transitioning from one question to the next without answering was prevented; therefore, all questions were answered. Additionally, care was taken to ensure that answering the test questions did not take too much time.

Multiple-choice tests are among the most preferred measurement and evaluation tools at various levels, from classroom assessments to national exams (Atılgan et al., 2013). "Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills" developed by the researchers was used to determine the knowledge level of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills.

2.3.1. Knowledge level test on speaking skills

The created test's content validity rates in line with expert opinions were calculated using the Lawshe Technique. Lawshe Technique was developed by a person named Lawshe, and between 5 and 40 expert opinions are needed to apply the technique (Alisinanoğlu & Şimşek, 2012). In the Lawshe Technique, for each item there are explanations such as "the item measures the targeted structure", "the item does not measure the targeted structure" and "the item is related to the targeted structure but is unnecessary" (Lawshe, 1975). Items that did not provide content validity in line with the Lawshe technique were not included in the data collection tool. By removing the items, the data collection tool was made ready for pilot application. Lawshe technique calculation formula is shown below.

CVR in Lawshe technique: Content Validity Ratio; NG=The number of experts who say an item is necessary/Item measures the structure; N=refers to the number of experts from whom information is collected about the substance.

$$CVR = \frac{NG}{N} - 1$$

In line with the specified formula, if more than half of the experts did not say "Necessary", $CVR < 0$, if half of the experts said "Necessary", $CVR = 0$, if more than half of the experts said "Necessary", $CVR > 0$, if all of the experts said "Necessary", $CVR = 1$ (Yurdağül, 2005).

The minimum values required for the Content Validity Ratio are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Minimum values for content validity rates

Number of Experts	Minimum Value	Number of Experts	Minimum Value
5	0.99	13	0.54
6	0.99	14	0.51
7	0.99	15	0.49
8	0.78	20	0.42
9	0.75	25	0.37
10	0.62	30	0.33
11	0.59	35	0.31
12	0.56	40	0.29

Minimum and maximum content validity rates are given according to the number of experts participating in the study. According to this formula, when opinions were taken from 13 experts, the minimum value to be reached was calculated as .54 (Lawshe, 1975).

Table 3. Content validity rates (CVR) of the articles

Item No	Number of Experts Saying Item Measures Structure	Number of Experts from whom Data was Collected	CVR
1	13	13	1.00
2	12	13	0.85
3	10	13	0.54
4	10	10	1.00
5	12	13	0.84
6	11	13	0.69
7	11	13	1.00
8	13	13	1.00
9	4	13	-0.39
10	10	13	0.54
11	12	13	0.85
12	12	13	0.85
13	12	13	0.85
14	13	13	1.00
15	12	13	0.85
16	12	13	0.85
17	13	13	1.00
18	13	13	1.00
19	9	10	0.80
20	12	13	0.85
21	7	9	0.56
22	9	13	0.39
23	10	10	1.00
24	13	13	1.00
25	12	12	1.00
26	7	11	0.27
27	9	13	0.39
28	12	13	0.85
29	10	13	0.54
30	13	13	1.00
31	11	13	0.69
32	7	13	0.08
33	13	13	1.00
34	10	13	0.54
35	13	13	1.00

Experts did not express their opinions on some questions. In this case, the number of experts on that question was changed and the minimum value determined accordingly was sought. According to

these values, 4 items (9-21-26-27) that did not provide content validity were removed from the data collection tool. A pilot study was conducted to study the validity and reliability of the temporary form prepared after the items were removed. The pilot study was applied to 160 people with 31 items. The data obtained after the pilot application of the created test was analyzed with TAP (Test Analysis Program). By analyzing the pilot study data, reliability (KR-20), item difficulty, and item discrimination analyses were carried out. As a result of the analyses, 4 items were removed from the test because they reduced reliability. 9 items were removed because they reduced discrimination. The main application was carried out with a total of 18 items. As a result of the statistics, the reliability coefficient of KR-20 was found to be 0.65. This is expressed as medium-level reliability in achievement tests in the literature (Kızılcık & Tan, 2007; Tan, 2009). Sample questions related to the developed multiple-choice test are given below:

- Which of the following is not one of the vocal characteristics of a good speech?
- The process of the brain, nervous system, lungs, vocal cords, small tongue, large tongue, palate, lips and teeth in a balanced harmony with the co-operation of organs such as the brain, nervous system, lungs, vocal cords, small tongue, large tongue, palate, lips and teeth constitutes which quality of speech?
- What is the branch of science that analyses the formation of the sounds of a language, the forms of speech, the evolution of sounds and the functioning of speech organs?

2.4. Data Analysis

Normality analysis of the "Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills" answered by 302 teachers was carried out. Normality analyses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings regarding normality distribution of variables

Variables	Normality Tests	
	Skewness	Kurtosis
Gender	1.014	-.979
Graduation	.687	-.013
Professional Experience	.184	-1.186
Location of the School	-1.259	-.233

112

When the findings of the distribution normality analysis for the variables included in the study are examined, it is seen that Skewness values are between -2 and +2, and Kurtosis values are between -7 and +7. In the studies in the literature, the fact that the Skewness value is between -2 and +2 and the Kurtosis value is between -7 and +7 shows that the data are considered normal (Hair et al., 2010). Since the data shows a normal distribution, parametric tests can be applied. In this context, a t-test for independent samples was used in the analysis of the "Gender" variable, and a single-factor/one-way analysis of variance was used in the analysis of the "Graduation", "Professional Experience", and "Location of School" variables.

3. FINDINGS

Table 5. Arithmetic mean scores of elementary school teachers' knowledge levels regarding speaking skills

Knowledge Levels Regarding Speaking Skills	n	\bar{x}	Ss
	302	13.76	2.15

When the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills were examined, it was determined that their arithmetic average score was 13.76. The minimum score that can be obtained from the relevant data collection tool is determined as 0 and the maximum score is 18.

Table 6. t-test findings for independent samples regarding the differentiation of elementary school teachers' knowledge levels regarding speaking skills according to the gender variable

Rating Scale	Gender	n	\bar{x}	Ss	Sd	t	p
Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills	Female	219	13.87	2.07	300	1.41	.159
	Male	83	13.48	2.32			

When Table 6 is examined, no statistically significant difference was found in the gender variable dimension of elementary school teachers' speaking skill knowledge levels. It can be stated that the gender variable does not have any effect on speaking skill knowledge levels.

Table 7. One-Way analysis of variance findings regarding the differentiation of elementary school teachers' knowledge levels regarding speaking skills according to the graduation variable

Rating Scale	Graduation	n	\bar{x}	Ss	VK	KT	Sd	KO	F	p
Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills	Associate	5	11.60	1.82	In Group	24.391	3	8.130	1.776	.152
	Bachelor's Degree	199	13.82	2.19	Inter Group	1363.917	298	4.577		
	Master Degree	94	13.74	2.05	Total	1388.308	301			
	Doctorate	4	14.00	1.83						

When the information in Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills do not make a significant difference according to the graduation variable ($F_{(3-298)}=1.176;.152>.05$). Accordingly, it can be stated that whether elementary school teachers have an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree or doctorate degree has no effect on their speaking skill knowledge levels.

Table 8. One-Way analysis of variance findings regarding the differentiation of elementary school teachers' knowledge levels regarding speaking skills according to the professional experience variable

Rating Scale	Professional experience	n	\bar{x}	Ss	VK	KT	Sd	KO	F	p
Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills	1-5 Years	50	14.34	2.02	In Group	45.275	4	11.319	2.503	.042
	6-10 Years	85	14.09	1.81	Inter Group	1343.033	297	4.522		
	11-15 Years	61	13.48	2.30	Total	1388.308	301			
	16-20 Years	52	13.40	2.44	Source of Difference (LSD)					
	20 Years and More	54	13.39	2.17	1-5 Years >11-15 Years; 16-20 Years; 20 Years and more					

When the information in Table 8 is examined, it is seen that the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills create a significant difference according to the professional experience variable ($F_{(4-297)}=2.503;.042\leq.05$). Accordingly, the knowledge level of teachers with 1-5 years of professional experience regarding speaking skills is higher than teachers with 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 20 years and more professional experience.

Table 9. One-way analysis of variance findings regarding the differentiation of elementary school teachers' knowledge levels regarding speaking skills according to the variable of location of school

Rating Scale	Location of School	n	\bar{x}	Ss	VK	KT	Sd	KO	F	p
Knowledge Level Test on Speaking Skills	Village	58	13.6897	2.51457	In-Group	2.867	2	1.433	.309	.734
	Town	25	14.0800	1.84662	Inter Group	1385.441	299	4.634		
	City Center	219	13.7489	2.08004	Total	1388.308	301			

When the information in Table 9 is examined, it is seen that the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills do not differ significantly depending on the location of the school ($F_{(2-299)}=.309;.734>.05$). Accordingly, it can be said that the fact that elementary school teachers work in a village, town or city center does not have any effect on their speaking skill knowledge levels.

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to determine the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills. As a result of the literature review, it was found that there was no study on the speaking skill knowledge levels of elementary school teachers.

Some of the questions in the prepared scale were taken from the speaking skill gains in the 2019 Turkish Language Teaching Program. The other half consists of speaking skill information that elementary school teachers should know as a result of the literature review. Therefore, teachers are expected to answer all questions correctly. However, as a result of the statistical analysis, in the knowledge level test consisting of 18 questions to measure speaking skills, the teachers' arithmetic average regarding speaking skills was 13.74. This corresponds to a rate of 76.3%. While elementary school teachers, who are responsible for teaching and developing speaking skills, were expected to have a 100% success rate by correctly answering all questions in this achievement test, this rate was found to be 76.3%. The underlying reasons why teachers do not receive the expected score from this achievement test are that elementary school teachers did not receive training on speaking skills in their pre-service training, that they were not subjected to any exams on speaking skills before starting teaching, and that they did not attend seminars on speaking skills after starting their job. It may also be that they are young or have attended a limited number of seminars.

If the elementary school teachers' speaking skill knowledge levels are not at the expected level, this will directly affect the speaking skills of the students. Because for a teacher to fully help students acquire a skill, he or she must also have that skill properly. When relevant studies are examined, the general opinion is that teachers should be aware of the self-efficacy they need to have regarding speaking skills and do what is necessary in this direction (Demirkol & Aytas, 2023). Kurudayıoğlu (2013) stated that there should be a compulsory course called "Speaking Skills" for teachers to acquire the achievements in the curriculum.

In their study, Adem and Berkessa (2022) stated that the language skill that teachers see as the weakest in students is speaking skills and those students are pessimistic about learning to speak. Kemiksiz (2022) stated that teachers, in addition to being an example for students in speaking, are also responsible for providing students with basic knowledge and skills. The teacher who fulfills this responsibility must have sufficient knowledge of speaking skills. Deniz et al. (2019) stated that in the curriculum, achievements related to speaking skills are not included regularly and are chosen randomly, and no order is followed. Cömert (2017) stated that speaking skill gains are insufficient to reflect speaking behavior, and Leong and Ahmadi (2017) stated that speaking skill is an ignored skill. When these situations are added to the fact that teachers' knowledge of speaking skills is not at the expected level, unfortunately, it is normal for students to have low speaking skills. In his study with prospective teachers, Alan (2021) stated that the speaking self-efficacy perceptions of the prospective teachers were at a medium level rather than the expected level. Akkaya (2012) stated that the prospective teachers had various problems with their speaking skills. Akongoh (2021) stated that teachers are inadequate in measuring speaking skills and that they should receive pre-service or in-service training in this field. Oğuz (2009) examined the self-efficacy perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding their oral and written expression skills. In his study, pre-service teachers stated that they saw their oral communication skills as inadequate, and the reasons for this were that they spoke

without following the rules of speech and did not engage in speaking-related practices. [İşcan et al. \(2017\)](#) stated that teacher candidates found themselves more than adequate in speaking skills.

When the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills were examined according to the gender variable, no significant difference was found between genders. The knowledge levels of female teachers and male teachers regarding speaking skills were at similar levels. The reason may be due to the fact that the education received before starting the profession and the in-service training while practicing the profession is general for everyone, and no different training is given according to gender. [Baki \(2018\)](#), in his study examining the speaking self-efficacy of Turkish teacher candidates, and [Alan \(2021\)](#), in his study with teacher candidates, stated that gender did not have a significant effect on speaking skills. [Alptekin and Demir \(2022\)](#) in their study with students and [Balbağ and Yenilmez \(2019\)](#) in their study with Science and Primary Mathematics teacher candidates, concluded that the gender variable did not have a significant effect on speaking. Some studies do not show similar results to the research. [Hayran \(2020\)](#) and [Tunagür \(2021\)](#) concluded that gender has a significant effect on speaking skill self-efficacy perceptions and that female teachers' speaking skill self-efficacy perceptions are higher. [Ürün-Karahan \(2015\)](#), in their study examining the attitudes of Turkish teacher candidates towards speaking education, found a significant difference according to gender and stated that female teacher candidates' attitudes towards speaking were higher.

When the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills were examined according to the graduation variable, no significant difference was found between graduations. The fact that elementary school teachers graduated from associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral education programs did not cause a significant difference in their speaking skill knowledge levels. The reason may be due to the fact that the parts of the curriculum that the teachers graduated from are similar to speaking skills, or that they have not received any extra training on speaking skills. In their study by [Aydın and Uçgun \(2023\)](#), all of the Turkish teachers who participated in the study stated that their speaking skills should be evaluated. Only some of them stated that they carried out evaluation studies. It can be thought that the underlying reasons for this are due to their lack of knowledge of speaking skills or not knowing how to measure this skill.

When the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills were examined according to the professional experience variable, significant differences were detected between the elementary school teachers' knowledge levels of speaking skills according to their professional experience. Accordingly, the knowledge levels of teachers with 0-5 years of professional seniority were higher compared to those with 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21 years, and more of professional seniority.

It can be thought that the reason for this is that teachers who are new to the profession attach more importance to their professional development and want to improve themselves and that they have taken the oral interview exam before starting teaching. All teachers, regardless of their professional experience, need to be aware of the seriousness of the situation. In particular, elementary school teachers should follow the student's skill development in the classroom and prepare plans accordingly in order to instill that self-confidence in students ([Hatipoğlu, 2022](#)). In their study, [Adem and Berkessa \(2022\)](#) found that experienced teachers' optimism about speaking was higher. In their study, [Kaya and Bozkurt \(2019\)](#) stated that most teachers, regardless of their professional experience, felt inadequate in speaking skills, and this situation was related to the undergraduate period.

When the knowledge levels of elementary school teachers regarding speaking skills were examined according to the variable of the location of the school, it was concluded that the fact that elementary school teachers worked in villages, towns and city centers did not have a significant effect on their knowledge levels of speaking skills. However, some studies have stated that the physical environment and conditions are very effective in speaking skill training. [Tosun and Aydın \(2013\)](#) stated that a large number of students, unfavorable physical environment, audibility of the voice, its

resonance and similar factors have an impact on speaking skills. Assuming that the essence of the speech act is sound, it is obvious that physical and environmental factors have an impact on speaking skills (Çerçi, 2015). Factors such as whether the school is in a village, town, or city center, whether schools are properly equipped or not, and the number of lesson hours are also effective factors in improving the teacher's level of knowledge about speaking skills. Because if essential physical needs are not met, teachers will have to focus on different problems rather than educational problems (Arhan, 2007).

Generally speaking, there are studies in national and international studies literature aimed at improving students' speaking skills. This is due to students' shortcomings in this regard. Because there is a need for improvement in an area that is deemed deficient. Unfortunately, this situation is thought to be due to the fact that the people who will provide speaking skill training are not equipped at the expected level. This deficiency should be recognized as soon as possible and serious steps should be taken.

The following recommendations are made as a result of the study:

- Organizing practices and training which will increase teachers' knowledge of speaking skills,
- Devoting more time to speaking skills in schools,
- Organizing activities to increase teachers' knowledge levels in evaluating speaking skills,
- Including courses such as voice training, diction, and speaking training before their service at schools.

Ethics Committee Decision

This research was carried out with the permission of Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University Publication Ethics Board with the decision numbered 411154 dated 19.09.2023.

5. REFERENCES

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