


## Improving Motivation in Translator Training: Achievement Goal Orientations of Translation Studies Students

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### Abstract

In order to improve the student motivation, this study aims to determine the opinions of Translation Studies students about achievement goal orientations in terms of variables such as gender, department, class and perception of academic achievement. Research is based on the relational screening model and the research data was collected by using the Goal Orientations Scale adapted to Turkish by Akın & Çetin (2007). During the academic year 2017-2018, 242 students studying in the German, French and English Translation Studies Departments at a state university participated in the research. As a result, it was observed that learning orientation, one of the three sub-dimensions of achievement goal orientations, varies significantly by gender and perception of academic achievement; and performance-approach orientation, other sub-dimension, by department and gender. No statistically significant relationship was found between variables and performance-avoidance orientation, the third sub-dimension.

**Keywords:** Translation Studies, translator training, achievement goal orientations, motivation.

## Çeviri Eğitiminde Motivasyonu Artırmak: Çeviribilim Öğrencilerinin Başarı Amaç Yönelimleri

### Öz

Bu çalışma çeviri eğitiminde öğrenci motivasyonunu artırmak için Çeviribilim öğrencilerinin amaç başarı yönelimlerine ilişkin görüşlerini cinsiyet, bölüm, sınıf ve akademik başarı algısı değişkenleri açısından incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma ilişkisel tarama modeline dayanmaktadır ve araştırma verileri Türkçeye Akın & Çetin (2007) tarafından uyarlanan Başarı Yönelimleri Ölçeği aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Araştırmaya 2017-2018 akademik yılında bir devlet üniversitesinde Almanca, Fransızca ve İngilizce Mütercim Tercümanlık Bölümlerinde kayıtlı bulunan 242 öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda amaç başarı yönelimlerinin üç alt boyutundan ilki olan öğrenme yöneliminin cinsiyet ve başarı algısı değişkenlerine göre; diğer alt boyut olan performans-yaklaşma başarı yöneliminin bölüm ve cinsiyet değişkenlerine göre istatistiksel açıdan farklılaştığı bulunmuştur. Üçüncü alt boyut olan performans-kaçınma başarı yöneliminin ise değişkenlerle arasında istatistiksel açıdan anlamlı ilişki bulunmamıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çeviribilim, çeviri eğitimi, başarı amaç yönelimleri, motivasyon.

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## INTRODUCTION

Achievement is a concept that influences the entire education journey of a student from primary school to university. In surroundings where the aim is to attain a specific goal - as in the case of education - student's achievement is measured, to a large extent, quantitatively. For example, a student who correctly answers most of the questions passes the exam (Wolters & Shirley et.al., 1996). Along with measuring achievement quantitatively in assessment situations, researchers have also investigated how students approach achievement contexts. In this kind of approach, which we might label achievement goal orientations, what is important is not how much the student gets, but how s/he positions her/himself cognitively and emotionally in reaching the goal (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Nicholls, 1989; Schunk & Pintrich et.al., 2008). Achievement goal orientations describe a whole belief that leads to different reactions, interests, and approaches to achievement situations (Ames, 1992) and "*assumes that individuals engage in academic behaviour for particular reasons, or goals, that drive, direct and organize thought and behaviour*" (Deemer, 2004, p. 74).

When the literature on the achievement goal orientations is searched, it can be observed that researchers tend to treat the concept as bipolar, despite their different point of view: learning orientation - grade orientation (Eison, 1980); task involvement-ego involvement (Nicholls, 1975) and finally learning orientation-performance orientation (Ames & Archer, 1988; Button & Mathieu et.al., 1996; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Heyman & Dweck, 1992; Markus, 1977). In learning orientation, the student focuses on mastering the teaching material whereas in performance orientation s/he tries to prove his/her ability (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & Church, 1997; Nicholls, 1984; 1989; Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Wolters & Shirley et. al., 1996).

An individual with learning orientation makes a significant effort to learn new knowledge and to develop his/her skills during a task. In this context, it can be said that a learning-oriented student has the following characteristics: they use cognitive processing and effective learning strategies to solve a problem, they have positive motivation towards learning, they choose challenging tasks instead of avoiding difficulties and work successfully under difficult conditions since they think success will come with effort. They want to strive for what they are working on. They are concerned with how far they have progressed in the learning process and on the topic they are working on, not on the performance of others. In case of failure, they view the mistakes as feedback and strive with a higher motivation to make up for the missing (Akın, 2006; Arslan, 2011; Dweck, 1986, 1989; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Eliot & Dweck, 1988; Heyman & Dweck, 1992; Matos & Vansteenkiste, 2007).

The most important goal for performance-oriented individuals is to show their competence; they try to get positive reactions from others or to avoid negative reactions. Performance-oriented individuals can be said to have the following characteristics: they try to perform better than other students. Thus, they focus on their talents. In order not to be seen as incompetent, they tend to avoid jobs where they might fail or tasks that will place them in a difficult situation. Their performance deteriorates when facing an obstacle, and they do not learn intrinsically. They run away from failure situations and feelings of failure, but if, and when they face failure, they link it to inability, experience negative feelings and

withdraw themselves from the task (Ames, 1992; Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Akin, 2006; Diener & Dweck, 1978 ; 1980; Nicholls, 1984; Wolters & Shirley et.al., 1996).

Many researchers used to think that learning orientation is linked to positive goals such as adaptive behaviors, high self-efficacy levels and perception of competence, whereas performance orientation - as these competencies are seen at a low level - is linked to negative goals (Ames, 1992; Bandura & Dweck, 1985; Brophy, 2004; Nicholls, 1984; Nolen, 1988; Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992; Schunk & Pintrich et.al., 2008). However, it was proved that this was not exactly true (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & Moller, 2003; Midgley & Kaplan et.al., 2001). Having examined performance orientation in two distinct categories - performance approach and performance avoidance -the aforementioned researchers identified that negative aspects show up only in performance-avoidance since in the performance-approach, students compare themselves to others in order to prove their competence while in performance-avoidance, they compare themselves to others in order not to seem incapable. The response of the question "why are some learners learning-oriented and others performance-oriented?" is related to students' individual concept of intelligence. Those with an incremental intelligence theory tend to be learning-oriented because they think that they can improve their intelligence and performance by making an effort, but those adapting an entity intelligence theory are more performance-orientated since they think that intelligence and performance of individuals are steady (Dweck, 1986, 1989).

Strategies and emotional reactions of learners in learning and performance orientations are different from each other. Metacognitive strategies that provide deep learning are observed in learning orientation while superficial learning strategies that are less effective on learning are observed in performance orientation (Nicholls, 1989; Nolen, 1988; Pintrich& Schrauben, 1992). In learning orientation, motivation is seen even in the case of failure. In performance orientation, on the other hand, a feeling of helplessness and anxiety may be seen in the case of failure (Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliot & Church, 1997).

Kelly (2005) in her book *A Handbook for Translator Trainers* points out the importance of motivation for the success of learning processes. She examines student motivation along with "learning styles" and "prior knowledge" in the third step of her cyclic design called "identify student profile and needs" and emphasizes that "*teachers and course designers must be aware of students expectations and motivations when choosing to join a translation course*" (2005, p. 49). She also indicates that research about student motivation "*has been less abundant than in other fields of educational research*" (2005, p. 49). In fact, in conformity with Kelly goal orientations are an under-researched topic in translator training. At the international level, attempts have been made to measure goal orientations using different scales (see Bontempo & Napier, 2014; Farsani & Beikmohammadi et.al., 2014; Hashempour & Ghonsooly et.al., 2015). However, no study has dealt with achievement goal orientations of trainee translators in Turkey. Therefore, this study attempts to be the first step towards filling this gap both in the literature of Education and Translation Studies.

It is important to determine the achievement goal orientations in translation education since students with different achievement goal orientations will not approach translation tasks with the same motivation and will not always show active or sufficient participation in the learning process, which may be directly influential in the acquisition of translation competence, one of the main objectives of translation education (Akalin &

Gündoğdu, 2010; Akdağ, 2015, p. 661 & 2016, p. 71). Therefore, if we wish students to acquire the desired outcome of any course, we should know how to motivate them and one of its possible ways is to determine how students approach to translation, in other words to determine their achievement goal orientations. Designing courses in accordance with different achievement goal orientations will not only motivate students but also improve the quality of translator training. Motivated students will participate more, will be willing to engage in a variety of translational tasks, will have the opportunity to practice more and will have better outcomes.

To improve the quality of translator training by focusing on the student motivation, this study aims to determine achievement goal orientations of Translation Studies students. In this context, the research questions are as follows:

1- What are the achievement goal orientations of Translation Studies students in the learning process?

2- Do achievement goal orientations of Translation Studies students vary significantly by gender, class, department and academic success perception?

## METHOD

In this section the research design, the population and the data collection tools of the study were specified.

### Research Design

The relational screening model was used in this study. *“Screening is a research model that aims to identify the past or present as it exists. The event, individual or object subject to the research is tried to be defined as it is and in its own conditions”* (Karasar, 2017, p. 109). Being one of the screening models, relational screening models are *“research models aiming to determine the presence and / or degree of mutual exchange between two or more variables”* (Karasar, 2017, p. 114). In this study, the objective is to investigate the relationship between the achievement goal orientations of Translation Studies students and such variables as gender, department, class and perception of academic achievement.

### Participants

The population of the research consisted of 242 students registered with the Translation Studies department of Istanbul University during the 2017-2018 academic year. Students are chosen by simple random sampling. Of these students, 80 were studying in German, 89 English and 73 French. Table 1 shows the gender, department, class and perception of academic achievement of the participants.

<sup>1</sup> Unless stated otherwise, translations are mine.

**Table 1.**  
*Characteristics of Translation Studies Students*

		N	%
<b>Department</b>	English TSD	89	36,78
	French TSD	73	30,17
	German TSD	80	33,06
<b>Gender</b>	Female	165	68,18
	Male	77	31,82
<b>Average of the last term</b>	4,0-3,50	29	12,24
	3,49-3,0	75	31,65
	2,99- 2,50	64	27,00
	2,49-2,0	49	20,68
	1,99- 1,0	19	8,02
<b>Class</b>	0,99-0	1	0,42
	Freshman	36	15,32
	Sophomore	67	28,51
	Junior	79	33,62
	Senior	53	22,55

### Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is the language pairs involved. Students whose working languages are English, French and German were involved in the research. The other limitation may be that the research was conducted in one state university.

### Data Collection Tools

The data was collected using the "Goal Orientations Scale" developed by Midgley et al. (1998) and adapted to Turkish by Akın and Çetin (2007) as "Başarı Yönelimleri Ölçeği". The original scale is in the 5 response Likert model and it consists of 18 questions in total. The first 6 questions aim to measure learning orientation, the next 6 questions, performance-approach orientation and the last 6 questions, performance-avoidance orientation.

In this study, the scale adapted by Akın and Çetin was used. This scale consists of 17 questions. The first 6 questions of the scale are aimed at determining learning orientation, the next 6 questions, performance-approach orientation and the last 5 questions performance-avoidance orientation. The rating on the Likert scale was made from 1 "I definitely do not agree" to 5 "I definitely agree".

In this study, Cronbach  $\alpha$  was found to be 0.839 for the total scale, 0.839 for learning orientation, 0.886 for performance-approach orientation and 0.838 for performance-avoidance orientation. When the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scale's subdimensions were examined, it was determined that the reliability scores of the total Goal Orientations scale and its subdimensions learning orientation, performance-approach orientation and performance-avoidance orientation were high (Alpar, 2013).

### **Data Collection**

The data of the research was collected in the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of 2017-2018 academic year from freshmen to senior Translation Studies students. The reason why data was collected in the second semester was to provide a better understanding of academic achievement for freshmen.

### **Data Analysis**

To summarize the data obtained from the study, descriptive statistics were tabulated as mean  $\pm$  standard deviation and minimum- maximum for continuous variables. Categorical variables were summarized as a number and a percentage.

The normality test of the numerical variables was checked by the Kolmogov Smirnov test.

The Independent Samples t test was used when the numerical variables were normally distributed in two independent group comparisons, and the Mann Whitney U test was used when the numerical variables were not normally distributed.

One-way ANOVA was used when the numerical variables were normally distributed in more than two independent groups and the Kruskal Wallis H test was used when the numerical variables were not normally distributed.

In the analysis of relations between numerical variables, Pearson was used in case of normal distribution and Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient was used in cases where normal distribution was not observed.

Statistical analyzes were performed with the Jamovi project (2018) program and statistical significance was considered as 0.05 (p-value).

### **FINDINGS**

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of data analysis are shown as tables in compliance with the research questions.

#### **What are the Achievement Goal Orientations of Translation Studies Students?**

In Table 2, descriptive statistics related to the subdimensions of the Goal Orientations Scale were given based on the answers given by the participant students.

**Table 2.***Achievement Goal Orientations of Translator Trainees*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
Learning Orientation	23,79	4,44	8,00	30,00
Performance-approach orientation	17,49	6,48	6,00	30,00
Performance-avoidance orientation	9,68	4,81	5,00	25,00

With reference to the table, the mean of the learning orientation score was  $23.79 \pm 4.44$ , performance-approach orientation score was  $17.49 \pm 6.48$ , and performance-avoidance orientation score was  $9.68 \pm 4.81$ .

It can be argued that students' learning orientation scores are high since the learning orientation score mean ( $X = 23.79$ ) is higher than the scale mean ( $((8 + 30) / 2 = 19)$ ). Again, it can be said that the trainee translators' performance-approach orientation score is low since the performance-approach orientation score average ( $X = 17.49$ ) is lower than the scale average ( $((6 + 30) / 2 = 18)$ ). Finally, since the performance-avoidance orientation mean ( $X = 9.68$ ) is lower than the scale mean ( $((5 + 25) / 2 = 15)$ ), it can be said that the performance-avoidance scores of Translation Studies students are low.

#### **Do Achievement Goal Orientations of Translation Trainees Differ Significantly by Gender, Department, Class and Academic Achievement Perception?**

Table 3 shows the relationship between learning, performance-approach and performance-avoidance orientations of trainee translators in terms of gender, department, class, and academic achievement perceptions.

**Table 3.**

*Achievement Goal Orientations with regard to gender, department, class, and academic achievement perception*

	LO		Test Stat.	p	PAO		Test Stat.	P	PAVO		Test Stat.	p
	Mean	SD			Mean	SD			Mean	SD		
<b>Department</b>												
ETS	23,74	4,1			18,71	6,3			9,87	4,46		
FTS	23,96	4,9	0,076	0,926 <sup>4</sup>	17,34	6,82	3,053	0,049 <sup>4</sup>	10,44	5,67	3,712	0,156 <sup>2</sup>
GTS	23,69	4,39			16,28	6,17			8,77	4,21		
<b>Gender</b>												
Female	24,26	4,31	2,425	0,015 <sup>3</sup>	16,89	6,74	-2,121	0,035 <sup>3</sup>	9,16	4,31	-1,681	0,093 <sup>1</sup>
Male	22,78	4,56			18,77	5,71			10,77	5,62		
<b>Acad.Percep.</b>												
4,0-3,50	52,84	7,57			26,04	3,43			8,76	3,07		
3,49-3,0	50,56	9			23,57	4,2			8,73	3,95		
2,99- 2,50	50,47	10,99	2,573	0,039 <sup>4</sup>	23,44	4,06	0,656	0,623 <sup>4</sup>	9,74	4,88	4,909	0,297 <sup>2</sup>
2,49-2,0	50,78	12,61			23,4	5,16			10,65	5,95		
1,99- 1,0	50,6	14,96			22,5	5,19			11,75	6,05		
<b>Class</b>												
Freshman	24,44	4,02			19,66	5,4			11,55	5,02		
Sophomore	24,44	3,89	1,713	0,165 <sup>4</sup>	17,93	6	2,352	0,073 <sup>4</sup>	9,29	4,16	7,456	0,059 <sup>2</sup>
Junior	22,99	4,39			17,01	6,45			9,09	4,42		
Senior	23,77	4,76			16,2	7,32			9,86	5,82		

1. Mann-Whitney U test 2. Kruskal-Wallis H test 3. Independent Samples T Test 4. One-Way Anova test.

As the table shows, when the relationship between the achievement goal orientations of translation trainees and gender was examined, the following findings were obtained: There was a statistically significant difference in the comparison of the mean scores of the gender and the learning orientation ( $p = 0,015$ ). Accordingly, the learning orientation mean score of female students was higher. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference between gender and performance-approach orientation ( $p = 0,035$ ): Male performance-approach orientation score averages were higher.

When the relationship between the achievement goal orientations of Translation Studies students and department was examined, the following findings were reached: There was no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0,05$  for each) between the learning orientation mean scores of ETS, FTS and GTS.

However, there was a statistically significant difference in the performance-approach orientation mean score compared to the departments ( $p = 0,049$ ). Thus, it was seen that the difference between the department and the performance-approach orientation score averages was due to the German-English duality.



There was no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0,05$  for each) in the comparison of learning, performance-approach and performance-avoidance orientation mean scores based on the translation trainees' class levels.

When the relationship between the achievement goal orientations and academic achievement perceptions of Translation Studies students were examined, the following findings were obtained: A statistically significant difference was found in the mean of the learning orientation score with respect to last semester's average ( $p = 0,039$ ) and it was seen that the mean score of students with a final grade of 3.50- 4.0 was higher than that of the students with a final grade of 1.00-1.99.

There was no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0,05$  for each) when the mean of the performance-approach orientation score was compared to last semester's grade average.

The means of the performance-avoidance orientation scores do not differ significantly by gender, department, class, and perception of academic achievement ( $p > 0.05$  for each).

## CONCLUSION

In this study in order to improve student motivation, the achievement goal orientations of translator trainees were examined in terms of variables such as gender, department, class and academic achievement perception. As a result of the study, a significant difference was found in favor of female students between gender and learning orientation subdimension of the achievement goal orientations. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies investigating achievement goal orientations, e.g. Koç & Arslan, 2015; Küçüköğlü & Kaya et.al., 2010; Özkal & Demirtas, et.al., 2014; Toğluk, 2009.

There was a significant difference in favor of male students between gender and performance-approach subdimension in this study. This finding is again consistent with the study of Koç & Arslan (2015) on the achievement goal orientations of secondary school students.

There was no significant difference between gender and performance-avoidance orientation. This finding is analogous with İzci & Koç's (2012) study on the achievement goal orientations of the pedagogical formation students and with Mentiş Köksoy & Aydın Uygun's (2017) study on pre-service music teachers but is different to that of Koç & Arslan (2015) since in their study, the researchers found a significant connection between female students and performance-avoidance.

While no significant differences were found in terms of learning orientation between Translation Studies students and their department, it was seen that in the performance-approach subdimension, the students of the ETSD had higher mean scores than those of the GTSD.

No statistically significant difference was found in the comparison of mean scores of learning, performance-approach and performance-avoidance orientation in terms of class levels. This finding partially overlaps with the findings of Küçüköğlü & Kaya et.al. (2010) on the achievement goal orientations of primary teacher candidates, Koç & Arslan (2015) and Mentiş Köksoy & Aydın Uygun (2017). There was no significant difference in the performance-approach subdimension in Koç & Arslan (2015), and in the performance-

avoidance subdimension in Küçüköğlü & Kaya et. al. (2010) and Mentiş Köksoy & Aydın Uygun (2017).

There was a significant difference between the academic achievement perception and achievement goal orientations in terms of students with the highest and lowest grades in the learning orientation subdimension, but there was no significant difference in performance-approach and performance avoidance subdimensions. These findings are similar to Mentiş Köksoy & Aydın Uygun (2017) but are in contrast with the findings of İzci & Koç (2012), as there was no significant difference in learning orientation in their study, but differences were found in the other two subdimensions. One of the possible reasons for the difference in the findings is that the training type is different. Students taking pedagogical formation come from different disciplines, but they all take the same formation courses. In other words, these lessons are not field courses and most students are working towards a target - to get a certificate. The situation is different for Translation Studies students since the majority try to perform full learning in their main discipline to be well-equipped translators.

Based on the findings, it can be said that the learning orientation means of Translation Studies students are higher than the performance orientation means. Arslan (2011) reached a similar conclusion by finding that pre-service teachers candidates' learning orientations are high, and that the least favored orientation is the performance-avoidance orientation. When the needs of the translator's profession are considered, this is very promising for students to become a well-equipped translator since learning-oriented students show positive learning behaviors in the classroom environment (Ames & Archer, 1988). If we interpret this finding from a translation training point of view, learning oriented trainee translators with a high level of cognitive abilities and who are not intimidated by stringent translation projects will thus have the necessary skills to meet the requirements of the translators' profession. They will also benefit greatly from the education they receive at school since they are prone to complete learning, they learn for learning's sake.

The fact that the learning orientation mean of girls is higher than that of boys and that the performance-approach scores of boys are higher than girls can cause them to show different learning behaviors in the class. Performance-approach oriented students tend to perform highly in class rather than seem untalented in the eyes of their friends. Avoiding translation tasks where they may be unsuccessful may cause them not to learn certain topics.

It is recommended that translator trainers be informed about achievement goal orientations in order to structure their training in alignment with the different achievement goal orientations. In addition, before training begins, the students' different achievement goal orientations may be determined, and training activities may be formatted accordingly.

This study contributes to the Translation Studies discipline by borrowing the achievement goal orientations approach from Educational Sciences and applying it to the translator trainees to provide student motivation. Achievement goal orientations have been studied mostly in educational psychology along with other concepts/ approaches of motivation. The importance of motivation is also highlighted by Kelly (2005) in her cyclic design of translator training. Namely in the third phase of her cyclic design she considers motivation being one of the factors that allow students to "*reach higher levels of understanding*" (2005:49). As for the achievement goal orientations, they are of particular importance in terms of education quality since students' achievement goal orientations are directly

influential on one of the main objectives of translation training: the acquisition of translation competence. Learning-oriented translator candidates can be successful in different learning environments, but performance-approach oriented translator candidates can assume an active role in courses where they can demonstrate their ability while performance-avoidance oriented translator candidates can work to obtain good grades. Therefore, they may experience deficiencies in the acquisition of translation sub-competences as they cannot sufficiently participate in all activities. The delivery of translation training which takes into account different achievement-oriented trainee translators will ensure that all students learn the topics at the optimum level.

This research includes student opinions in German, French and English TSD at a state university. Future research based on this study may extend the results by including other Translation Studies departments at different state and/or private universities with different language-pairs.

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