Speaking is one of the important learning fields of language. It is an important skill that enables individuals to communicate with others, do shopping, keep their culture alive and transmit it to the next generation. The most important aspect of speaking skill is using words and sentences appropriately. Pronunciation is another important side of speaking skill. Speaking is defined as “A behavior created by the movements of tongue, palate, teeth, vocal cords, lips, laryngeal and mouth. It allows individuals to communicate with each other. In other words, speaking is the expression of words with the assistance of the voice” (Temizyurek, Erdem and Temizkan, 2007, p. 247).

According to Kilinc and Sahin (2013), speaking is necessary for individuals to build social relationships and develop the relevant skills. If a person has poor speaking skills, then their other language skills will be weak, too.

Another remarkable aspect of speaking is the role it plays in social relationships and communication. These concepts are important for persons and societies. If individuals know how to express themselves properly, they can create healthy relationships and contribute to social development. Therefore, a society can make significant steps for its future if its people are thoughtful and able to express themselves. This process shapes the values and life perspectives of individuals, and they begin to develop appropriate attitudes for the situations they encounter.

Training in speaking is done in every stage of the educational process. Students are supposed to express their thoughts and provide feedback about the knowledge they gain. The correct acquisition of this skill is particularly important for creating future generations who think and are able to express what they think accurately. Thus, pre-service teachers are supposed to master speaking skills and have a comprehensive knowledge of how to transmit this knowledge. This study aims to examine the speaking skills and determine the attitudes of pre-service Turkish Language Teachers towards speaking instruction. The study also examines whether their attitudes vary by variables such as gender, year of study, father’s profession and the type of high school that they attended.

The study population included the students in Kafkas University’s Faculty of Education Department of Turkish Language Education in the 2014-2015 academic year. The author tried to reach all the students in the population, and 250 pre-service teachers were included in the study sample.

The data were collected using the Attitudes Towards Speaking Instruction Scale created by Ceran (2012). This is a 5-point Likert-type scale, and it includes 1 factor and 34 items. A reliability analysis was done to test the reliability of the scale. The reliability level of the scale, its Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, was found to be 0.89. The validity of the survey was tested by item analysis. The item analysis found that the questions on the survey were valid. The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of the scale was recalculated for this study, and it was found to be 0.77.

The data collected from the pre-service teachers were analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 Package Program. The positive statements in the attitude scale were arranged to start with the “Strongly Agree” option in the order 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The negative statements started with “Strongly Disagree” in the reverse order 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

The maximum possible score on the scale is 149, while the minimum score is 71. The mean score of the participants was 115.5, which indicates that they have an intermediately positive attitude towards speaking instruction. Another outcome of the study shows that pre-service teachers’ attitude towards speaking varied significantly by gender (p<0.05). This difference was to the benefit of female students ( \bar{X} =121.59). A review of the relevant literature indicates that female students have more positive attitudes according to the majority of the study results (Ceran, 2012).

This study found that the attitude towards speaking demonstrates a significantly year of study. Post hoc (Scheffé) results reveal that this difference is between juniors and seniors. The mean scores also show that juniors and seniors have a positive attitude towards speaking instruction. The mean attitude scores of the freshmen and sophomores are close to each other, too. In other words, positive attitudes towards speaking instruction increase in direct proportion with years of study.

In this study, attitudes towards speaking instruction did not vary by father’s profession. This result indicates that the professions of the students’ fathers did not affect their attitudes towards speaking instruction. The type of high school they attended was also not a determinant of their attitudes. This result implies that although students graduate from different types of high schools or receive different types of education, it does not affect their attitudes towards speaking instruction.
Speaking instruction should be implemented actively in other courses, too. These efforts should be compatible with other courses. Particularly, students’ in-class attitudes towards this lesson should be considered. This means that students should be led to appreciate the importance and necessity of this skill. They should spend effort to develop themselves after classes, too. Students should crave to use this skill properly not only at school, but in every field of life. This skill is important for all students who choose teaching as a profession. Therefore, all students should have and use this skill successfully. Since families are the first educational setting, parents should meet their responsibilities and act as role models regarding this issue.