

An Investigation of the Speech Skills of Children Living in Rural and Urban Areas[¶]

Abdulkerim Arıkan,¹ Mustafa Onur Kan²

- 1 Ministry of National Education, Turkey
- 2 Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Antakya, Turkey

Abstract: Communication is vital for children's development, especially in differentiating rural and urban speech skills. The aim of this study is to investigate the speech skills of children living in rural and urban areas. The speech skills of 72 students attending the 8th grade in rural and urban areas of Iskenderun in the 2020-2021 academic year were examined. In the study designed with the screening model, the data were collected with a structured observation form. The video recordings of the speeches made by the students on the topic of "human and nature" according to their levels were taken and evaluated according to the "Speech Evaluation Form". The results of the present research revealed that the highest average scores of the students belonged to the sub-dimensions of applying the external structural elements of the language, applying the internal structural elements of the language and the psychological state of the speaker. In addition, it was determined that the students' speech skills were at a moderate level, whereas their ability to briefly introduce the parts of the speech, to start the topic with interesting expressions, to use appropriate tools such as pictures, graphs and photographs that can make the speech interesting, to use proverbs, idioms and aphorisms suitable for the topic, to benefit from literary devices suitable for the topic and to summarize the speech were very low. Urban students demonstrated comparatively stronger speech skills, highlighting the value of targeted improvements in communication education.

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About the Authors: *Abdulkerim Arikan, M.A., Primary School, Ministry of National Education, Turkey, E-mail: abdulkerimarikan.4731@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://0000-0002-0782-6783>*

Mustafa Onur Kan, Assoc. Prof., Ph.D., Department of Primary Education Hatay Faculty of Education, Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Antakya, Turkey, E-mail: mokan@mku.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8319-0791>

Correspondence to: *Mustafa Onur Kan at Hatay Mustafa Kemal University of Turkey.*

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Introduction

SPEECH skill, which enables people to convey their emotions, thoughts and desires to those in their social environment in a correct and effective way, is very important for individuals to establish connection with the external world, and for their cognitive and affective development. Speech skill emerges as a result of individuals' cognitive maturity, personality development and social relations (Sever, 2000). In this process, socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the environment can affect speech skills of individuals.

Environment, which is one of the basic factors that affect the development process, can enable individuals to improve their innate skills. Human beings develop an identity in accordance with the environmental conditions created by the individuals in the environment where they are born and raised, with their innate temperament and characteristic features, and continue their lives in accordance with this identity (Öztürk, 2017). Environmental conditions also affect the development process of individuals' speech skills, and it is stated in the studies in the literature that environmental differences have an effect on the speech skills of individuals (Uysal, 2014; Uzunyol, 2019; Ünsal, 2019). In rural and urban areas with varying structures in terms of conditions such as sociocultural and economic characteristics, technology, education, health, etc., the opportunities for accessing and benefiting from educational and sociocultural resources may differ (Deniz, 2000: 23).

In the literature, there are studies (Sağlam & Doğan, 2013; Yıldız, 2014; Yeğen & Topçuoğlu Ünal, 2015; Başar et al., 2015; Ünsal, 2019; Uzunyol, 2019) that examine the speech skills of students at different levels of education. However, very few studies (E.g. Sargin, 2006) have investigated students' speech skills have been examined according to the environment they live in. It is thought that the present study will contribute to the speech skill studies in the literature.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the speech skills of children living in rural and urban areas.

METHOD

Research Model

This research, which examines the speaking skills of children living in rural and urban areas, was designed in the screening model. The screening model is a research approach that aims to reflect, describe the events, facts or situations that occurred in the past or present as they are, without any change (Büyük öztürk et al., 2020: 243-244).

Working Group

The study group consisted of 72 students attending the 8th grade in rural and urban areas in İskenderun district of Hatay province in the 2020-2021 academic year. Of the students participating in the study, 38 are girls and 34 are boys.

Data Collection Tool

In the research, the “Speaking Evaluation Form” developed by Sargin (2006) as a structured observation form was used to collect the data. The observation form consists of three parts: speaking order, language awareness (knowledge and language use skill) and speaker’s psychological state. In the speaking order part, students’ speeches are evaluated under five sub-headings: starting the speech (3 observation items), introduction part of the speech (3 observation items), development part of the speech (11 observation items), conclusion part of the speech (4 observation items) and ending the speech (2 observation items). In the language awareness (knowledge and language use skill) part, there are two sub-headings: ability to apply the external structural elements of the language (12 observation items) and ability to apply the internal structural elements of the language (10 observation items). In the speaker’s psychological state part, there are a total of 6 observation items.

Data Collection

In the research, the students were asked to express their opinions and knowledge on the topic of “human and nature”, which was decided to be suitable for the student levels by benefiting from the opinions of two faculty members who are experts in the field of Turkish education. The students were informed about the topic they would be speaking on. They were then asked to speak on the topic of “human and nature” in the classroom environment the next day at the specified time. The students were given information that their speeches would be recorded with a camera. At the specified dates and times, each student’s speeches on the subject were listened to in their own classroom environments and the process was recorded with a camera.

Data Analysis

In the research, the video recordings of the students’ speeches on the topic of “human and nature” were evaluated according to the observation status of the items in the structured observation form. The speeches of the students participating in the research were handled as not observed at all (1), not ob-

served (2), partially observed (3), observed (4) and fully observed (5) within the framework of the items in the observation form. Descriptive analysis technique was used in the analysis of the obtained data.

Results

In this section, findings related to speaking order, language awareness (knowledge and language use skill) and speakers' psychological state are presented.

Findings on Speaking Order

The findings related to the “starting the speech” of the students participating in the research are presented in **Table 1**.

As indicated in **Table 1**, it was observed that of the students living in rural areas, 60.6% started their speech with an appropriate address style; 36.3% did not present the title related to the speech topic, and 51.5% briefly introduced the speech parts. It was determined that 64.1% of the students living in urban areas started their speech with an appropriate address style; 33.3% did not present the title related to the speech topic, and 46.2% briefly introduced the speech parts.

According to **Table 2**, it was determined that 87.9% of the students living in rural areas formed the introduction part of their speeches; 81.9% did not start their speeches with interesting expressions (proverb, poem description, memory, etc.); 69.7% presented the introduction part in a normal length. On the other hand, 89.7% of the students living in urban areas formed the introduction part of their speeches; 82.1% did not start their speeches with interesting expressions (proverb, poem description, memory, etc.); 92.3% presented the introduction part in a normal length.

The findings on the development part of the speech are given in **Table 3**:

When **Table 3** is examined, it is seen that a large portion of the students in both rural and urban areas did not use appropriate tools (pictures, graphs, photos, posters, etc.) to make the speech interesting. Moreover, they did not use proverbs, idioms and aphorisms suitable for the topic; they did not tell stories, tales and jokes etc. relevant to the topic and they did not benefit from literary devices. On the other side, the skills of giving examples from daily life related to the topic, bringing the topic up to date, having emotional and intellectual richness related to the topic, supporting the main idea with auxiliary ideas and reflecting the main idea were found to be higher than other skills.

As revealed by **Table 4**, of the students living in rural areas, 87.9% formed the conclusion part of their speeches; 78.8% created conclusion

Table 1. Findings Related to Starting the Speech.

Starting a Conversation	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she start the conversation with the appropriate style of address?	Rural	33	24.2	3.0	12.1	18.2	42.4
	Urban	39	17.9	10.3	7.7	20.5	43.6
	Total	72	20.8	6.9	9.7	19.4	43.1
Does he/she present the title of the speech topic?	Rural	33	18.2	12.1	6.1	36.4	27.3
	Urban	39	17.9	15.4	5.1	28.2	33.3
	Total	72	18.1	13.9	5.6	31.9	30.6
Does he/she briefly introduce the parts of the subject?	Rural	33	24.2	27.3	15.2	12.1	21.2
	Urban	39	41.0	12.8	7.7	5.1	33.3
	Total	72	33.3	19.4	11.1	8.3	27.8

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 2. Findings on the Introduction Part of the Speech.

Starting a Conversation	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Is there an introduction part in the speech?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	21.2	66.7
	Urban	39	2.6	0.0	7.7	17.9	71.8
	Total	72	1.4	1.4	8.3	19.4	69.4
Does he/she introduce the speech with interesting expressions (proverbs, poems, descriptions, memories, etc.)?	Rural	33	66.7	15.2	9.1	3.0	6.1
	Urban	39	46.2	35.9	7.7	2.6	7.7
	Total	72	55.6	26.4	8.3	2.8	6.9
Does he/she present the introduction in a normal length?	Rural	33	0.0	9.1	21.2	36.4	33.3
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	7.7	38.5	53.8
	Total	72	0.0	4.2	13.9	37.5	44.4

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

statements consistent with the main idea of the speech; 81.9% did not utilize literary products such as poems, proverbs, aphorisms, etc. in the conclusion part; 48.5% ended their speeches with an impressive expression. It was determined that all of the students living in urban areas formed the conclusion part of their speeches; 87.2% created conclusion statements that were consistent with the main idea of the speech; 56.4% of them did not use literary products such as poems, proverbs, aphorisms, etc. in the conclusion part and 60.3% ended their speech with an impressive expression.

Table 3. Findings on the Development Part of the Speech.

Development Part of the Speech	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she use appropriate tools (pictures, graphics, photographs, posters, etc.) to make the speech interesting?	Rural	33	78.8	21.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Urban	39	79.5	20.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	72	79.2	20.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Does he/she use proverbs, idioms and aphorisms appropriate to the subject?	Rural	33	78.8	6.1	9.1	0.0	6.1
	Urban	39	59.0	17.9	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Total	72	68.1	12.5	8.3	4.2	6.9
Does he/she tell stories, tales, jokes, etc. appropriate to the subject?	Rural	33	63.6	12.1	15.2	6.1	3.0
	Urban	39	38.5	41.0	15.4	2.6	2.6
	Total	72	50.0	27.8	15.3	4.2	2.8
Does he/she give examples from daily life on the subject?	Rural	33	3.0	0.0	3.0	39.4	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.9	64.1
	Total	72	1.4	0.0	1.4	37.5	59.7
Can he/she bring the topic up to date?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	45.5	42.4
	Urban	39	0.0	7.7	2.6	30.8	59.0
	Total	72	0.0	5.6	5.6	37.5	51.4
Does he/she make use of verbal arts appropriate to the subject (personification, metaphor etc.)?	Rural	33	69.7	15.2	6.1	3.0	6.1
	Urban	39	41.0	25.6	0.0	15.4	17.9
	Total	72	54.2	20.8	2.8	9.7	12.5
When he/she speaks, does he/she make intermediate addresses to the listeners?	Rural	33	27.3	45.5	3.0	12.1	12.1
	Urban	39	35.9	35.9	7.7	5.1	15.4
	Total	72	31.9	40.3	5.6	8.3	13.9
Does he/she go off the subject when speaking?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	48.5	39.4
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	56.4	41.0
	Total	72	1.4	0.0	5.6	40.3	52.8
Is there a richness of feeling and thought on the subject?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	24.2	24.2	51.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	15.4	28.2	56.4
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	9.4	26.4	54.2
Does he/she support the main idea with auxiliary ideas?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	18.2	33.3	45.5
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	41.0	56.4
	Total	72	0.0	1.4	9.7	37.5	51.4
Does he/she reflect the main idea?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	6.1	30.3	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.2	71.8
	Total	72	0.0	1.4	2.8	29.2	66.7

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 4. Findings Related to the Conclusion Part of the Speech.

Conclusion Part of the Speech	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Is there a conclusion part in the speech?	Rural	33	3.0	3.0	6.1	45.5	42.4
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.2	53.8
	Total	72	1.4	1.4	2.8	45.8	48.6
Do the concluding statements correspond to the main idea?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	21.2	42.4	36.4
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	12.8	38.5	48.7
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	16.7	40.3	43.1
Does he/she use poems, proverbs, aphorisms, etc. literary devices?	Rural	33	66.7	15.2	12.1	3.0	3.0
	Urban	39	35.9	20.5	15.4	23.1	5.1
	Total	72	50.0	18.1	13.9	13.9	4.2
Does he/she end the speech with an impressive expression?	Rural	33	24.2	12.1	15.2	3.0	45.5
	Urban	39	17.9	7.7	5.1	10.3	59.0
	Total	72	20.8	9.7	9.7	6.9	52.8

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 5. Findings on the Way the Students Ended Their Speech.

The Way He Finished the Speech	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she summarize the speech?	Rural	33	48.5	18.2	9.1	24.2	0.0
	Urban	39	28.2	20.5	15.4	28.2	7.7
	Total	72	37.5	19.4	12.5	26.4	4.2
Does he/she end the conversation with sentences containing expressions of courtesy?	Rural	33	15.2	18.2	0.0	21.2	45.5
	Urban	39	7.7	25.6	2.6	10.3	53.8
	Total	72	11.1	22.2	1.4	15.3	50.0

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 6. Findings on the Ability to Apply the External Structural Elements of the Language.

To be Able to Apply the External Structural Elements of Language	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Can he/she make sounds correctly?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	18.2	18.2	63.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	12.8	84.6
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	9.7	15.3	75.0
Does he/she prolong the sounds unnecessarily?	Rural	33	3.0	3.0	51.5	30.3	12.1
	Urban	39	2.6	0.0	38.5	43.6	15.4
	Total	72	2.8	1.4	44.4	37.5	13.9
Does he/she swallow sounds in words during speech?	Rural	33	3.0	6.1	42.4	15.2	33.3
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	23.1	28.2	46.2
	Total	72	1.4	4.2	31.9	22.2	40.3
Is he/she able to make connected speech where necessary to ensure fluency?	Rural	33	39.4	30.3	3.0	9.1	18.2
	Urban	39	23.1	15.4	2.6	30.8	28.2
	Total	72	30.6	22.2	2.8	20.8	2.6
Does he/she repeat words or sentences?	Rural	33	6.1	6.1	48.5	21.2	18.2
	Urban	39	2.6	2.6	28.2	41.0	25.6
	Total	72	4.2	4.2	37.5	31.9	22.2
Does he/she always use inverted sentences?	Rural	33	3.0	6.1	6.1	33.3	51.5
	Urban	39	0.0	15.4	5.1	28.2	51.3
	Total	72	1.4	11.1	5.6	30.6	51.4
Does he/she speak by heart?	Rural	33	3.0	21.2	9.1	45.5	21.2
	Urban	39	2.6	20.5	15.4	20.5	41.0
	Total	72	2.8	20.8	12.5	31.9	31.9
Can he/she speak standard Turkish?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	27.3	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	17.9	5.1	74.4
	Total	72	0.0	2.8	13.9	15.3	68.1
Does he/she make unnecessary sounds (eeee, ııı, ııııı, etc.) that disrupt the flow of speech?	Rural	33	0.0	6.1	42.4	42.4	9.1
	Urban	39	0.0	7.7	17.9	46.2	28.2
	Total	72	0.0	6.9	29.2	44.4	19.4
Can he/she adjust his/her speaking speed in a way that the listeners can understand?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	15.2	30.3	51.5
	Urban	39	2.6	0.0	2.6	28.2	66.7
	Total	72	1.4	1.4	8.3	29.2	59.7
Does he/she speak loud enough for the listeners to hear him/her?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	3.0	39.4	57.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	7.7	28.2	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	5.6	33.3	61.1
Does he/she speak naturally?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	12.1	27.3	57.6
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	12.8	12.8	71.8
	Total	72	0.0	2.8	12.5	19.4	65.3

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 5 illustrates the findings on how the students ended their speech:

It is seen in **Table 5** that 66.7% of the students living in rural areas summarized their speeches; 66.7% ended their speech with sentences that included courtesy expressions. It was also found that 48.7% of the students living in urban areas summarized their speeches; 64.1% ended their speeches with sentences that included courtesy expressions.

Findings on Language Awareness (Knowledge and Language Use Skill)

The findings on the ability of the students participating in the research to apply the external structural elements of the language are presented in **Table 6**.

As can be seen in **Table 6** 97.0% of the students living in rural areas could speak with a tone of voice that the listeners could hear, 87.9% could speak with standard Turkish, 84.9% could deliver natural speech, 84.8% did not constantly make inverted sentences, 81.8% could pronounce the sounds correctly, 81.8% could adjust the speech speed in a way that the listeners could understand, 69.7% could not make liaison and pause at the necessary places to ensure fluency and 66.7% did not speak by heart.

Considering the students living in rural areas, 97.4% could pronounce the sounds correctly, 94.9% could adjust the speech speed in a way that the listeners could understand, 92.3% could speak with a tone of voice that the listeners could hear, 84.7% could speak naturally, 79.5% did not constantly make inverted sentences, 79.5% could speak with standard Turkish, 74.4% swallowed the sounds in the words during the speech and 74.4% did not make unnecessary sounds (eeee, uuu, uuuuu etc.) that disrupted the speech flow.

The findings on the ability of the students to apply the internal structural elements of the language are given in **Table 7**.

Table 7 reveals that among the students attending school in rural areas, 84.8% could wrap up the sentence together, 78.7% could form meaningful sentences, 72.7% could establish semantic relationships between sentences, 69.7% could establish semantic relationships between words, 66.7% had harmony between speech language and body language, 66.6% could direct the phonetic flow related to the emotion and thought in the words within the framework of language awareness and 63.7% did not make unnecessary pauses.

Regarding the students attending school in urban areas, the findings indicate that 97.4% could form meaningful sentences, 84.6% could establish semantic relationships between words, 82.1% had harmony between speech language and body language, 82.0% could establish semantic relationships between sentences, 66.7% could direct the phonetic flow related to the emotion and thought in the words within the framework of language awareness,

Table 7. Findings on the Ability to Apply the Internal Structural Elements of the Language.

To be Able to Apply The Internal Structural Elements of Language	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Can he/she establish a meaning relationship between words?	Rural	33	0.0	6.1	24.2	12.1	57.6
	Urban	39	0.0	15.4	0.0	17.9	66.7
	Total	72	0.0	11.1	11.1	15.3	62.5
Does he use unnecessary words?	Rural	33	0.0	12.1	33.3	39.4	15.2
	Urban	39	0.0	5.1	33.3	30.8	30.8
	Total	72	0.0	8.3	33.3	34.7	23.6
Can he/she form meaningful sentences?	Rural	33	3.0	0.0	18.2	24.2	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	0.0	28.2	69.2
	Total	72	1.4	0.4	8.3	26.4	62.5
Can he/she establish the semantic relationship between sentences?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	24.2	18.2	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	15.4	17.9	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	2.8	19.4	18.1	59.7
Can he put a sentence together?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	15.2	24.2	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	33.3	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	8.3	29.2	62.5
Can he/she emphasize the words whose meaning he/she wants to convey?	Rural	33	9.1	30.3	9.1	3.0	48.5
	Urban	39	2.6	25.6	7.7	2.6	61.5
	Total	72	5.6	27.8	8.3	2.8	55.6
Can he/she direct the phonetic flow of emotions and thoughts in words within the framework of language awareness?	Rural	33	6.1	6.1	21.2	12.1	54.5
	Urban	39	5.1	17.9	10.3	10.3	56.4
	Total	72	5.6	12.5	15.3	11.1	55.6
Does he/she pause at the appropriate places to emphasize the meaning of words and word groups?	Rural	33	15.2	36.4	3.0	9.1	36.4
	Urban	39	0.0	51.3	0.0	7.7	41.0
	Total	72	6.9	44.4	1.4	8.3	38.9
Does he/she make unnecessary pauses?	Rural	33	3.0	3.0	30.3	45.5	18.2
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	30.8	28.2	38.5
	Total	72	1.4	2.8	30.6	36.1	29.2
Is there harmony between spoken language and body language?	Rural	33	3.0	9.1	21.2	18.2	48.5
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	15.4	23.1	59.0
	Total	72	1.4	5.6	18.1	20.8	54.2

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 8. Findings on the Psychological State of the Speaker.

Psychological Status of the Speaker	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she express self-confidence with his/her posture?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	18.2	21.2	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	7.7	28.2	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	62.5
Does he/she display sympathetic behavior?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	15.2	27.3	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	12.2	26.2	61.6
	Total	72	0.0	1.4	11.1	27.8	59.7
Does he/she make eye contact with the listeners?	Rural	33	15.2	15.2	15.2	6.1	48.5
	Urban	39	7.7	10.3	25.6	0.0	56.4
	Total	72	11.1	12.5	20.8	2.8	52.8
Is he/she affected by various behaviors of the listeners?	Rural	33	3.0	39.4	12.1	45.5	0.0
	Urban	39	10.3	23.1	15.4	46.2	5.1
	Total	72	6.9	30.6	13.9	45.8	2.8
Does he/she make unnecessary movements?	Rural	33	3.0	0.0	6.1	72.7	18.2
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	15.4	61.5	23.1
	Total	72	1.4	0.0	11.1	66.7	20.8
Does his/her voice tremble?	Rural	33	3.0	15.2	9.1	30.3	42.4
	Urban	39	2.6	15.4	2.6	23.1	56.4
	Total	72	2.8	15.3	5.6	26.4	50.0

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

66.7% did not make unnecessary pauses and 64.1% could emphasize the words they wanted to convey their meaning.

Findings on the Psychological State of the Speaker

The findings on the psychological state of the speaker are shown in **Table 8**:

When **Table 8** is examined, it is seen that 81.8% of the students living in rural areas showed their self-confidence with their posture; 81.8% exhibited sympathetic behaviors; 54.6% could make eye contact with the listeners; 45.5% were not affected by various attitudes of the listeners; 90.9% did not make unnecessary movements and 72.7% did not have trembling voice. On the other hand, of the students living in urban areas 92.3% showed their self-confidence with their posture; 87.8% exhibited sympathetic behaviors; 56.4% could make eye contact with the listeners; 51.3% were not affected by various attitudes of the listeners; 84.6% did not make unnecessary movements and 79.5% did not have trembling voices.

Discussion

In this study, the speaking skills of 8th grade students who study in the urban and rural areas of İskenderun district of Hatay province in the 2020-2021 academic year were examined. The findings obtained revealed that the students both from rural and urban areas had moderate levels of starting their speeches with appropriate address styles and presenting the topic of their speech, while most of the students did not briefly introduce the parts of their speeches. In addition, it was determined that most of the students formed an appropriate introduction part for their speeches and presented the introduction part at a normal length, while the level of starting the speech with interesting expressions (proverb, poem, description, memory, etc.) was very low. The students living in urban areas were found to have better speaking and introduction skills than those living in rural areas. However, these skills were generally at a moderate level. Although media technologies and the Internet are effective in improving speaking skills, exam-oriented education and the inadequacy of speaking activities in schools prevent the development of this skill. Muradoğlu (2021) determined that students at the 3rd grade level started speaking at a moderate level. Duran (2020) reported that students who study at the 3rd and 4th grade levels in combined classes had a moderate level of making a logical introduction to the topic; their ability to make logical transitions between topics and connect the topic with a concluding speech were at a low level. Karaköse (2019) found that most of the 6th grade students did not start their speeches with a salutation sentence and their level of introducing the parts related to their speeches was very low. In this context, it can be

said that the results obtained in the present study show similarity with those obtained in other studies in the literature.

In the study, it was observed that the students did not use different methods to make the speech interesting, but they were able to present examples, emotions and thoughts, main and supporting ideas related to the topic. In addition, the students attending school in urban areas were more successful than those living in rural areas in the introduction and development parts of the speech. This situation may be related to the breadth and diversity of the social environment of the students living in urban areas. Previous studies in the literature (Aydoğan, 2019; Doğan, 2019; Yaşar, 2017; Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Sargın, 2006) have concluded that students do not use appropriate tools, narratives and figures to make their speeches interesting, but they present appropriate examples, main and supporting ideas for the given topic.

The students receiving education in urban areas were found to be better than those in rural areas in the conclusion part of the speech, but this skill was generally at a moderate level. These results are also similar to those reported in other studies in the literature (Üzüm, 2021; Karaköse, 2019; Sevim & Kapıcı, 2016; Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017; Yeğen, 2014; Uysal, 2014; Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Sargın, 2006).

The findings of the present research showed that the students could apply the external structural elements of the language at a high level, but their fluency skills such as liaison and pause were low. In addition, it was determined that the students in the urban areas were slightly better than those in rural areas in these skills. Sargın (2006) determined in his study that the ability to apply the external structural elements of the language varies depending on the grade level, and that secondary school students have a very high ability to apply the external structure elements of the language; while primary school students have a moderate level. The ability to apply the external structure elements of the language at a high level has also been determined in various studies in the literature (Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Tüzemen & Kardaş, 2017; Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017; Yaşar, 2017).

The findings also revealed that the students could apply the internal structural elements of the language at a high level, but their skills, such as emphasis, pause and phonetic flow, are at a moderate level. In addition, it was determined that there was no significant difference in terms of these skills between the students living in the urban and rural areas. Similarly, other studies in the literature (Sargın, 2006; Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Aslan, 2018; Uysal, 2014; Tüzemen & Kardaş, 2017) have also reached the conclusion that students at different education levels have a moderate level of ability to apply the internal structural elements of the language.

This study showed that the students had high levels of self-confidence and sympathetic behavior skills, moderate levels of unnecessary movement, voice tremor and eye contact skills, and low skill of being af-

ected by the attitudes of the listeners. Besides, there was no significant difference between the students in the urban and rural areas in these skills. Sargın (2006) determined that most students at different education levels did not have confidence in themselves with their posture, could not exhibit sympathetic behaviors in their speeches, could not make eye contact with listeners, exhibited unnecessary movements during the speech process and their voices trembled. However, despite these negatives, they were not affected by the attitudes of the listeners. The ability of speakers to express their self-confidence with their posture, exhibit sympathetic behaviors, avoid unnecessary movements and make eye contact with the listeners were at a moderate level in other studies in the literature (Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017; Uysal, 2014; Muradoğlu, 2021). This difference between the current findings and those in the literature may stem from sociocultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the students participating in the study.

The following suggestions can be developed based on the results obtained in the current research:

1. It was observed that the students participated in the study often omitted to briefly introduce the parts of the speech. To address this issue, feedback can be given to students after their speeches.
2. A majority of students failed to start their speeches with attention-grabbing elements such as proverbs, descriptions, poems and anecdotes. Therefore it can be considered to display informative and interesting contents, such as poems, proverbs and idioms, on classroom and school boards and to share speech examples that start with these elements with students.
3. It was found in the research that the students did not make intermediate addresses to the audience they spoke to. In this regard, speech examples demonstrating the effectiveness of intermediate addresses in capturing the dispersed attention of listeners can be shown.

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