# Speaking Skills Attitude Scale for Primary School Students: Validity and Reliability Study

**Emel Guvey Aktay**✉[1] **& Ferah Mermi**[2]

[1,2] Department of Elementary Education, Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Mugla, Turkey

✉ emelguveyaktay@mu.edu.tr

**Abstract.** The current study was conducted to develop a scale to measure students' speaking skills attitudes. This study is a scale of development study. The current research study group comprises 225 third and fourth-grade students attending primary schools in Mugla in the 2019-2020 school year. After conducting a literature review and interviews with primary school students, an item pool consisting of 106 items was created. KMO value was found to be .759. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 32-item scale, and a scale composed of 18 items gathered under three sub-dimensions was obtained. Cronbach Alpha test was found to be .78. Thus, it can be said that the scale developed to measure primary school students' attitudes towards speaking skills is a reliable and valid scale. In addition, it can be noted that this scale will provide convenience in measuring primary school students' attitudes towards speaking skills and in evaluating and interpreting students' attitudes.

**Keywords:** speaking skills, attitude, validity, reliability, primary school students

**INTRODUCTION** ~ Speaking as one of the four basic language skills is used all the times in life, regardless of variables such as status and age. Speaking is the most preferred and used skill in self-expression in daily life and business life (Ozden, 2018). When the time remaining after the time spent on sleeping has been subtracted is considered, 10% of it is spent by writing, 15% by reading, 30% by talking, and 45% by listening (Kline, 1996). Similarly, Güneş (2016) states that a person is in communication for an average of 12 hours during the day, and this time is distributed as five hours for listening, four hours for speaking, and the rest for reading and writing. Despite this, the language skill most used in Turkish lessons is reading, followed by writing, listening, and speaking skills (Ünsal, 2019). In this respect, speaking skill is the least addressed skill in Turkish lessons.

Speaking, which is a crucial element in someone's personal and social life, is an essential factor affecting the success or failure of individuals in their education and training processes and their professional and social lives (Yönez, 2012). Individuals who can use their memory correctly draw the attention of other individuals when they speak. Since these individuals use logical and regular sentences, listeners easily understand them (Avci, 2019). One of the factors that make up speech is the psychological factor. Individuals' approach to speaking is shaped by how

they are raised, their perspectives of events, and their self-confidence (İşcan et al., 2017). When schools are observed, it is seen that there is a student profile that refrains from speaking because of feelings such as embarrassment and fear, has a limited vocabulary, and has not advanced verbal expression skills (Kara, 2009).

For students to establish healthy communication in their lives, they need to learn speaking skills systematically. This process considers families and teachers as the essential elements that support and set an example for them (Bohner & Dickel, 2011). The interaction and reflection of the teacher with the students and the students with each other positively affect the students speaking skills, thus enabling them to be individuals who are tolerant of the thoughts of others (Triwidayati & Utami, 2019). Under environmental factors, students begin to feel positive and negative feelings towards speaking skills over time. Students reactions and attitudes towards speaking skills are the tendencies, feelings and thoughts, beliefs, prejudices, and perceptions of speaking skills. Attitude includes the ability of an individual to keep in mind anything abstract and mundane, including thoughts, groups, individuals, and objects (Bohner & Dickel, 2011). The aim of measuring attitude is to measure the stable structure underlying the responses. Therefore, the variables in the process should be understood from the responses given (Krosnick et al., 2005).

The speaking skill was not specified as an independent skill in mother tongue teaching programs in Turkey until 1968 (Demirezen, 2003), but only then has it been addressed as a separate skill. Despite this, it can be said that when the objectives in the 2019 Primary School Turkish Curriculum are considered, it is still not given the importance it deserves. With this study, it is believed that vital importance and attention will be given to speaking skills in the mother tongue teaching programs planned to be developed in the coming years and that it will fill the gap in the literature as there is a limited amount of attitude research on primary school students in the literature. Furthermore, it can be said that this scale will provide convenience in measuring primary school students' attitudes towards speaking skills and in evaluating and interpreting students' attitudes.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the existing research on attitudes towards speaking reviewed, this research focused on university students and attitudes towards speaking within the context of learning English as a foreign language. There have been very few studies on speaking attitudes and their measurements with primary school students, which stands as one of the reasons why the current research was conducted.

In the literature, there is one study investigating the speaking skill within the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language at the primary school level (Korkmaz & İnal, 2019), and there are few studies on student attitudes towards English as a foreign language (Atli, 2008; Kiziltan & Atli,

2013). When the studies conducted on middle school students are examined, there are studies investigating speaking attitudes and anxiety in Turkish lessons (Albahlal, 2019; Tekşan et al., 2019; Ünsal, 2019), speaking success together with speaking attitudes (Maden, 2010) and attitudes towards speaking in English (Oradee, 2013). Among the studies conducted on high school students, there are studies focused on speaking skills within the context of teaching English as a foreign language (Sevinç, 2020), investigating speaking attitude together with English speaking skills (Kılıç & Tuncel, 2009; Pesen, 2016) and speaking attitude together with speaking anxiety (Kozikoğlu & Kanat, 2018).

There are many studies focused on the speaking skill of university students. Some studies investigated only the speaking attitude (Başaran et al., 2009; Eyüp, 2013; Koc, 2018; Temizkan, 2010; Ürün Karahan, 2015; Yangil & Topçuoğlu Ünal, 2019). In addition, there are studies investigating speaking attitude through speaking activities (Aydeniz, n.d.; İşcan et al., 2017; Koc, 2018; Temizkan, 2010; Yalçin & Genç, 2013). Some other studies examined the speaking attitude using speaking activities within the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language (Avci, 2019) and teaching English as a foreign language (Ali et al., 2019; Aykaç, n.d.; Janudom & Wasanasomsithi, 2009; Kavaliauskienė, 2013; M. Al-Tamimi & Attamimi, 2014; Othman & El-Hallim, 2018; Sarıçoban, 2000). In addition, there are some studies investigating speaking attitude, anxiety, and skill together within the context of teaching English as a foreign language (Karagöl & Başbay, 2018; Lu et al., 2019; Taskin Aycicek, 2009; Yaman, 2014) and the methods used by instructors to evaluate English speaking skill (Çalışkan, 2013; Önem, 2015; Yastibas & Cepik, 2015). As a result of the literature review, there are various studies investigating speaking anxiety, attitude, and other factors from students at different levels of schooling, and the studies have been conducted to improve speaking skills by using other methods and techniques. This research is essential because it is the first scale study on the speaking attitudes of primary school students who speak their mother tongue in Turkey.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study is a scale of development study. The research aims at developing a scale regarding the speaking skills attitude for primary school students. This study covers creating scale items, preliminary applications, and factor analysis.

### Study Group

The current research comprises 227 third and fourth-grade students attending primary schools in Mugla in the 2019-2020 school year. In the sample size, more than 200 participants are considered acceptable (Comrey & Lee, 2013). The third-grade students consisted of 42 female students and 57 male students. The fourth-grade students consisted of 71 female students and

57 male students. Attention was paid to select the participants from among the students attending different schools having different socio-economic conditions.

**Data Collection Tools**

The speaking skills attitude scale for primary school students was developed via the following stages:

- Development of scale items
- Preliminary application
- Factor analysis
- Reliability calculation Study Group

**Development of Scale Items**

After collecting the literature review, studies on speaking were examined to create the scale items, and written interviews were conducted with 11 students and face-to-face interviews with three students in the fourth grade of primary school using an interview form containing 12 open-ended questions to determine the speaking attitudes of the students. Another data collection form, containing five open-ended questions, was administered to two primary school teachers, a Turkish teacher, a music teacher, and a technology design teacher, assuming that they had the opportunity to observe students' speaking skills closely.

In this way, many items related to speaking skills attitude were determined, and items representing the dimensions of belief, behavior, and perception that constitute the attitudes were created. While creating the items, attention was paid to positive and negative expressions, and simple and understandable items were created (Tavsancil, 2005, as cited in Çokluk et al., 2016). It was ensured that primary school children understood the items consisting of sentences. The items in the scale can be responded with one of the following response options: "Never" (1), "Sometimes" (2), "Always" (3). 106 items were created with the data obtained from the literature review student and teacher data collection forms.

Within the context of content validity, corrections and reductions were made on the items by using the opinions of one field expert and five experts in the field of Psychological Counselling and Guidance and Turkish Education. Through the changes made, the number of items in the draft scale was reduced to 34. The final scale was administered to 4 students in the third and fourth grades and was checked for comprehensibility of the language used. For the comprehensibility of the items, the items were interpreted and evaluated aloud together with the students.

**Preliminary Application**

The 32-item draft scale was administered to 227 participants. There were 225 students included in the analysis due to incomplete answers from two students participating in the study. Afterward, factor analysis was carried out with the data.

**Factor Analysis**

After making the necessary arrangements for the missing data and reverse-coded items in the data set loaded into the statistical data analysis program, the suitability of the collected data was checked with the KMO and Bartlett's Sphericity test. The factor analysis was made by using the Principal Component Analysis technique. The items in the resulting "common variance table" were examined, the "explained total variance table" was checked, the "scree plot graph" was examined, and the factor number was decided (Çokluk et al., 2016). Finally, the Varimax Vertical Rotation technique was applied to determine the ideal factor structure.

**Reliability Calculation**

Finally, the item-total test score correlation of the items and the Cronbach's alpha value were calculated to test the scale reliability. The value above 0.70 is considered adequate for the reliability test (Büyüköztürk, 2010). The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated to be .78.

**RESULTS**

After making the necessary arrangements for the missing data and reverse-coded items in the data set loaded into the statistical data analysis program, the suitability of the collected data was checked with the KMO and Bartlett's Sphericity test. The corresponding values are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** KMO and Bartlett's Test

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | |
|---|---|
| KMO | 0.759 |
| Bartlett Test | 1420.706 |
| Sd | 496 |
| p | 0.00 |

Field (2005) emphasizes that the lower limit for KMO should be 0.50. In this study, the Barlett test was significant ($p<0.05$), and the KMO value was bigger than 0.50 (KMO=.759). This shows that the sample is sufficient to meet the multiple normality assumption. The factor analysis was conducted by using the Principal Component Analysis technique. The items in the resulting "common variance table" were examined, the "explained total variance table" was checked, the "scree plot graph" was examined, and the factor number was decided (Çokluk et al.,

2016). Accordingly, in the data set consisting of 32 items, ten dimensions before the rotation explained 59.102% of the total variance (Figure 1).

### Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 5.268 | 16.462 | 16.462 | 5.268 | 16.462 | 16.462 |
| 2 | 3.219 | 10.060 | 26.522 | 3.219 | 10.060 | 26.522 |
| 3 | 1.759 | 5.497 | 32.019 | 1.759 | 5.497 | 32.019 |
| 4 | 1.492 | 4.663 | 36.682 | 1.492 | 4.663 | 36.682 |
| 5 | 1.438 | 4.494 | 41.176 | 1.438 | 4.494 | 41.176 |
| 6 | 1.280 | 4.001 | 45.177 | 1.280 | 4.001 | 45.177 |
| 7 | 1.190 | 3.720 | 48.897 | 1.190 | 3.720 | 48.897 |
| 8 | 1.161 | 3.628 | 52.526 | 1.161 | 3.628 | 52.526 |
| 9 | 1.092 | 3.411 | 55.937 | 1.092 | 3.411 | 55.937 |
| 10 | 1.013 | 3.165 | 59.102 | 1.013 | 3.165 | 59.102 |
| 11 | .996 | 3.111 | 62.214 | | | |
| 12 | .932 | 2.913 | 65.127 | | | |
| 13 | .884 | 2.764 | 67.891 | | | |
| 14 | .834 | 2.607 | 70.498 | | | |
| 15 | .797 | 2.490 | 72.988 | | | |
| 16 | .765 | 2.390 | 75.378 | | | |
| 17 | .756 | 2.362 | 77.740 | | | |
| 18 | .682 | 2.131 | 79.871 | | | |
| 19 | .658 | 2.056 | 81.927 | | | |
| 20 | .636 | 1.986 | 83.913 | | | |
| 21 | .594 | 1.856 | 85.769 | | | |
| 22 | .575 | 1.797 | 87.566 | | | |
| 23 | .538 | 1.681 | 89.247 | | | |
| 24 | .501 | 1.564 | 90.812 | | | |
| 25 | .458 | 1.431 | 92.243 | | | |
| 26 | .446 | 1.392 | 93.635 | | | |
| 27 | .412 | 1.287 | 94.922 | | | |
| 28 | .371 | 1.159 | 96.081 | | | |
| 29 | .347 | 1.085 | 97.166 | | | |
| 30 | .335 | 1.046 | 98.212 | | | |
| 31 | .310 | .969 | 99.181 | | | |
| 32 | .262 | .819 | 100.000 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Figure 1.** Explained Variance

To determine the factors, the Scree Plot was examined. The Varimax Vertical Rotation technique was applied to determine the ideal factor structure. The Scree Plot is presented in Figure 2.
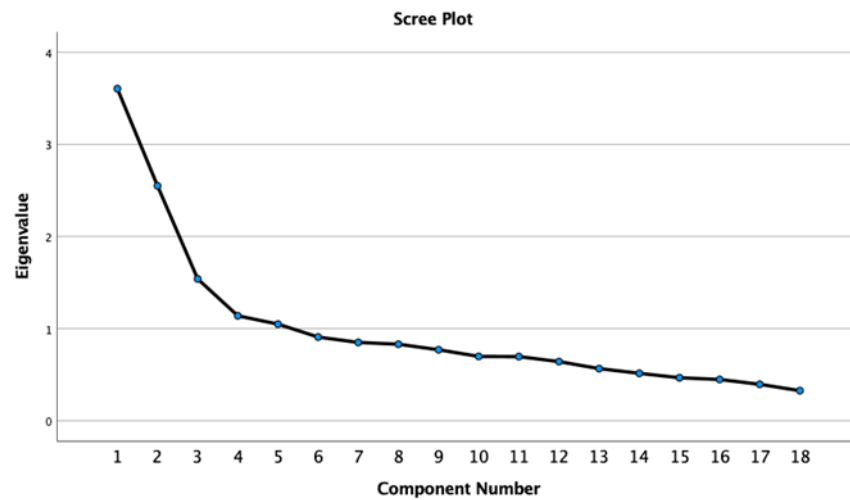
**Figure 2.** Screen Plot

By considering the breaks in the plot and the literature, it was decided to collect the scale structure in three factors. After the analysis, the items with the lowest item loading values were discarded, and then the analysis was repeated. The factor analysis was completed after the items with low item loading values and the cross-loading items were removed. A total of 14 items were removed (1, 4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 28, 31) and the scale was divided into three factors. The analysis was repeated for the remaining 18 items on the scale. Büyüköztürk (2009) states that .45 or higher item loading values are a good criterion for selecting items. Yin (2017) suggests that sample sizes should be considered when deciding whether to keep an item on the scale. Accordingly, when the sample size is at least 120, items with a factor loading of .50 or higher can be evaluated (Sencan, 2005, as cited in Çokluk et al., 2016). The item factor loadings in the scale vary between .509 and .780.

When the factor loadings after rotation were examined, it was found that seven items (10, 19, 20, 25, 27, 30, 32) were loaded on the first factor, eight items (2, 3, 6, 9, 23, 26, 29) were loaded on the second factor and three items (5, 7, 12) were loaded on the third factor. According to Scherer et al. (1988), it is considered sufficient for the variance explained in social sciences to be between 40% and 60% (Tavsancil, 2005, as cited in Çokluk et al., 2016). The total variance explained by the scale with the items collected under three factors was determined to be 42.757%. The first factor explains 20.31% of the total variance, indicating "speaking behavior", considering the literature. The second one explains 14.17%, indicating "speaking anxiety". The third explains 8.56%, indicating "speaking perception".

**DISCUSSION**

This scale created to evaluate students' attitudes towards speaking skills is important in that it is the first study to measure the mentioned attitudes. During the preparation of the scale, a literature review was conducted and other studies on speaking skills were examined. In

addition, the data on speaking skills attitudes were collected from 14 primary school students with a form consisting of open-ended questions. With the assumption that they observed students speaking, the opinions of five teachers working in different branches were obtained through a form consisting of five open-ended questions.

In line with the feedback from the experts and students, the 106-item pool was reduced to 32 items, and they were administered to 225 primary school students. The data obtained from the scale were loaded into the statistical data analysis program. After making the necessary arrangements for the missing data and reverse-coded items in the data set, the suitability of the collected data for factor analysis was checked with the KMO and the KMO value was found to be .759. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the scale, which was determined to be sufficient to meet the normality assumption. After the analysis, a three-point Likert type scale with 18 items and three sub-dimensions was obtained. The reliability coefficient was found to be .78.

In the literature, it is found that students studying in secondary and higher education have been used as the study group in studies on speaking skills and on developing measurement tools on speaking skills. Rees et al. (2002) developed a measurement tool to evaluate the attitudes of medical students towards communication skills in their study with 490 medical students. The reliability coefficient of the scale was determined to be .81. This developed scale was re-used in the study by Ullah et al. (2012). In the study aimed at evaluating the attitudes of 35 Malaysian medical students towards communication skills and to confirm the validity and reliability of the scale, it was found that the reliability coefficient of the positive attitude items was found to be .88, and the reliability coefficient of the negative attitude items was found to be .75.

Aydin (2013) developed a measurement tool to evaluate the speaking skill self-efficacy of 503 pre-service teachers. The scale consisted of 46 items and four sub-dimensions, and Cronbach's alpha value was .95. In another study, with a similar sample (342 students receiving formation training), Yıldız & Yavuz (2012) developed a scale of 24 items and five sub-dimensions. The reliability coefficient value was .92. Sevim (2012) developed a measurement tool to evaluate the speaking anxiety of pre-service teachers with the participation of 338 pre-service teachers. The scale consisted of three sub-dimensions and 20 items. The reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .91.

A measurement tool was developed to evaluate students attitudes towards speaking skills in the study conducted with students studying at secondary school (Topçuoğlu Ünal & Özer, 2017). It was found that the reliability coefficient of the scale, which consisted of two sub-dimensions and 27 items, was .81.

## CONCLUSION

As a result, when the existing research is examined, it can be said that the scale studies related to speaking are also discussed under the name of communication skills. The lack of a speaking attitude scale in Turkey for primary school children, considered a separate language skill such as reading or writing, constituted the reason for this study. It is predicted that the scale, which is valid and reliable, will be a helpful resource in determining and interpreting the speaking skills attitudes of primary school students.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Appendix 1. Speaking Skills Attitude Scale for Primary School Students*

| No | Evaluate yourself in terms of the following characteristics. | Never | Sometimes | Always |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | Speaking is a good way to express my thoughts. | | | |
| 2 | While speaking, I pay attention to correct pronunciation of the words correctly. | | | |
| 3 | I take care to use my tone of voice well while speaking. | | | |
| 4 | I take care to use correct stress while speaking. | | | |
| 5 | I feel comfortable while speaking about a topic in class. | | | |
| 6 | I take care to raise my hand to speak in class. | | | |
| 7 | I believe that I speak accurately. | | | |
| 8 | I am afraid of making mistakes while speaking. | | | |
| 9 | I feel ashamed while speaking. | | | |
| 10 | I get excited when I start speaking. | | | |
| 11 | I feel hesitant about speaking to other people. | | | |
| 12 | I'm afraid of my voice trembling while speaking. | | | |
| 13 | I'm afraid my friends will make fun of me while speaking. | | | |
| 14 | I am ashamed to speak in public. | | | |
| 15 | I am afraid of being asked sudden questions while speaking. | | | |
| 16 | I enjoy speaking. | | | |
| 17 | I find speaking boring. | | | |
| 18 | I find speaking enjoyable. | | | |

*Appendix 2. Speaking Skills Attitude Scale for Primary School Students (in Original Language):*

*İlkokul Öğrencilerine Yönelik Konuşma Becerisi Tutum Ölçeği*

| No | Kendinizi aşağıda yer alan özellikler açısından değerlendiriniz. | Hiçbir zaman | Bazen | Her zaman |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------|-----------|
| 1 | Konuşmak düşüncelerimi ifade etmenin iyi bir yoludur. | | | |
| 2 | Konuşurken kelimeleri doğru seslendirmeye dikkat ederim. | | | |
| 3 | Konuşurken ses tonumu iyi kullanmaya özen gösteririm. | | | |
| 4 | Konuşmada doğru vurgulamalar yapmaya dikkat ederim. | | | |

| 5 | Sınıfta bir konuyu anlatırken kendimi rahat hissederim. |
|---|---|
| 6 | Sınıfta konuşmak için parmak kaldırıp söz almaya dikkat ederim. |
| 7 | Konuşmamın düzgün olduğuna inanırım. |
| 8 | Konuşurken hata yapmaktan çekinirim. |
| 9 | Konuşurken utanırım. |
| 10 | Konuşmaya başlarken heyecanlanırım. |
| 11 | İnsanlarla konuşmaktan çekinirim. |
| 12 | Konuşurken sesimin titremesinden çekinirim. |
| 13 | Konuşurken arkadaşlarımın benimle alay edeceğinden korkarım. |
| 14 | Topluluk karşısında konuşmaktan utanırım. |
| 15 | Konuşurken bana aniden soru sorulmasından korkarım. |
| 16 | Konuşmaktan hoşlanırım. |
| 17 | Konuşmak sıkıcıdır. |
| 18 | Konuşmak eğlencelidir. |