



**An Investigation of Turkish Speaking and Writing
Motivation among Syrian Middle School Students
under Temporary Protection¹**

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between Turkish speaking and writing motivation among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection. Using a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational survey design, the study included 126 students selected through purposive sampling during the 2025–2026 academic year. Data were collected using a personal information form, the Speaking Motivation Scale for Learners of Turkish as a Second Language, and the Writing Motivation Scale. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson correlation analysis. The findings revealed no statistically significant differences in motivation scores based on gender or perceived Turkish language proficiency. However, extrinsic motivation differed significantly by age, while significant differences were observed across all motivation dimensions according to grade level. Fifth-grade students exhibited lower levels of motivation than students in certain higher grades. A strong positive correlation was found between intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation ($r = .798$). In addition, writing motivation was positively correlated with extrinsic motivation and negatively correlated with amotivation. Based on these findings, the study recommends integrating speaking and writing activities and developing supportive instructional practices specifically tailored to fifth-grade students.

Keywords: Turkish as a second language, Syrian students, speaking motivation, writing motivation, middle school students.



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Introduction

Since 2011, Türkiye has provided temporary protection to millions of people fleeing the civil war in Syria. A substantial proportion of this population comprises school-aged children. Initially, Syrian children were primarily educated in temporary education centres where instruction was delivered in Arabic. However, from 2016 onwards, these students were gradually integrated into formal schools operating under the Ministry of National Education (Çelik & İçduygu, 2019). As a result of this transition, proficiency in Turkish has become essential for Syrian students' academic achievement and social integration (Sarmini et al., 2020). Furthermore, the voluntary returns following the change of government in Syria in December 2024 have introduced a new dimension to the circumstances of these students. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of the Interior on 15 December 2025, approximately 590,000 Syrians voluntarily returned from Türkiye to Syria between 8 December 2024 and 15 December 2025 (UNHCR, 2025). For students who remain in Türkiye, uncertainty about their future may represent an important contextual factor influencing the value they attach to the Turkish language and their motivation to learn it.

For Syrian middle school students under temporary protection in Türkiye, Turkish serves as an essential means of communication, enabling them not only to interact in everyday situations but also to participate in classroom activities, complete academic tasks, and express themselves in the school environment. However, their use of Turkish is influenced by differences in language proficiency and the challenges they encounter in educational settings. Koçoğlu and Yanpar Yelken (2018) identified communication difficulties and varying levels of Turkish proficiency among students as some of the most common challenges teachers face when teaching Turkish to Syrian students. Similarly, Karakoç et al. (2024) found that Syrian middle school students face several challenges in learning Turkish, including communication difficulties, issues related to their sense of belonging, insufficient learning materials, and being assessed according to the same criteria as their native Turkish-speaking peers.

Speaking and writing skills play a significant role in enabling students who learn Turkish as a second language to participate in school life. Speaking enables students to interact with their teachers and peers, ask questions, and express their thoughts verbally, whereas writing allows them to organise information and communicate their ideas through assignments, examinations, and other written tasks. Yıldız (2015) identified speaking as one of the primary language learning needs of learners of Turkish as a foreign language. Similarly, Şimşek and Erdem (2021) emphasised the importance of incorporating activities into writing instruction that enable students to express their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Although conducted in different learning contexts, these studies highlight the importance of providing opportunities for meaningful oral and written language production in Turkish language instruction.

The roles of these two skills in the school context become more evident when considering the distinction between everyday conversational language and academic language. Cummins (2008) notes that children learning a second language in school can typically develop conversational fluency comparable to that of their peers within approximately two years. In contrast, developing the language proficiency required for academic

success, including the ability to understand and express concepts orally and in writing at a level appropriate to their grade, may take an average of five to seven years. This distinction suggests that students who communicate comfortably in Turkish in everyday situations may still experience difficulties with academic writing tasks. For students whose first language is Arabic, writing in Turkish may present additional challenges compared with speaking, as it involves adapting to the Latin alphabet, which is written from left to right, rather than the Arabic script, which is written from right to left. Therefore, speaking and writing motivation among Syrian students should be examined as distinct but potentially related constructs.

Participation in speaking and writing activities depends not only on students' language proficiency but also on their motivation to use the target language. MacIntyre et al. (1998) note that high levels of language proficiency do not necessarily guarantee a willingness to communicate in a second language. In the context of writing, students' desire to improve their writing skills, their willingness to invest effort in this process, and their engagement in writing activities are important components of motivation (Waller & Papi, 2017). Furthermore, students' interest in an activity and the personal value they attach to it are important considerations in understanding their motivation to learn (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Ryan and Deci (2000) distinguish between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity out of personal interest and for the satisfaction derived from the activity itself, whereas extrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity to achieve outcomes that are separate from the activity itself. Amotivation, by contrast, refers to a lack of intention to engage in an activity. In the context of speaking Turkish, students' enjoyment of communicating and expressing themselves may reflect intrinsic motivation, whereas speaking to obtain good grades, achieve academic success, or meet others' expectations may reflect extrinsic motivation. Conversely, students who perceive little value or purpose in speaking Turkish and lack the intention to engage in such activities may exhibit amotivation.

In self-determination theory, extrinsic motivation is not treated as a monolithic orientation. Ryan and Deci (2000, 2020) define extrinsic motivation along a continuum—comprising external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation—based on the degree to which a behavior has been internalized. They further argue that this internalization is fostered by the fulfillment of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In their application of this theory to second-language learning, Noels et al. (2000) found that amotivation is negatively associated with perceived competence and the intention to continue learning, while being positively associated with anxiety; conversely, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation are positively associated with perceived competence, the freedom to choose, and the intention to continue learning. The need for relatedness is particularly significant within the context of this study, especially when considering the challenges regarding a sense of belonging among Syrian students, as identified by Karakoç et al. (2024). Dörnyei (2001, 2005), who examines language-learning motivation in relation to learner characteristics, goals, and the learning environment, also emphasizes that motivation is shaped

by classroom experiences. Within this framework, students' motivation toward speaking and writing in Turkish should not be viewed merely as an individual trait, but rather evaluated in conjunction with the support provided by the school environment in which they are situated.

Writing motivation plays an important role in students' willingness to engage in writing activities, their interest in such tasks, and their persistence in writing. Deniz and Demir (2020) examined this affective construct by developing a scale to assess writing motivation among middle school students. Although writing motivation is related to writing skills and writing anxiety, it is conceptually distinct from these constructs. For example, the findings of Maden, Dincel, and Maden (2015) on writing anxiety among students learning Turkish as a foreign language highlight the importance of affective factors in the writing process. However, examining writing anxiety alone does not fully explain why students choose to engage in writing activities or what motivates them to persist in writing. Therefore, writing motivation needs to be assessed as a distinct construct.

The literature on writing motivation suggests that this construct cannot be examined independently of the instructional environment. Bruning and Horn (2000) identify several key conditions for fostering writing motivation, including developing functional beliefs about writing, providing authentic writing purposes and engaging contexts, creating a supportive writing environment, and addressing negative emotions. In a review of empirical studies involving school-aged students, Camacho et al. (2021) found that female students generally demonstrate higher levels of writing motivation than their male counterparts, whereas findings regarding grade-level differences reveal no consistent pattern. Although these findings provide a basis for examining writing motivation in relation to gender and grade level, whether similar patterns are observed among students learning Turkish as a second language remains to be investigated.

Although speaking and writing involve different conditions of language production, both are productive skills that require students to construct meaning and express themselves in the target language. Speaking typically requires real-time interaction and immediate responses, whereas writing provides opportunities to plan, organise, and revise ideas. These differences suggest that students may exhibit different levels of motivation towards speaking and writing. At the same time, an interest in using Turkish and a desire for self-expression may be associated with engagement in both activities. The findings of Şimşek and Erdem (2021) concerning the integration of writing tasks with reading and speaking suggest that these skills can be addressed together in language instruction. Nevertheless, the pedagogical integration of these skills does not necessarily explain the relationship between students' motivation to speak and their motivation to write.

Research on the experiences of Syrian students learning Turkish highlights their diverse learning goals and the challenges they face. Tunagür and Kardaş (2021) identified several reasons why students learn Turkish, including living and studying in Türkiye, participating in social life, and helping their families. Suna et al. (2021) emphasised that students' adaptation to the educational environment should be considered in relation to their language skills, access to psychological support, family involvement, participation in social activities, and teachers' competencies.

Similarly, Öner and Dur (2023) highlighted the importance of language-related difficulties, social exclusion, absenteeism, and family-related issues in students' adjustment to school. Taken together, these studies suggest that learning Turkish is closely associated with students' experiences both inside and outside school. Therefore, planning effective language instruction requires an understanding not only of the challenges students encounter but also of their motivation to use Turkish.

Regarding speaking motivation, Erdem and Tay (2024) found that students learning Turkish as a second language exhibited moderate levels of speaking motivation. In contrast, existing research on Syrian students has primarily focused on language learning difficulties, educational needs, and school adjustment (Aydın & Kaya, 2017; Çelik & İçduygu, 2019; Sarmini et al., 2020). Although these studies provide valuable insights into the educational experiences and learning conditions of Syrian students, they offer limited insight into speaking and writing motivation among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection.

Middle school is a particularly important educational stage for examining this relationship. During this period, students engage in a range of speaking and writing tasks across different subjects, using Turkish for both communication and academic learning. Eccles et al. (1993) suggest that certain negative psychological changes during early adolescence may result from a mismatch between students' developmental needs and the opportunities provided by the middle school environment. Furthermore, Lepper et al. (2005) found that intrinsic motivation declined linearly from third to eighth grade, whereas extrinsic motivation showed no significant change. Changes in course structure and academic expectations associated with the transition to middle school may also influence the experiences of students learning Turkish as a second language, particularly in relation to their productive language skills. However, it remains unclear whether these findings, which concern general academic motivation, also apply to students who have experienced migration and are learning the language of instruction as a second language. Accordingly, examining motivation scores by age and grade level may help identify student groups that could benefit from additional support. Comparisons based on gender and perceived Turkish language proficiency may also provide insights into variations in students' motivation. Noels et al. (2000) suggest that perceived language proficiency may be associated with autonomous forms of motivation. In this context, perceived proficiency refers to students' self-assessment of their Turkish language proficiency, which may differ from their actual language performance.

This study aims to examine speaking and writing motivation among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection, investigate whether motivation levels differ according to gender, age, grade level, and perceived Turkish language proficiency, and explore the relationships between the subdimensions of speaking motivation and writing motivation. The study is expected to contribute to a better understanding of students' affective characteristics related to oral and written language production and to inform the development of Turkish language teaching practices tailored to their needs. Drawing on self-determination theory and the shared productive nature of speaking and writing, it was hypothesised that intrinsic and extrinsic speaking motivation would be positively associated with writing motivation, whereas amotivation would be negatively

associated with it. Accordingly, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of intrinsic speaking motivation, extrinsic speaking motivation, amotivation, and writing motivation among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection?
2. Do students' scores on the subdimensions of speaking motivation differ significantly according to gender, age, grade level, and perceived Turkish language proficiency?
3. Do students' writing motivation scores differ significantly according to gender, age, grade level, and perceived Turkish language proficiency?
4. Are there statistically significant relationships between the dimensions of speaking motivation (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation) and writing motivation?

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a descriptive and correlational survey design. Survey research aims to describe individuals' existing opinions, attitudes, and characteristics, whereas correlational research examines the direction and strength of relationships between variables without manipulating them (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2012). The descriptive component examined the levels of speaking and writing motivation among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection and investigated whether these motivation scores differed according to gender, age, grade level, and perceived Turkish language proficiency. The correlational component examined the relationships between the three dimensions of speaking motivation—*intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation*—and writing motivation. As no variables were experimentally manipulated, the findings were interpreted in terms of observed group differences and associations rather than causal relationships.

Population and Sample

The accessible population for this study consists of Syrian students under temporary protection who are enrolled in public middle schools in the province where the research was conducted. The sample comprises 126 students, selected using criterion sampling—a type of purposive sampling. Criterion sampling involves including individuals in a study who meet predetermined characteristics aligned with the research objectives (Büyüköztürk et al., 2024; Patton, 2015). In this study, the inclusion criteria were defined as follows: being a Syrian national under temporary protection, being enrolled at the middle school level during the 2024–2025 academic year, and possessing a sufficient level of Turkish language proficiency to understand and respond to the data collection instruments. A total of 126 students who met these criteria, had obtained parental consent, and participated in the study voluntarily were included in the sample. Given that the sample was not selected using a probability-based method, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to the entire accessible population.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the study group

Variable	Category	n
Gender	Female	103
	Male	23
Grade Level	Grade 5	41
	Grade 6	34
	Grade 7	18
	Grade 8	33
	11 years	49
Age	12 years	22
	13 years	30
	14 years and old	25

As shown in Table 1, 103 participants were female and 23 were male. Regarding grade level, 41 students were in Grade 5, 34 in Grade 6, 18 in Grade 7, and 33 in Grade 8. In terms of age, 49 participants were 11 years old, 22 were 12, 30 were 13, and 25 were aged 14 years or older.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a personal information form, the Speaking Motivation Scale for Learners of Turkish as a Second Language, and the Writing Motivation Scale. The personal information form collected demographic information, including gender, age, and grade level, as well as students' self-reported Turkish language proficiency.

The Speaking Motivation Scale for Learners of Turkish as a Second Language, developed by Dölek and Arıcı (2021), was used to assess students' motivation to speak Turkish. The instrument is a 16-item, five-point Likert-type scale comprising three subdimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. The original scale development study involved 195 learners of Turkish at the B2 and C1 proficiency levels. The three-factor structure explained 62.061% of the total variance, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was .798. Reverse-coded items were accounted for when calculating scores, and subscale scores were interpreted according to the construct represented by each dimension.

The Writing Motivation Scale, developed by Deniz and Demir (2020) for middle school students, was used to assess students' writing motivation. The scale comprises 13 items measuring a single dimension, with responses recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Never" to "Always". In the original scale development study, the single-factor structure explained 42.52% of the total variance. The structural reliability coefficient was reported as .89, and the test-retest reliability coefficient was .85.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 27. Means and standard deviations were calculated to summarise students' speaking and writing motivation scores. The normality of the score distributions was assessed using skewness and kurtosis coefficients. Values within the range of -1.50 to +1.50 were considered indicative of approximate normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine differences in motivation scores across variables with two categories, whereas one-way

analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed for variables with three or more categories. When statistically significant differences were identified, Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) or Tamhane's T2 post hoc tests were used to determine which groups differed significantly. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships between the three dimensions of speaking motivation (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation) and writing motivation. The statistical significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$.

Findings

This section presents descriptive statistics for students' speaking and writing motivation, comparisons of motivation scores across demographic groups, and correlations between motivation dimensions. The findings are presented in tables and organised according to the research questions.

Descriptive Statistics and Normality Assessment

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Normality Indicators for Speaking and Writing Motivation

Dimension	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Intrinsic Motivation	126	3,51	1,01	-1,124	0,995
Amotivation	126	3,69	1,00	-0,540	-0,405
Extrinsic Motivation	126	2,99	0,94	-0,539	-0,248
Writing Motivation	126	3,28	0,91	-1,083	0,985

As shown in Table 2, the mean scores for intrinsic speaking motivation, extrinsic speaking motivation, and amotivation were 3.51 (SD = 1.01), 2.99 (SD = 0.94), and 3.69 (SD = 1.00), respectively. The mean score for writing motivation was 3.28 (SD = 0.91). The mean intrinsic speaking motivation score was descriptively higher than the mean extrinsic speaking motivation score. Skewness coefficients ranged from -1.124 to -0.539, whereas kurtosis coefficients ranged from -0.405 to 0.995. As all coefficients fell within the predefined range of -1.50 to +1.50, the score distributions were considered approximately normal according to the criteria adopted in this study.

Findings by Gender

Table 3. Independent-Samples t-Test Results for Speaking and Writing Motivation Scores by Gender

Dimension	t	df	p
Intrinsic Motivation	0,086	124	,931
Amotivation	0,465	124	,643
Extrinsic Motivation	0,554	124	,581
Writing Motivation	0,277	124	,782

As shown in Table 3, no statistically significant gender differences were found in intrinsic speaking motivation, $t_{(124)} = 0.086$, $p > .05$; amotivation, $t_{(124)} = 0.465$, $p > .05$; extrinsic speaking motivation, $t_{(124)} = 0.554$, $p > .05$; or writing motivation, $t_{(124)} = 0.277$, $p > .05$. These findings suggest that speaking and writing motivation scores did not differ significantly between female and male students in the present sample.

Findings by Age

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether students' extrinsic speaking motivation scores differed significantly across age groups. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA Results for Extrinsic Speaking Motivation Scores by Age Group

Source of Variation	ss	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	17,587	3	5,862	7,642	<,001*
Within Groups	93,588	122	0,767		
Total	111,175	125			

* $p < .05$

As shown in Table 4, the one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference in extrinsic speaking motivation scores across age groups, $F(3, 122) = 7.642$, $p < .001$. This finding indicates that extrinsic speaking motivation differed significantly according to students' age groups. To identify the specific age groups between which these differences occurred, Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Tukey HSD Post Hoc Comparisons of Extrinsic Speaking Motivation Scores Across Age Groups

Age Group	n	M	Subset 1	Subset 2
11 years	49	2,54	2,54	
12 years	22	3,03	3,03	3,03
14 years and older	25	3,35		3,35
13 years	30	3,38		3,38
p			,155	,434

As shown in Table 5, the Tukey HSD post hoc test revealed that students aged 13 years ($M = 3.38$) and those aged 14 years or older ($M = 3.35$) had significantly higher extrinsic speaking motivation scores than students aged 11 years ($M = 2.54$). Students aged 12 years ($M = 3.03$) were included in both homogeneous subsets, indicating that their scores did not differ significantly from those of the other age groups. Overall, these findings suggest that extrinsic speaking motivation was higher among students in the older age groups than among those aged 11 years, although this pattern does not establish a developmental increase in motivation with age.

Findings by Grade Level

One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to examine whether students' intrinsic speaking motivation, extrinsic speaking motivation, amotivation, and writing motivation scores differed significantly across grade levels. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA Results for Speaking and Writing Motivation Scores by Grade Level

Motivation Dimension	Variables Source	Variance Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	p
Intrinsic Motivation	Between Groups	11,361	3	3,787	3,979	,010*
	Within Groups	116,101	122	0,952		
	Total	127,461	125			
Amotivation	Between Groups	10,364	3	3,455	3,701	,014*
	Within Groups	113,878	122	0,933		
	Total	124,242	125			
Extrinsic Motivation	Between Groups	29,881	3	9,960	14,948	<,001*
	Within Groups	81,294	122	0,666		
	Total	111,175	125			
Writing Motivation	Between Groups	9,016	3	3,005	3,840	,011*
	Within Groups	95,485	122	0,783		
	Total	104,501	125			

As shown in Table 6, the one-way ANOVA results revealed statistically significant differences across grade levels in all four motivation dimensions: intrinsic speaking motivation, $F(3, 122) = 3.979$, $p < .05$; amotivation, $F(3, 122) = 3.701$, $p < .05$; extrinsic speaking motivation, $F(3, 122) = 14.948$, $p < .001$; and writing motivation, $F(3, 122) = 3.840$, $p < .05$. These findings indicate that students' speaking and writing motivation scores differed significantly across grade levels. To identify the specific grade levels between which these differences occurred, Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Tukey HSD Post Hoc Comparisons of Speaking and Writing Motivation Scores Across Grade Levels

Motivation Dimension	Grade	n	M	Significant Differences (Tukey HSD)
Intrinsic Speaking Motivation	Grade 5	41	3,08	Grades 6, 7 and 8 > Grade 5
	Grade 7	18	3,64	
	Grade 6	34	3,69	
	Grade 8	33	3,77	
Amotivation	Grade 6	34	3,30	Grade 5 > Grade 6
	Grade 8	33	3,60	
	Grade 7	18	3,77	
Extrinsic Speaking Motivation	Grade 5	41	4,03	Grades 6, 7 and 8 > Grade 5
	Grade 5	41	2,30	
	Grade 7	18	3,15	
	Grade 6	34	3,26	
Writing Motivation	Grade 8	33	3,46	Grade 6 > Grade 5
	Grade 5	41	2,89	
	Grade 8	33	3,40	
	Grade 7	18	3,45	
	Grade 6	34	3,51	

As shown in Table 7, the Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons revealed significant differences in motivation scores across grade levels. For intrinsic speaking motivation, Grade 5 students ($M = 3.08$) had significantly lower scores than students in Grade 6 ($M = 3.69$), Grade 7 ($M = 3.64$), and Grade 8 ($M = 3.77$). Regarding amotivation, Grade 5 students ($M = 4.03$) scored significantly higher than Grade 6 students ($M = 3.30$). No other statistically significant pairwise differences were identified for this dimension. Similarly, for extrinsic speaking motivation, Grade 5 students ($M = 2.30$) had significantly lower scores than students in Grade 6 ($M = 3.26$), Grade 7 ($M = 3.15$), and Grade 8 ($M = 3.46$). For writing motivation, Grade 6 students ($M = 3.51$) scored significantly higher than Grade 5 students ($M = 2.89$). No other statistically significant pairwise differences were identified. These findings suggest that Grade 5 students had significantly lower intrinsic and extrinsic speaking motivation scores than students in higher grades. However, the patterns of differences in amotivation and writing motivation were more limited, with significant differences observed only between Grades 5 and 6.

Findings by Perceived Turkish Language Proficiency

One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to examine whether students' intrinsic speaking motivation, extrinsic speaking motivation, amotivation, and writing motivation scores differed

significantly across self-reported Turkish language proficiency levels. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA Results for Speaking and Writing Motivation Scores by Self-Reported Turkish Language Proficiency Level

Motivation Dimension	Variables Source	Variance Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	p
Intrinsic Speaking Motivation	Between Groups	1,191	1	1,191	1,169	,282
	Within Groups	126,271	124	1,018		
	Total	127,461	125			
Amotivation	Between Groups	0,148	1	0,148	0,148	,701
	Within Groups	124,094	124	1,001		
	Total	124,242	125			
Motivation Dimension	Between Groups	0,136	1	0,136	0,152	,697
	Within Groups	111,039	124	0,895		
	Total	111,175	125			
Writing Motivation	Between Groups	0,122	1	0,122	0,145	,704
	Within Groups	104,379	124	0,842		
	Total	104,501	125			

An examination of Table 8 reveals no statistically significant differences in students' scores for intrinsic motivation [$F(1, 124) = 1.169$; $p > .05$], amotivation [$F(1, 124) = 0.148$; $p > .05$], extrinsic motivation [$F(1, 124) = 0.152$; $p > .05$], and writing motivation [$F(1, 124) = 0.145$; $p > .05$] based on their Turkish language proficiency level. It appears that the Turkish language proficiency level does not lead to a significant differentiation in students' levels of speaking and writing motivation. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between students' speaking motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation) and their writing motivation; the results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Correlation matrix showing the relationship between motivation scores

Motivation Dimension	1	2	3	4
1. Intrinsic Speaking Motivation	1			
2. Amotivation	-,102	1		
3. Extrinsic Speaking Motivation	,636**	-,333**	1	
4. Writing Motivation	,798**	-,275**	,430**	1

** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 9, statistically significant correlations were identified among several motivation dimensions. A strong positive correlation was found between intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation ($r = .798$, $p < .01$), indicating that students with higher intrinsic speaking motivation scores tended to report higher levels of writing motivation. A moderately strong positive correlation was also observed between intrinsic and extrinsic speaking motivation ($r = .636$, $p < .01$). In addition, extrinsic speaking motivation was moderately and positively correlated with writing motivation ($r = .430$, $p < .01$). Significant negative correlations were found between amotivation and extrinsic speaking motivation ($r = -.333$, $p < .01$), as well as between amotivation and writing motivation ($r = -.275$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that students with higher amotivation scores tended to report lower extrinsic speaking motivation and writing

motivation scores. The results indicate that intrinsic speaking motivation was strongly associated with writing motivation, whereas amotivation showed weaker negative associations with extrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation.

Discussion

This study examined speaking and writing motivation in Turkish among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection in Türkiye. Specifically, it investigated differences in motivation scores across demographic characteristics and explored the relationships between intrinsic speaking motivation, extrinsic speaking motivation, amotivation, and writing motivation. The most notable finding was the strong positive correlation between intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation. Statistically significant differences were also identified across grade levels in all four motivation dimensions and across age groups in extrinsic speaking motivation. In contrast, no statistically significant differences were observed according to gender or perceived Turkish language proficiency.

The descriptive findings showed that students' mean intrinsic speaking motivation score was higher than their mean extrinsic speaking motivation score. However, because the statistical significance of this difference was not examined, it should be interpreted as a descriptive pattern rather than evidence of a statistically significant difference. Furthermore, the relatively high mean amotivation score should not be interpreted as indicating stronger speaking motivation. Within the framework of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation represent conceptually distinct motivational orientations. Accordingly, students' speaking motivation is better understood by examining their intrinsic interest in speaking, externally driven reasons for participation, and lack of motivation as separate dimensions rather than reducing these orientations to a single overall motivational level. This multidimensional perspective is also relevant to the work of Erdem and Tay (2024), who examined speaking motivation among learners of Turkish as a second language and highlighted its importance as an affective dimension of language learning.

The findings of Noels et al. (2000), which highlight the relevance of perceived competence and anxiety to motivation in second-language learning, provide a useful perspective for interpreting the relatively high amotivation scores observed in the present study. These scores may suggest that some students experience difficulties perceiving speaking Turkish as a meaningful or attainable activity. However, no statistically significant differences in amotivation were identified across students' self-reported Turkish language proficiency levels. This finding suggests that perceived language proficiency alone may not adequately account for variations in amotivation. Other factors, such as language anxiety, classroom experiences, and opportunities for meaningful communication, may also be relevant, although these were not directly examined in the present study.

The strong positive correlation between intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation ($r = .798$) indicates that students who reported greater intrinsic motivation to speak Turkish also tended to report higher levels of writing motivation. Although speaking and writing differ in their

communicative demands and production processes, both involve constructing meaning and expressing ideas in the target language. These shared characteristics may help explain the close association between motivation for the two skills. This interpretation is consistent with Ryan and Deci's (2000) conceptualisation of intrinsic motivation as engagement in an activity for its inherent interest and satisfaction. Nevertheless, the correlational nature of the findings precludes any conclusion that intrinsic speaking motivation directly influences writing motivation. An alternative explanation is that the strong association reflects a broader motivational orientation towards self-expression in Turkish that may be captured by both scales. Further research employing confirmatory factor analysis and assessments of discriminant validity could help establish whether intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation represent empirically distinct constructs.

The moderate positive correlation between extrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation ($r = .430$) suggests that students who report stronger extrinsic reasons for speaking Turkish also tend to demonstrate higher levels of writing motivation. The role of Turkish in completing school-related tasks and supporting academic participation may offer one possible explanation for this association. However, the use of overall subscale scores does not allow conclusions to be drawn about the relative importance of specific extrinsic factors, such as grades, teacher expectations, or family expectations. Furthermore, the negative correlation between amotivation and writing motivation ($r = -.275$) indicates that students with higher amotivation scores tended to report lower levels of writing motivation. This association can be interpreted within the framework of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which conceptualises amotivation as a lack of intention or motivation to engage in an activity. Nevertheless, the observed relationship does not establish that amotivation directly reduces writing motivation.

The findings concerning grade level highlight the importance of examining the motivational experiences of Grade 5 students. Compared with students in Grades 6, 7, and 8, Grade 5 students reported significantly lower levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic speaking motivation. They also had significantly lower writing motivation scores than Grade 6 students, although no significant differences were identified between Grade 5 and the other grade levels for this dimension. In contrast, Grade 5 students had significantly higher amotivation scores than Grade 6 students. Taken together, these findings suggest that Grade 5 students may represent a group whose speaking and writing motivation warrants particular attention. However, the cross-sectional design does not allow these differences to be attributed to progression through grade levels or to specific developmental processes.

The motivational patterns observed among Grade 5 students may be associated with changes in the instructional environment and academic expectations during the transition from primary to lower secondary education. Karakoç et al. (2024) reported that Syrian middle school students experienced difficulties related to communication, belonging, instructional materials, and assessment practices while learning Turkish. These challenges provide a potentially relevant context for interpreting the grade-level differences identified in the present study. Similarly, the stage-environment fit perspective proposed by Eccles et al. (1993) suggests that

a mismatch between students' developmental needs and the opportunities provided by their school environment may adversely affect motivation during the transition to lower secondary education. Such a mismatch may be particularly pronounced among Syrian students who require additional language support.

Nevertheless, the finding that Grade 5 students demonstrated lower motivation than students in higher grades contrasts with the findings of Lepper et al. (2005), who reported a decline in intrinsic motivation as students progressed through grade levels. This discrepancy suggests that motivation among students learning the language of schooling as a second language may be associated not only with age but also with their accumulated experience of using that language in educational settings. Cummins (2008) emphasised that the development of academic language proficiency is a process that takes several years. From this perspective, the longer exposure of students in higher grades to Turkish-medium educational environments may offer one possible explanation for the observed differences. However, because the present study did not examine students' length of residence in Türkiye or the duration of their education in Turkish, this explanation could not be empirically tested.

The age-related findings indicated that students aged 13 years and those aged 14 years or older had significantly higher extrinsic speaking motivation scores than students aged 11 years. In line with Dörnyei's (2001, 2005) approach to language learning motivation, which considers learner characteristics, goals, and learning experiences, these differences may be associated with the academic and social significance that students attribute to learning and using Turkish. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow these differences to be interpreted as evidence of increasing extrinsic motivation with age.

The absence of statistically significant gender differences indicates that motivation scores did not differ significantly between female and male students in the present sample. However, this finding does not establish that gender is irrelevant to motivation or that other variables are necessarily more influential. Camacho et al. (2021), in their review, reported that female students generally demonstrated higher writing motivation than male students, suggesting that the present findings differ from this broader pattern. The substantial imbalance between the numbers of male ($n = 23$) and female ($n = 103$) participants may have limited the statistical power of the gender comparisons, particularly for detecting smaller differences.

The absence of statistically significant differences according to perceived Turkish language proficiency also requires cautious interpretation. In the present study, proficiency was assessed through students' self-reports rather than an objective language proficiency test. Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that actual Turkish language proficiency is unrelated to motivation. MacIntyre et al. (1998) highlighted the relevance of linguistic competence, self-confidence, anxiety, and communicative context to willingness to communicate in a second language. Similarly, Noels et al. (2000) identified positive associations between perceived competence and more autonomous forms of motivation, alongside a negative association with amotivation. The

categorisation of perceived Turkish language proficiency into only two groups in the present study may have reduced the sensitivity of the analysis to differences in motivation associated with proficiency perceptions.

Taken together, the findings highlight the value of considering speaking and writing motivation in conjunction. In particular, the strong association between intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation provides a rationale for investigating integrated learning activities that allow students to engage in both oral and written production on topics of personal interest. The grade-level differences further suggest the importance of attending closely to the linguistic and affective needs of Grade 5 students. Bruning and Horn (2000) identified meaningful writing purposes and authentic contexts that engage students' interests as important conditions for supporting writing motivation. Their perspective offers a theoretical foundation for designing integrated speaking and writing activities that may foster students' engagement with Turkish. However, the effectiveness of such activities would need to be established through further empirical research.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated significant associations between speaking and writing motivation among Syrian middle school students under temporary protection in Türkiye. A strong positive correlation was identified between intrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation, while a moderate positive correlation was found between extrinsic speaking motivation and writing motivation. Amotivation was negatively correlated with writing motivation.

No statistically significant differences in motivation scores were observed according to gender or perceived Turkish language proficiency. Extrinsic speaking motivation scores were significantly higher among students aged 13 years and those aged 14 years or older than among students aged 11 years. Significant differences were also identified across grade levels in all four motivation dimensions. Grade 5 students had significantly lower intrinsic and extrinsic speaking motivation scores than students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. They also reported lower writing motivation and higher amotivation scores than Grade 6 students.

These findings highlight the importance of considering speaking and writing motivation together and paying particular attention to the motivational needs of Grade 5 students. They also provide a basis for further research into instructional approaches that address both oral and written language engagement among students learning Turkish as a second language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are proposed for educational practitioners and researchers:

- Targeted transition programmes could be developed for Syrian students under temporary protection, particularly those entering Grade 5, to support their motivation to speak and write in Turkish during the transition from primary to lower secondary education.
- Speaking and writing could be addressed as complementary productive language skills in Turkish language lessons. Classroom

activities that integrate oral and written expression may provide opportunities for students to develop their motivation to use Turkish in meaningful communicative contexts.

- Teachers could establish safe, inclusive, and supportive communication environments in which students feel comfortable expressing themselves in Turkish. Opportunities for participation, constructive feedback, and communication without fear of negative judgement may help support students' speaking motivation.
- In-service training programmes should be provided to strengthen teachers' understanding of the Turkish language learning experiences of Syrian students under temporary protection. Such programmes could address second-language acquisition, speaking anxiety, writing difficulties, differences between writing systems, and cultural adaptation, alongside instructional strategies responsive to students' linguistic and affective needs.

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