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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

THE USE OF COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES BY TURKISH EFL STUDENTS

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

✓

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To

my parents and my husband
who have always encouraged me

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ABSTRACT

This study, which comprises five chapters, investigates if the grammatical difference in the classification of nouns in English and in Turkish affects the performance of Turkish students studying English as a foreign language, whether this influence is positive or negative, and to what extent.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a number of tests were given to Turkish EFL students at the prep school, Open Education Faculty, Anadolu University. The test results were then analysed and discussed.

The first chapter describes the grammatical classifications of nouns in English and in Turkish. The difference in one sub-class which grammatically exists only in English is emphasized. Also, number and countability in English and in Turkish are discussed. In addition, grammatical identities of English and Turkish nouns are mentioned. Finally, the purpose of this study is explained.

The second chapter deals with nouns and noun types in Turkish and English. At the end, a comparison is made between the two languages in this particular aspect.

In the third chapter, the method of the study is explained by describing the research design supported by the contrastive analysis hypothesis; selection of subjects, data collection, methodological assumptions, and limitations.

In the fourth chapter, the data obtained from the tests given to Turkish students are statistically calculated and analysed.

In the fifth chapter, the statistical interpretations are discussed. The following are the more significant conclusions reached in this study: a) English countables in context are easier than uncountables in context for Turkish students studying English, b) in isolation there is no significant difference between the two, c) countables as well as uncountables should be taught in context, d) translating countables and uncountables from English into Turkish is easier than vice versa.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

English and Turkish classify nouns grammatically under various subclasses. Some of these subclasses coincide while others do not.

Both English grammar and Turkish grammar have the following subgroups of nouns (Tahsin Banguoğlu, 1974:319, 320, 321; Jackson, Howard, 1980:61, 62):

a) Proper nouns and common nouns:

Examples for proper nouns in English: Timothy, California, etc.

Examples for common nouns in English: Child, bread, luck, happiness, etc.

Examples for proper nouns in Turkish: Emine, (a female name), Istanbul, etc.

Examples for common nouns in Turkish: Çocuk, ekmeK, şans, mutluluk, etc.

b) Concrete nouns and abstract nouns:

Examples for concrete nouns in English: Child, bread, etc.

Examples for abstract nouns in English: Luck, happiness, etc.

Examples for concrete nouns in Turkish: Çocuk, ekmek, etc.

Examples for abstract nouns in Turkish: Şans, mutluluk,
etc.

Unlike the above subclasses the following subclass grammatically exists in English while it does not in Turkish.

a) Countable nouns and uncountable nouns:

Examples for countable nouns in English: a child, an idea,
etc.

Examples for uncountable nouns in English: bread,
happiness, etc.

1.2. NUMBER IN ENGLISH AND IN TURKISH

In English before the application of the singular/plural rule to a noun, it must be decided whether the noun is countable or uncountable. If it falls into the countable noun category, then it can be left as a singular noun or can be made a plural noun (William E. Rutherford, 1987:59)

In Turkish, however, this process is different since it is grammatically possible to use an uncountable noun either in singular or plural form (illness names are exceptions; they are not used in plural forms: kabakulak (mumps), kızamık (measles), etc.

1.2.1. THE CONCEPT OF COUNTABILITY IN ENGLISH AND IN TURKISH

In both English and Turkish the concepts of countability and uncountability exist semantically. This semantic concept is grammatically supported in English. As L.G. Alexander says (1988:38)

all common nouns fall into one of two sub-classes, countable nouns or uncountable nouns. And this distinction is fundamental in English because only by distinguishing between the two is it possible to use singular or plural forms, articles, and quantifiers correctly.

However, in Turkish this semantic concept is not supported grammatically: nouns are not divided into countables and uncountables in grammatical terms. As Tahsin Banguoğlu (1979:80) and Tahir N. Gencan (1984:149) say, a noun, when it stands alone, indicates a single entity or concept; and when more than one entity or concept are mentioned the noun takes the plural suffix: /-lEr/ (see examples in 2.1.1.3. in this study).

The notion of 'uncountability' exists in Turkish, for example: "Bu kadar suyu nasıl içtin?" ("How did you drink this much water?"). 'Water' in this example is an uncountable noun in English. In Turkish, however, it can be also be used with the indefinite article 'bir' (a/an) or in plural form, for example, "Beş su rica ediyorum." ("Five *waters, please." meaning: "Five glasses of water, please." or "Five bottles of water, please." depending on the context). In English, the grammatical usage of uncountable nouns is different: for example, 'water' in its unmarked form is uncountable in English. The usage of 'water' in plural form meaning 'glasses or cups of water' is not common while the usage of tea in plural form meaning 'glasses or cups of tea' is common. And the cases like 'tea' and few other nouns like 'coffee', 'beer', etc. is exceptional compared with the great number of other uncountable nouns in English, such as, 'water', 'air', 'paper', etc. These can neither be used in singular form nor in plural form as long as their unmarked forms are meant.

1.3. GRAMMATICAL IDENTITIES OF NOUNS IN DICTIONARIES

In English and Turkish dictionaries, words are usually identified grammatically before they are defined. In an English dictionary if a word is grammatically a noun, then it is identified either as concrete or abstract or either as countable or uncountable. In a Turkish dictionary, also, if a word is a noun, it is identified either as concrete or abstract, but not as countable or uncountable. The reason for this is that the grammatical use of uncountable nouns is not the same as it is in English.

The following diagram shows this clearly:

	PROPER	COMMON			
		COUNTABLE		UNCOUNTABLE	
		CONCRETE	ABSTRACT	CONCRETE	ABSTRACT
TURK	Ankara Selma	bir masa bir su	bir fikir bir haber	biraz su	bazı haberler
ENG	London Anthony	a table *a water	an idea *a news	some water	some news

Noun Classes in Turkish and English Grammar

The Use of Countables and Uncountables

As can be seen in the diagram above, the grammatical usage of nouns are different in the two languages: in the countable category, nouns: 'masa' (T) = 'table' (E) and 'fikir' (T) = 'idea' (E) take the indefinite article 'bir' (T) = 'a/an' (E) in both languages. But, in the uncountable category, nouns: 'su' (T) = 'water' (E) and

'haber' (T) = 'news' (E) may, in Turkish, take the indefinite article 'bir' (T) = 'a/an' (E) and may take the plural suffix: /-ler/ = /(e)s/ like in 'sular' (*waters) and 'haberler' (*more than one news), whereas in English they do not (see also 2.2.1.3., and 5.2. in this study for the use of uncountables as countables in English).

1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study investigates if the grammatical difference in the classification of nouns in English and in Turkish affects the performance of Turkish students studying English, whether this influence is positive or negative and to what extent.

The general purpose of this study is to compare the Turkish students' performance in using countable nouns and their performance in using uncountable nouns.

The goal is to give answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in context?

2. Is there a correlation between the students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context?

3. Is there a correlation between the students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation?

4. Is there a correlation between the students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation?

5. Is there a significant difference between the students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation?

6. Is there a significant difference between the students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context?

7. Is there a significant difference between the students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation?

8. Is there a significant difference between the students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation?

9. Is there a significant difference between the students' scores taken in the testing of uncountables in context and their scores taken in the testing of uncountables in isolation?

10. Do Turkish students score higher in translating countables and uncountables from English into Turkish or from Turkish into English?

11. How accurate are native speakers of English when they are given the same testing of countables and uncountables in context and in isolation given to Turkish students?

12. How do native speakers score in using countables and uncountables in context and in isolation compared to the students' performance?

CHAPTER 2

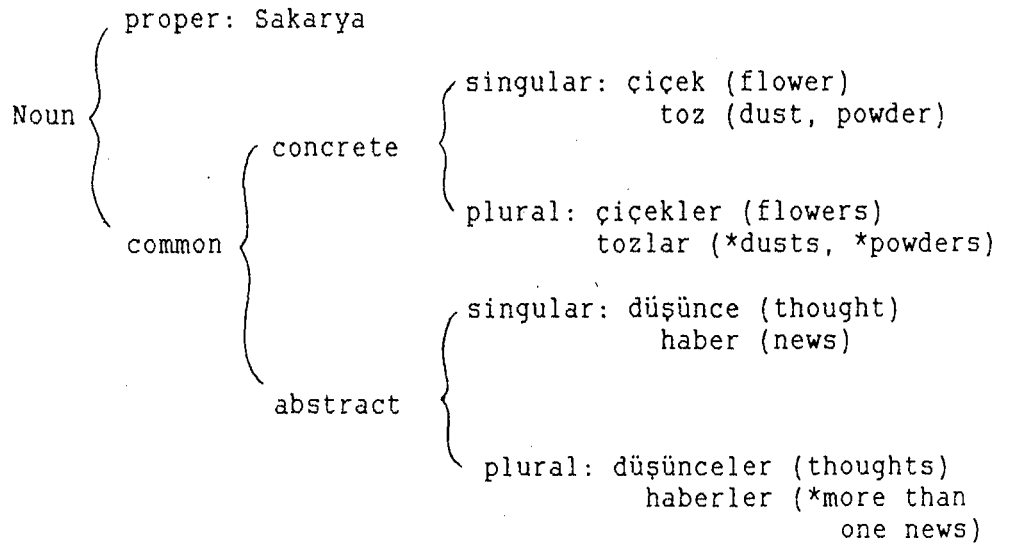
NOUNS AND NOUN TYPES IN TURKISH AND IN ENGLISH

2.1. NOUNS AND NOUN TYPES IN TURKISH

As defined by Tahsin Banguoğlu (1940:27, 1974:319) and by Muharrem Ergin (1981:218), nouns are words which name real or imaginary things: sütçü (milkman), ot (grass), bilgi (information, knowledge), temizlik (cleanness, cleaning), etc.

2.1.1. NOUN TYPES

Nouns are classified under several types (Tahsin Banguoğlu, 1974: 319-321; Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984: 146-149):



2.1.1.1. Proper Nouns and Common Nouns

Firstly nouns are divided into proper and common nouns:

a) Proper nouns denote single beings or things, or single groups: Dursun, Karabas, Sakarya, Türkler, etc.

b) Common nouns denote members of a species: kız (girl), avcı (hunter), orman (forest), sevinç (happiness), danışma (reference), etc.

2.1.1.2. Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns

Secondly, nouns are divided into concrete and abstract nouns:

a) Concrete nouns denote concrete things: çiçek (flower), taş (stone), Ayşe (proper name for a girl), sütçü (milkman), kum (sand), Mersin (city name in Turkey), ot (grass), etc.

b) Abstract nouns denote abstract things or conceptions: bilgi (information, knowledge), kaygı (enxiety), dilek (wish), uyku (sleep), arkadaşlık (friendship), sevinç (happiness), özgürlük (freedom), etc.

2.1.1.3. Number

Nouns are divided into two classes according to number (Tahsin Banguoglu, 1940: 27; 1974:322; 1979: 80; Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1979: 149):

a) Common nouns in plain form stand for one member of a species or one particular piece of a whole: çiçek (flower), taş (stone), sütçü (a milkman), kaygı (enxiety), ülkü (ideal), kum (sand), özgürlük (freedom), etc.

Here one or one piece also stands for one class or one whole:
 "Kitap en iyi arkadaştır." (The book is the best friend.), "Elma sever misin?" (Do you like apples?)

b) More than one thing belonging to a class is shown by adding the plural suffix: /-ler/ to a noun: çiçekler (flowers), taşlar (stones), sütçüler (milkmen), kaygılar (anxieties), ülküler (ideals), kumlar (*sands meaning: grains of sand), özgürlükler (*freedoms), etc.

In Turkish all the nouns in plain form are singular and are made plural by adding: /-ler/ (Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984:149). The only exceptions are to our knowledge the name of the moslem deity 'Allah' and the names of illnesses, such as 'kabakulak' (mumps), kızamık (measles), etc.

However, a whole class of a species or a limited quantity of a class can be shown by a singular common noun: "Kitap en iyi arkadaştır." ("*Book is the best friend." meaning: "The book is the best friend."); "Halam bize çiçek göndermiş." ("My aunt has sent us *flower." meaning: "My aunt has sent us (some) flowers."); "Sabahları süt içiyorum." ("I drink milk in the morning.")

2.1.1.3.1. Other Functions of the Plural in Turkish

The plural suffix in Turkish may be added to nouns not only to indicate more than one thing but for other purposes as well (Tahsin Banguoğlu, 1979: 80, 81; Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984: 149, 150):

The plural suffix is added to a noun:

a) not only to indicate the greatness of the number, such as but to indicate the greatness of the number, such as in: "Arkadaşları geldi." ("Her friends arrived."); but to indicate the amount as well which are called 'exaggeration or emphasis plurals' (pluriel emphatique) (Tahsin Banguoğlu, 1974:323), for example: baklavalalar, börekler, kürkler (furs), ateşler içinde (in *fires meaning: having a high temperature/fever), yerlerde yatmak (to lie on *floors meaning: to lie on the floor - showing disapproval), havalara sıçramak (to jump into *airs meaning: to jump into the air - showing happiness).

b) to mention about a nation, group, family, etc.; for example, Uygurlar (Uygur Turks), Müslümanlar (Moslems), Avşarlar (Turkomans), Osmanlılar (Ottomans), etc.

c) to refer to a partical person and some or all members of her/his family together or their house; forexample, "Hale'ler bize geliyor." ("*Hales are coming to us." meaning: "Hale and her family are coming to us."; "Ablanlara gidelim mi?" ("Shall we go to your *sisters?" meaning: "Shall we go to your sister's house?")

d) to refer to a person and other people like that person or to refer to a place and other places like that place; for example, "Fuzuliler, Bakiler, Sinanlar 16. yuzyilda Türk sanatını yükselttiler." ("*Fuzulis, *Bakis, *Sinans improved the Turkish art in the 16th century." meaning: "Fuzuli, Baki, Sinan and other people like them improved the Turkish art in the 16th century."); "Bir süre Nice'lerde, Riviera'larda gezip tozmuşlar." ("They have visited *Nices, Riviernas." meaning: "They have visited Nice, Riviera and other places like them.")

e) to indicate that a thing or things belong to more than one person; for example, "Üç kardeş, kapı önünde oturup annelerini bekliyorlar." ("Three siblings are sitting in front of the door, waiting for their *mothers." meaning: "Three siblings are sitting in front of the door waiting for their mother."); "Bir inekleri, üç koyunları var." ("They have one *cows and three sheep." meaning: "They have one cow and three sheep.") (Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984: 149) (see the last paragraph of this section for the use of the plural suffix with and without number in front of a noun.)

f) to show respect; for example, "Sayın bay evdeler mi? Henüz dönmediler mi?" ("*Are Mr. gentleman at *homes? *Haven't *they arrived?" meaning: "Is Mr. gentleman at home? Hasn't he arrived?"; "Siz de gelecek misiniz?" ("Will *you (plural) come also?" meaning: "Will you (singular) come also?"); "Biz öyle yerlere gidemeyiz." ("*We cannot go to such places." meaning: "I cannot go to such places.") (Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984: 256)

g) to mean around, or approximately; for example, "Özgür beş yaşlarında bir çocuktur." ("Özgür is a child at the *ages of five." meaning: "Özgür is a child at the age of five."); "O sıralarda ben de okula yeni başlamıştım." ("At *those *times I had just started school." meaning: "At that time I had just started school.") (Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984: 150).

The plural nouns in Turkish do not take the plural suffix when used with a number in the front; for example, 'beş çocuk' (' five *child' meaning: 'five children'), 'iki gezegen' ('two *planet', meaning: 'two planets'). "Yüz kişi tutuklandı." ("A hundred

*person *was arrested." meaning: "A hundred people were arrested.").

But when plural nouns are used as names of a certain well-known people or a certain group of objects, the plural suffix is added to the number or to the name; for example, 'Kırklar' ('*Forties' meaning: 'a group of forty'), 'Dört Büyükler' ('Four *Greats' meaning: 'Four Great People'), 'Altı Kızlar' ('Six Girls'), 'Beşevler' ('Fivehouses'), etc.

2.1.1.4. Collective Nouns

Sometimes a singular common noun may denote a group: ordu, (army), bölük (troop), takım (set, lot), sürü (flock), küme (heap, pile), öbek (heap, group), dizi (row, series), etc.

These also may take a plural suffix to denote more than one group: ordular (armies), bölükler (troops), sürüler (flocks), etc.

2.1.1.5. Partitives

Partitive nouns can be used as collective nouns to denote a group of nouns belonging to the same class: bir avuç fındık (a handful of *nut: meaning a handful of nuts), iki demet çiçek (two *bunch of flower: meaning two bunches of flowers), üç çuval patates (three *sack of *potato: meaning three sacks of potatoes) (Tahsin Banguoğlu, 1974: 322, 323).

Other partitive-like structures are the following: azıcık ilgi (a little attention), biraz pirinç (some rice or a little rice), bir bardak şeker (a glass of sugar), bir dilim ekmek (a slice of bread), bir lokma ekmek (a bit of bread), etc.

It is possible to divide Turkish partitives into several types as in English but in a different way:

a) Partitives for both countables and uncountables:

biraz: biraz fındık, biraz un, etc.

(some, a little, a few: some *nut (meaning: some nuts), some flour, etc.)

azıcık: azıcık fındık, azıcık un, etc.

(little, few, a bit: few nuts, little flour, etc.)

bir avuç: bir avuç fındık, bir avuç un, etc.

(a handful: a handful of nuts, a handful of flour, etc.)

bir, iki, vs. çuval: üç çuval fındık, üç çuval un, etc.

(one, two, three, etc. *sack (meaning: sacks): three *sack of nuts (meaning: three sacks of nuts) , three sack of flour (meaning: three sacks of flour), etc.)

b) Partitives for countables only:

bir, iki, vs. sap: bir sap soğan, üç sap pırasa, etc.

(a/one, two, etc. stalk): a stalk of onion, three *stalk of *leek (meaning: three stalks of leeks), etc.)

bir, iki, vs. tane: bir tane fındık, beş tane elma, on tane kağıt, etc.

(a/one, two, etc. unit): a/one nut, five *apple (meaning five apples), ten *paper (meaning: ten sheets of paper), etc.)

bir, iki, vs. baş: bir baş sarımsak, dört baş soğan etc.

(a/one, two, etc. *head (meaning: unit): a head of garlic, four *head of *onion (four heads of onions) etc.)

c) Partitives for uncountables only:

bir, iki, vs. dilim: bir dilim ekmek, üç dilim kek, etc.

(a/an/one, two, etc. slices: a slice of bread, three *slice of cake (meaning: three slices of cake), etc.)

bir, iki, vs. lokma: iki lokma yemek, bir lokma ekmek,

etc.

(a/one, two, etc. morsel: two *morsel of food (meaning: two morsels of food), a morsel of bread, etc.)

bir, iki, vs. demet: iki demet çiçek, bir demet maydanoz,

etc.

(a/one, two, etc. bunches: two *bunch of *flower

(meaning: two bunches of flowers), a bunch of parsley, etc.)

bir, iki, vs. bardak: bir bardak su, iki bardak şeker,

etc.

(a/one, two, etc. glass: a glass of water, two *glass of

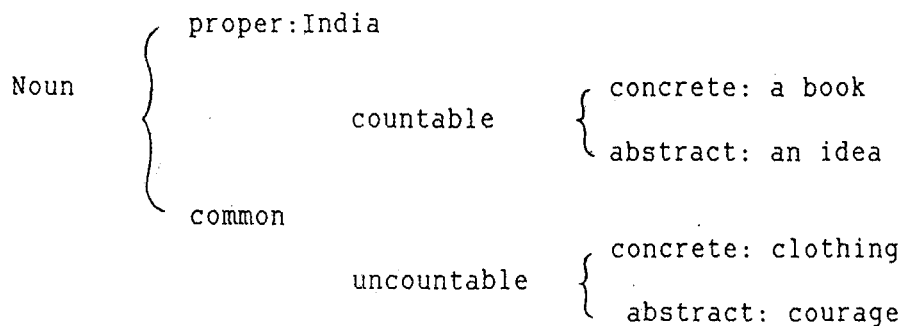
sugar (meaning: two glasses of sugar), etc.)

2.2. NOUNS AND NOUN TYPES IN ENGLISH

As defined in Collins Dictionary (1987) a noun is a word which is used to refer to a person, a thing, or an abstract idea such as a feeling or quality.

2.2.1. NOUN TYPES

Nouns are classified under several types (L.G. Alexander, 1988:38):



2.2.1.1. Proper Nouns and Common Nouns

Firstly, nouns are divided into proper nouns and common nouns (Howard Jackson, 1980:61):

a) Proper nouns are said to refer to unique 'things': James, America, etc.

a) Common nouns to a class of objects or to a specific instance of that class: flower, life, etc.

2.2.1.2. Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns

Countable and uncountable nouns are also subdivided into concrete and abstract nouns:

a) Concrete nouns are said to refer to perceivable objects: flower, book, etc. Many countable nouns are concrete while a few countable nouns are abstract (L.G. Alexander, 1988:39,40).

b) Abstract nouns refer to ideas, feelings and 'things' of that kind: love, perfection, etc. Many uncountable nouns are abstract while a few countable nouns are concrete (L.G. Alexander, 1988:39,40).

2.2.1.3. Countable Nouns and Uncountable Nouns

Secondly, all nouns are subdivided into countable and uncountable nouns:

a) Countable nouns are nouns which can be counted: a flower, a book, etc.

b) Uncountable (mass) nouns in principle cannot be counted: water, love, etc.

However, some nouns can be both countable and mass, depending on the context in which they appear: tea, two teas, cake, cakes, chocolate, chocolates, etc. (see 5.2. in this study).

Generally uncountable nouns (i.e. uncountables or noncount nouns) are given the same meaning as mass nouns (A.J. Thomson and A.V. Martinet, 1986:28; Carl A. Lafevre, 1970:119; Howard Jackson, 1980:61; Geoffrey N. Leech, 1971:105; F.V. Bywater, 1981:126; Marianne Celce-Murca, and Diane Larsen-Freeman, 1983:189; Walter Matreyek, 1983:328); Otto Jespersen, 1976:206; Wallace L. Chafe, 1970:108, 109).

2.2.2. A MORE DETAILED CLASSIFICATION OF NOUN TYPES

A more detailed classification has been made by L.A Hill (1979:1-10):

A countable: a car

B collective: a team

C plural only: the cattle

D plural only or countable: scissors, the Portuguses

a silver scissors, a Portuguese

E unique plural: the Azores

F uncountable: music, bread

G uncountable or countable: tea, a tea

H unique or countable: James, a James

I unique or countable or uncountable: Shakespeare,
a Shakespeare, some Shakespeare.

In the above classification of nouns by Hill some groups may overlap others:

D: A + C

G: A + F

I: F + H

Here Hill gives this detailed classification to guide the English teacher in her/his teaching strategy. He suggests that certain classes should be presented in the early stage while others in the intermediate and late stages successively.

2.2.3. NOUN TYPES IN COLLINS COBUILD DICTIONARY

In Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (1987) nouns are divided into eight groups: noun proper, noun count, noun uncountable, noun mass, noun part, noun singular, noun plural, and noun group.

2.2.3.1. Noun Proper

Proper nouns refer to one particular person, place or institution: Asia, Hell, Father Christmas, the BBC, etc.

2.2.3.2. Noun Count

Countable nouns have a plural form by adding /-s/. When they are singular, they must have a determiner: a, the, her, etc.; for example, an airplane, the car, airplanes, the cars, etc.

2.2.3.3. Noun Uncountable

Uncountable nouns do not treat the things that they refer to as countable: furniture, happiness, etc. They do not usually have a determiner in front of them.

2.2.3.3.1. Noun Mass

Mass nouns normally behave like uncountable nouns. However, unlike uncountable nouns they can also treat the things that they refer to as countables: tea, three teas, etc.

2.2.3.4. Noun Part

Partitive nouns are typically followed by 'of': two pints of beer. There are three types:

a) Some are used to measure things that are expressed by uncountable nouns or mass nouns: a cup of sugar, a glass of tea, etc.

b) Some are used to refer to individual items of something that is expressed by an uncountable noun: a little bit of work, a piece of news, etc.

c) Some are collective nouns, where the noun following 'of' is a plural count noun: a herd of cows, an army of soldiers, etc.

2.2.3.5. Noun Singular

Singular nouns are always singular in form: business, jumble, etc. They are always used with a determiner: a, the, etc.; for example, a business, the jumble, etc.

2.2.3.6. Noun Plural

Plural nouns are used with a plural verb: clothes are..., police are..., etc. Some plural nouns which end in /-s/ such as "jeans", refer to a single object which has two main parts.

2.2.3.7. Noun Group

Noun groups always have a noun or pronoun as their headword the house..., his smelly old house..., the town house of Sir Winston Churchill, etc.

2.2.4. NOUN TYPES FOCUSED ON IN THIS STUDY

In this study the classification is made with reference to Collins Dictionary (1974). The following two subgroups are used for the purposes of this study: noun countable, and noun uncountable. Mass nouns, in their unmarked forms (their first meaning in a dictionary) are uncountable, so they are treated as uncountable nouns, and as partitive nouns are countable by nature they are treated as countables.

2.3. A COMPARISON OF TURKISH AND ENGLISH: COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES

When compared on a wide spectrum there are more similarities than differences between nouns and noun types in Turkish and in English. Both Turkish and English grammatically define nouns in the same way (see 2.1. and 2.2 in this study). Also, most noun types fall into the same categories (see 1.1 in this study).

However, in Turkish and in English the usage of nouns as countables and uncountables may differ to a certain extent. Both languages add the plural suffix: /-lEr/ (T) = /-(e)s/ (E) to nouns to mean more than one thing or concept, but English limits the usage of the plural suffix to a certain class of nouns which are grammatically called countable nouns. On the other hand, Turkish does not limit the usage of the plural suffix as such. Conceptually uncountable nouns perfectly take the plural suffix (see 1.2.1. and 2.1.1. in this study) unless they are used with a number.

Similarly, Turkish does not limit the usage of certain partitive nouns to a certain class of nouns in the same way as in English (see 2.1.1.5. in this study).

CHAPTER 3

THE METHOD

3.1. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS HYPOTHESIS

The contrastive analysis hypothesis as stated by Lee (1968, p: 186) assumes an interference from the mother tongue arising from the differences between the target language and native language. By comparing the two languages the difficulties and errors can be predicted before they occur. So, what is left to be taught is the differences established by the CA.

In this study, the difference contrasted between English and Turkish is the fact that the latter does not have a grammatical noun classes as 'countables' and 'uncountables'.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a cross-sectional, comparative and contrastive case study.

In this study three types of tests were prepared in order to examine how easy or difficult it is for the Turkish learners of English to use countables and uncountables. A number of statistical analyses were made using the results of these tests to find out the answers to the questions stated in 1.4. in this study.

3.3. SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

The subjects who were to be given the exams were prep school students in the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University in Eskisehir. These students were native speakers of Turkish between 17-20 years of age. They were all being prepared to attain the same proficiency level at the end of the academic year (1987-1988) - nine months - to be able to follow courses instructed in English in the next four years.

There were five classes in the prep school with different levels of English which were determined by a test at the beginning of the academic year. The classes they had in a week are in the following diagram:

LEVEL		SPOKEN	READING	WRITING	GRAMMAR	VIDEO-AURAL
UPP INT	B	Cambridge 2,3				
INT	C	10 hours	4 hours	3 hours	4 hours	2 hrs 2hrs
LOW INT	A	a week				
ELEMAN	E	Cambridge 1,2	the eclectic approach (various sources of materials)			
BEGIN	D	10 hours				4 hrs 2hrs

3.4. TESTS

The tests given were of three types:

1. 84 nouns were presented in the first test, which was a fill-in-the-blank type: 42 countables and 42 uncountables in context and in a mixed order.

2. 73 nouns were presented in the second test, which contained a list of the nouns: 31 countables and 42 uncountables in isolation and in a mixed order.

3. 39 nouns were presented in two translation test: 19 nouns (11 countables and 8 uncountables) from English into Turkish; 20 nouns (3 countables and 17 uncountables) from Turkish into English.

3.4.1. DATA COLLECTION AND DESCRIPTION OF TESTS

In the first test the students were presented sentences each of which included one or two of the nouns in question. The test contained 42 countables and 42 uncountables. They were asked to fill in the blank in front of each noun with a proper determiner: 'a(an) / some / any / -- (blank)'. If they used 'a(an)' it would indicate the fact that the noun was countable, and if they used 'some / any / -- (blank)' then it would show that the noun was uncountable.

In the test including nouns in context the subjects were asked to use only the following determiners and quantifiers: 'a(an) / some / any / --(blank)', because the aim of the study was limited to measuring the difficulty level of using countables and uncountables for Turkish students rather than measuring the difficulty of various determiners and quantifiers.

In the second test, the countable and the uncountable nouns, which appear in the first test were listed in isolation and the students were asked to decide whether each noun seemed to be countable or uncountable at first sight (unmarked meaning). The number of countables was reduced from 42 to 31. The reason for this

was that in context some of the originally uncountable nouns were used as countables also. However, in isolation only the unmarked meaning of the nouns was to be decided. The second test was given separately on a different day to make sure they would not look at the nouns used in context in the first test.

The scores of both tests were later compared to see if the students had difficulties deciding whether a noun is countable or uncountable in context or in isolation.

Presumably, the noun presented in a certain context would be more easily selected as countable or uncountable correctly, because the context provides some clues. Also, dealing with an uncountable noun was thought to be more demanding than dealing with a countable as Turkish does not have a grammatical category as 'countables and uncountables', and it is possible to use uncountables like countables: bir su (*a water), bir haber (*a news).

The third test consisted of two translation exams: the first part (from English into Turkish) had 11 countable nouns and 8 uncountable nouns in English. The second part (from Turkish into English) had 3 countable and 17 uncountable nouns in Turkish.

The sentences used in the first test (English-Turkish) and the first section of the translation exam were taken from the English grammar book, Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, 1987), and from Collins Dictionary (1987). The sentences used in the second section of the translation exam (Turkish-English) were taken from authentic conversations of Turkish speakers.

3.5. METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that:

1. the results of the first tests will determine the students' success in using countables and uncountables in context correctly.

2. the results will help to see whether countables or uncountables present more difficulties in performance, and also in context or in isolation.

3. the results of the second test will determine the students' success in differentiating countables and uncountables.

4. the results of the second test will help to see whether countables in isolation or uncountables in isolation present more difficulties.

5. the results of the first and second tests will show if context helps.

6. the results of the translation tests will help observe how the two languages differ in treating countables and uncountables, and if the Turkish language biases the Turkish learners of English while using countable and uncountable nouns in English.

7. in the test including nouns in isolation, the unmarked meanings of the nouns first would occur to the subjects. That is why, no explanation about unmarked/marked meanings were given in the instructions of the test.

3.6. LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to:

1. the preparatory students in the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University,

2. a midterm exam (the third exam given at the prep school before the final: every exam given at the prep school is prepared to measure the students' proficiency in English).

3. the testing of the usage of countables and uncountables in English: a) in context b) in isolation c) in translations: English-Turkish and Turkish-English,

4. the testing of the nouns which were chosen according to the students' level of English which was measured by a midterm exam given at the prep school.

5. a limited number of quantifiers and determiners (a/an, some, any, -- (blank)).

6. a structural approach,

7. the definitions of nouns in Collins Dictionary (1987:XV, XIX) in which: "... the number of times a use occurs has a strong influence on the way the entries are organized," ; "Wherever possible the first sense is a common one,..." and "...the first sense is a common one and a central one;..."

8. a discrepancy between the number of countable nouns and the number of uncountable nouns in the translation tests.

9. the scattergrams and correlations to answer the questions: 1, 2, 3, and 4; the t-Tests to answer the questions: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9; the bar graphs to answer the questions: 10, 11, and 12 as well as the previous questions (see 1.1.4. for the 12 questions).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

4.1. THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS

The general aims of this study are to find out whether the Turkish students' level of English affects their success in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and in isolation; whether context affects their success in using countables and uncountables; whether countables or uncountables are more demanding in context; whether countables or uncountables are more demanding in isolation; whether countables and uncountables are more difficult in translating from English into Turkish or from Turkish into English; and how successful native speakers are in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and in isolation.

To achieve these aims, the students were given three tests. The first included countable nouns and uncountable nouns in context, the second test included countable nouns and uncountable nouns in isolation, and the third test included translations from English into Turkish and from Turkish into English. On the other hand, four native speakers were given only the first and second tests, but not the third test which required a knowledge of Turkish, also.

Scattergrams and correlations were used to find out whether there was a correlation between Turkish students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and the testing of countables in context, uncountables in context, countables in isolation and uncountables in isolation.

T-tests were calculated to find out whether there was a difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation; between their scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and uncountables in context; between their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and uncountables in isolation; between their scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and countables in isolation; between their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context and uncountables in isolation.

Bar graphs were used to compare the scores of the students dividing them into three groups (see 4.4.1. in this study); to analyse the results of the scattergrams and t-Tests from another viewpoint; to analyse the scores obtained in the translation tests; and to compare the results of the students and the results of the native speakers in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation.

4.2. CORRELATIONS AND SCATTERGRAMS

To answer the questions: 1,2,3, and 4 stated in 1.1.4. correlations were calculated and scattergrams were made.

The correlation between Turkish students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in context was calculated as $r:0.37911$. This correlation is shown in a scattergram in Figure:1.

The correlation between Turkish students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context was calculated as $r:0.10766$. This correlation is shown in a scattergram in Figure:2.

The correlation between Turkish students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation was calculated as $r:0.26390$. This correlation is shown in a scattergram in Figure:3.

The correlation between Turkish students' level of English measured by a midterm exam and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation was calculated as $r:0.01551$. This correlation is shown in a scattergram in Figure:4.

50.35 55.05 59.75 64.45 69.15 73.85 78.55 83.25 87.95 92.65

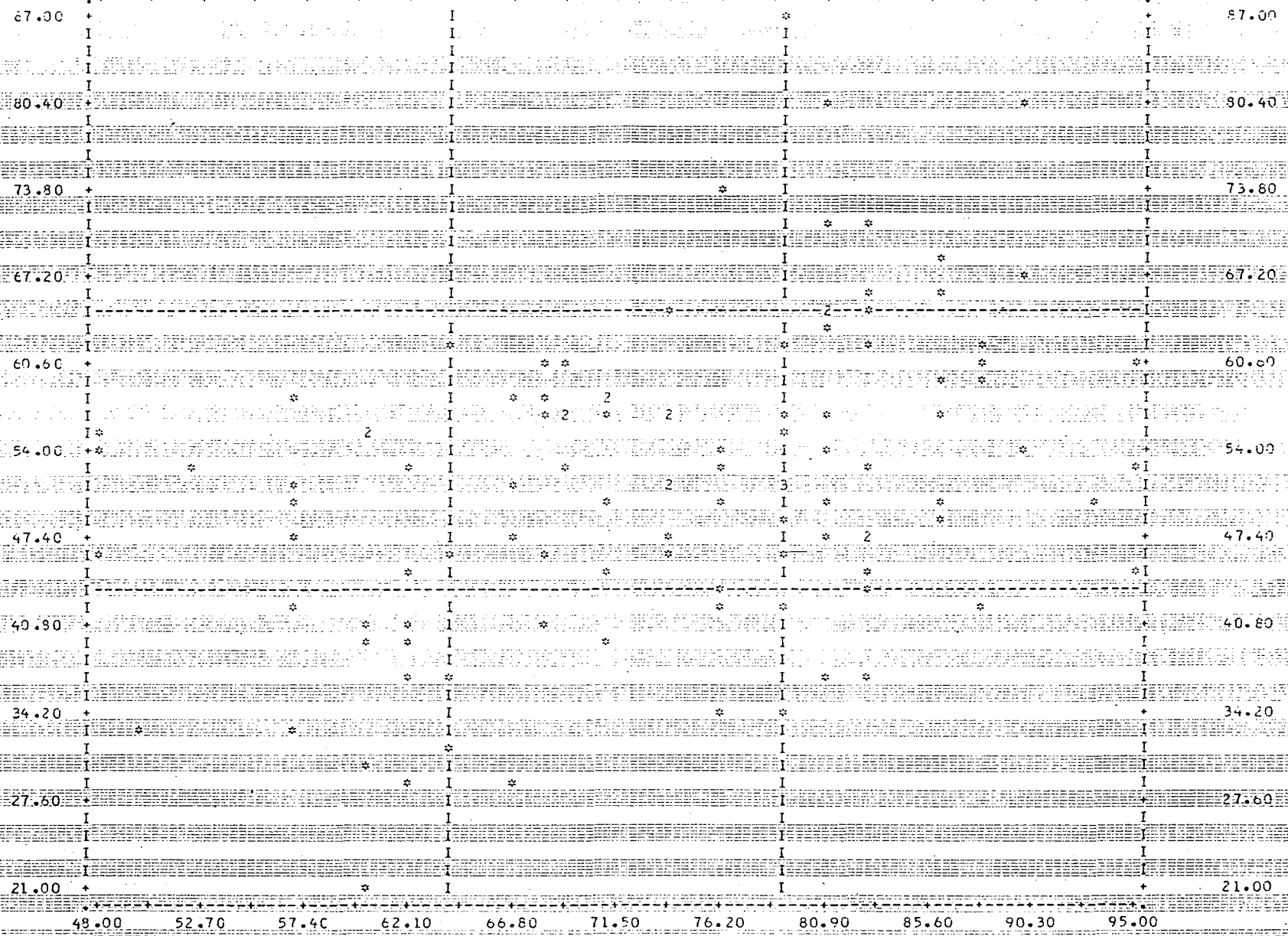


Figure 1

CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF ENGLISH AND COUNTABLES IN CONTEXT

STATISTICS..

CORRELATION (R) - 0.37911

FILE COR (CREATION DATE = 01/17/69)
 SCATTERGRAM OF (DOWN) CI (ACROSS) C3

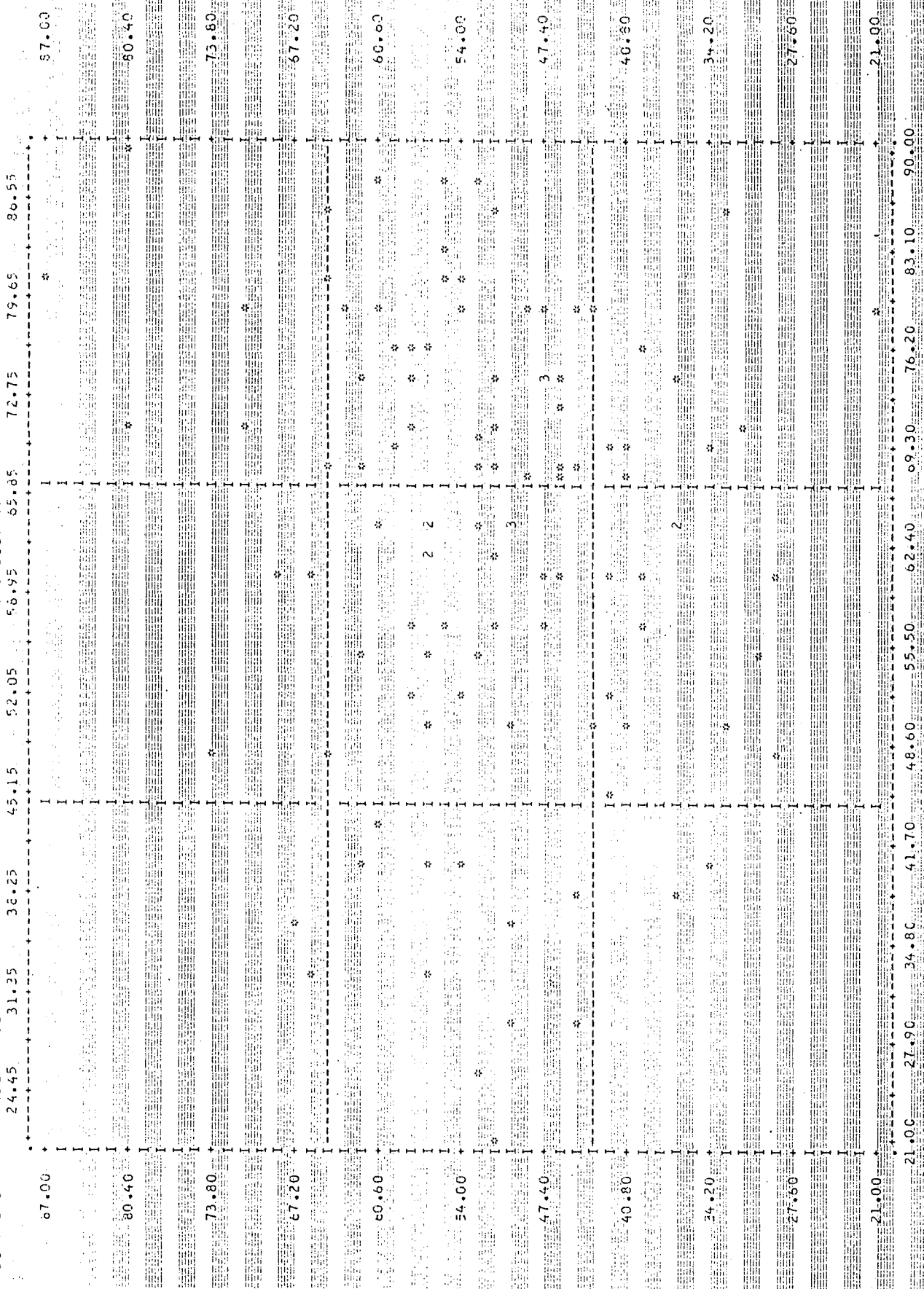


Figure 2

CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF ENGLISH AND UNCOUNTABLES IN CONTEXT

x

y

CORRELATION (R) = 0.10766

34.75 40.25 45.75 51.25 56.75 62.25 67.75 73.25 78.75 84.25

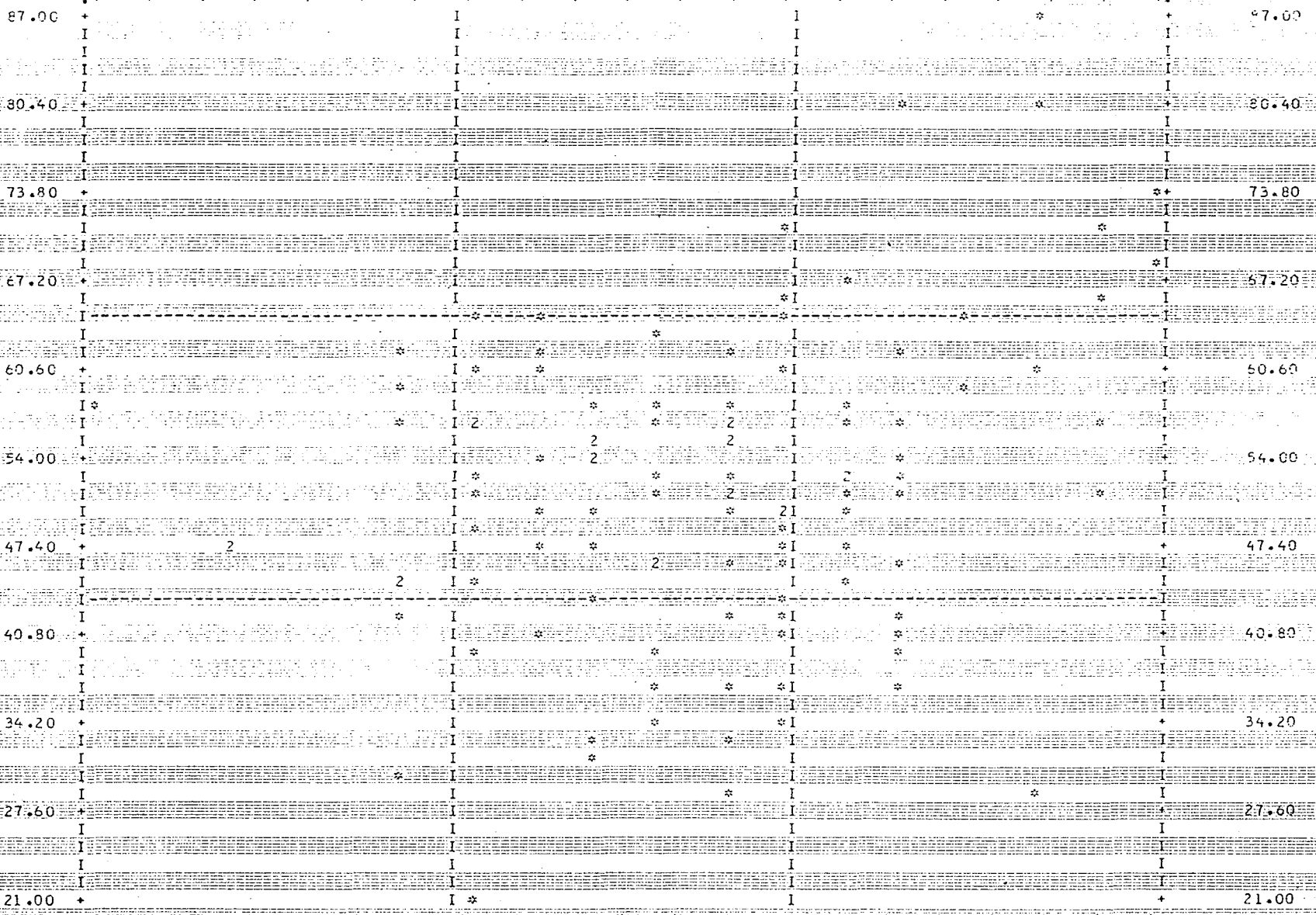


Figure 3

CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF ENGLISH AND COUNTABLES IN ISOLATION

STATISTICS..

CORRELATION (R) = 0.26350

FILE COR (CREATION DATE = 01/17/69)
 SCATTERGRAM OF (DOWN) C1 (ACROSS) C5

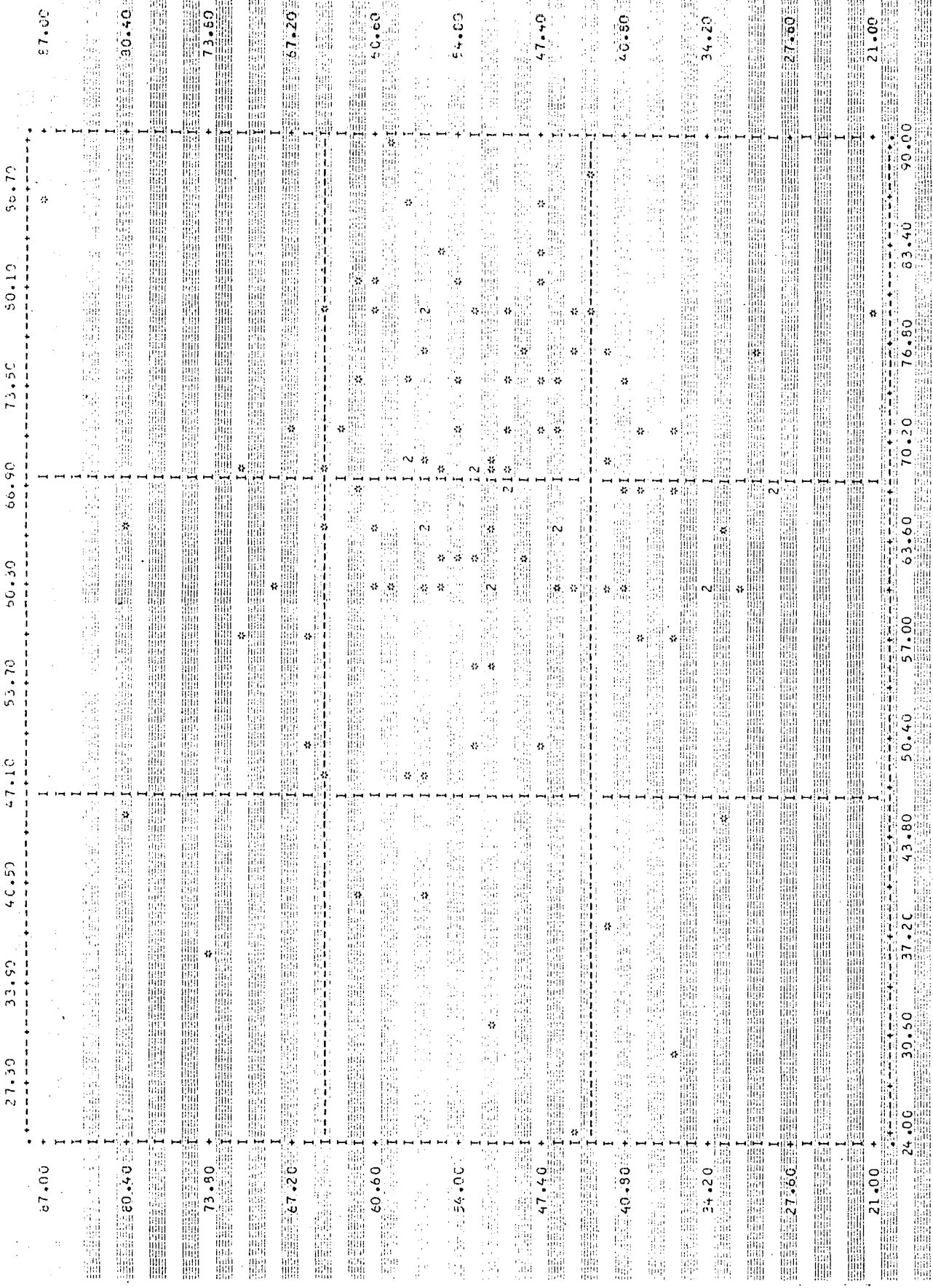


Figure 4

CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF ENGLISH AND UNCOUNTABLES IN ISOLATION

X

Y

STATISTICS:

CORRELATION (R) = -0.01551

4.3. T-TEST RESULTS

To answer the questions:5,6,7,8, and 9 stated in 1.1.4. the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested by using t-Test calculations of the students' scores obtained in the midterm exam measuring their level of English and the three tests given them for this study (see 3.4.).

According to this, the first null hypothesis can be formulated as below:

Ho: There will be no significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation.

The difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

The Results of t-Test Showing the Difference Between Turkish Students' Scores Obtained in the Testing of Countables and Uncountables in Context and Their Scores Obtained in the Testing of Countables and Uncountables in Isolation.

	n	x	sd	t	p	Level of Sig
C.Unc. in context		73.7	11.227			
	108			4.75	>2.390	0.01
C.Unc. in isolation		63.1	15.532			

These results show that Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context had a mean value of $x:73.7$ where the standard deviation was $s:11.227$. Their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation had a mean value of $x:63.1$ where the standard deviation was $s:15.532$. The t-value between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation was calculated as $t:4.75 > 2.390$ at the level of 0.01 significance. As indicated by this result there was a significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation. Thus, the null hypothesis set out above does not appear to be sound.

Ho: There will be no significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and uncountables in context.

The difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and uncountables in context is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

The Results of t-Test Showing the Difference Between Turkish Students' Scores Obtained in the Testing of Countables in Context and Uncountables in Context.

	n	x	sd	t	p	Level of Sig
Count. in context		73.7	11.227			
	108			4.93	>2.390	0.01
Uncount. in context		63.1	15.532			

These results show that Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context had a mean value of $x: 73.7$ where the standard deviation was $s: 11.227$. Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context had a mean value of $x: 63.1$ where the standard deviation was $s: 15.532$. The t-value between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and uncountables in context was calculated as $t: 4.93 > 2.390$ at the level of 0.01 significance. As indicated by this result there was a significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and uncountables in context. Thus, the null hypothesis set out above does not appear to be sound.

Ho: There will be no significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation.

The difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

The Results of t-Test Showing the Difference Between Turkish Students' Scores Obtained in the Testing of Countables in Isolation and Their Scores Obtained in the Testing of Uncountables in Isolation.

	n	x	sd	t	p	Level of Sig
Count. in isolation		64	10.789			
	108			0.84	<2.390	0.01
Uncount. in isolation		65.6	12.846			

These results show that Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation had a mean value of $x:64$ where the standard deviation was $s:10.789$. Their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation had a mean value of $x:65.6$ where the standard deviation was $s:12.846$. The t-value between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation was calculated as $t:0.84 < 2.390$ at the level of 0.01 significance. As indicated by this result there was no significant difference between

Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation. Thus, the null hypothesis set out above appears to be sound.

H_0 : There will be no significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation.

The difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

The Results Showing the Difference Between Turkish Students' Scores Obtained in the Testing of Countables in Context and Their Scores Obtained in the Testing of Countables in Isolation.

	n	x	sd	t	p	Level of Sig
Count. in Context		73.7	11.227			
	108			7.01	>2.390	0.01
Count. in Isolation		64	10.789			

These results show that Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context had a mean value of $x:73.7$ where the standard deviation was $s:11.227$. Their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation had a mean value of $x:64$ where the standard deviation was $s:10.789$. The t-value between Turkish students'

scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation was calculated as $t:7.01 > 2.390$ at the level of 0.01 significance. As indicated by this result there was a significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation. Thus, the null hypothesis set out above does not appear to be sound.

H_0 : There will be no significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation.

The difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

The Results of t-Test Showing the Difference Between Turkish Students' Scores Obtained in the Testing of Uncountables in Context and Their Scores Obtained in the Testing of Uncountables in Isolation.

	n	x	sd	t	p	Level of Sig
Uncount. in context		63.1	15.532			
	108			1.56	<2.390	0.01
Uncount. in isolation		65.6	12.846			

The results show that Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context had a mean value of $\bar{x}:63.1$ where the standard deviation was 15.532. Their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation had a mean value of $\bar{x}:65.6$ where the standard deviation was $s:12.846$. The t-value between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation was calculated as $t:1.56 < 2.390$ at the level of 0.01 significance. As indicated by this result there was no significant difference between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation. Thus, the null hypothesis set out above appears to be sound.

4.4. THE RESULTS ANALYSED IN BAR GRAPHS

Bar graphs were drawn to compare Turkish students' levels of English dividing them into three groups; to see their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and in isolation; and to answer the questions: 10, 11, and 12 stated in 1.4.4. Then, the results of the exams were analysed in bar graphs in various combinations.

4.4.1. REARRANGEMENT OF THE GROUPS

In the prep school there were five groups each with a different level of English. The classes ranked from the top level to the low as follows: B,A,C,E,D. However, both A and C, and both E

and D had the same levels of English which were measured by a midterm exam. The means of the groups' scores obtained were as follows: B: 59, A: 53, C: 54, E: 44, D: 44.

Thus, in this study the top class, B, is group I; the middle classes, A and C, are group II; and the lower classes, E and D, are group III.

4.4.2. MEANS OF LEVELS OF ENGLISH

The students' levels of English was determined by using their third midterm grades in the prep school. As seen in Fig: 5, group I had the highest level and group III had the lowest level.

4.4.3. MEANS OF COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES IN CONTEXT

As can be seen in Figs: 6 and 7, when all the groups are compared group I is the most successful with countables in context but the least successful with uncountables in context. For group III the situation is the reverse: they are most successful with uncountables in context while least successful with countables in context. Group II is in the middle in both cases.

4.4.4. MEANS OF COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES IN ISOLATION

As Figs: 8 and 9 show, the means of the results are similar to those above: group I scored relatively higher in countables in isolation, whereas they scored relatively lower in uncountables in isolation.

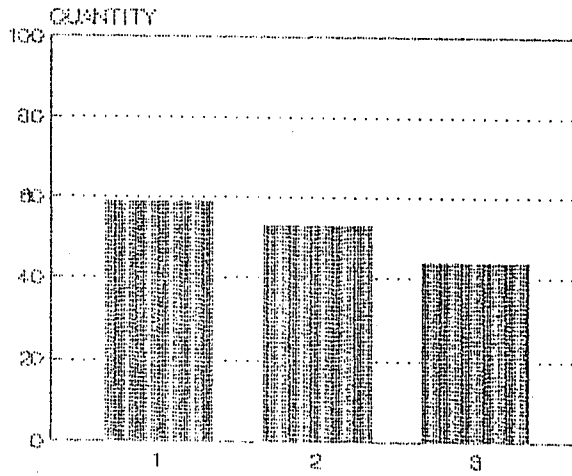


Figure 5

MEANS OF PROFICIENCY

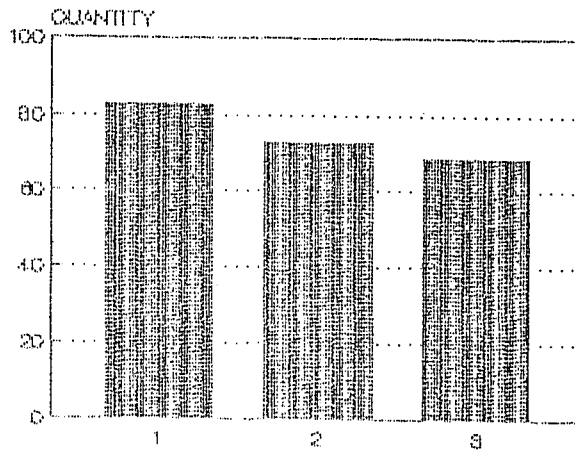


Figure 6

MEANS OF COUNTABLES IN CONTEXT

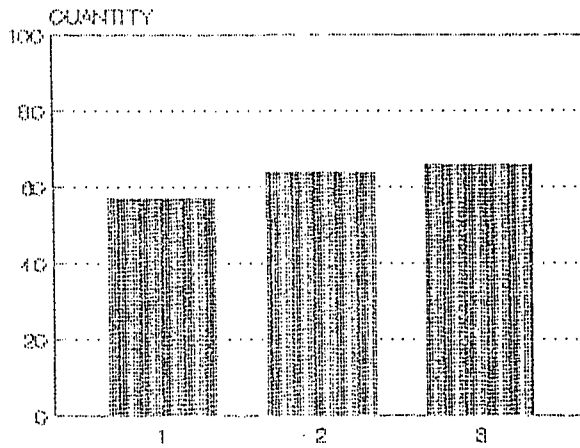


Figure 7

MEANS OF UNCOUNTABLES IN CONTEXT

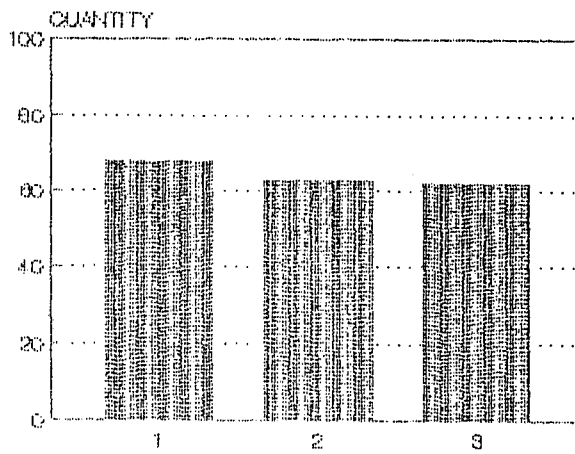


Figure 8

MEANS OF COUNTABLES IN ISOLATION

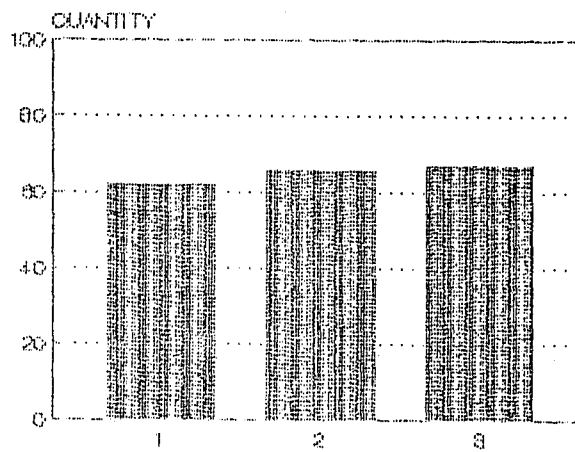


Figure 9

MEANS OF UNCOUNTABLES IN ISOLATION

4.4.5. MEANS OF COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES IN TRANSLATIONS:

ENGLISH - TURKISH

As can be seen in Figs: 10 and 11, the means of the English-Turkish translation results of the three groups were more or less similar with countables but group I scored lowest with uncountables, while group III scored relatively high.

4.4.6. MEANS OF COUNTABLES AND UNCOUNTABLES IN TRANSLATIONS:

TURKISH-ENGLISH

The means of the Turkish-English translation results differed very little with uncountables as seen in Figs: 12 and 13. Group II scored relatively low. However, with uncountables group I scored lowest, while group III scored highest.

4.4.7. MEANS OF TRANSLATIONS IN EACH GROUP

As can be seen in Fig: 14, group I scored almost the same with countables and uncountables in the English-Turkish translations while they scored much lower with uncountables than with countables in Turkish-English translations.

Group II (Fig: 15) scored almost the same with countables and uncountables in English-Turkish translations and a little lower with uncountables than with countables in Turkish-English translations.

Group III (Fig: 16) scored a little lower with countables than with uncountables in English-Turkish translations and scored a little lower with uncountables than with countables in Turkish-English translations.

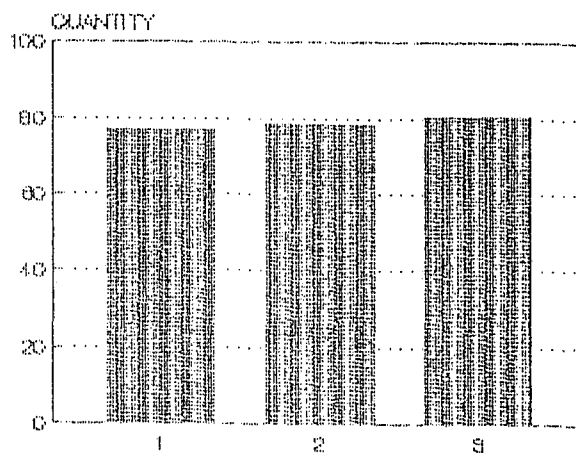


Figure 10

MEANS OF COUNTABLES IN ENGLISH-TURKISH TRANSLATION

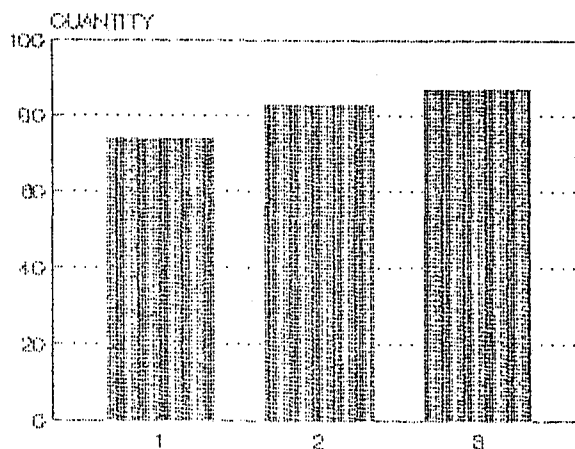


Figure 11

MEANS OF UNCOUNTABLES IN ENGLISH-TURKISH TRANSLATION

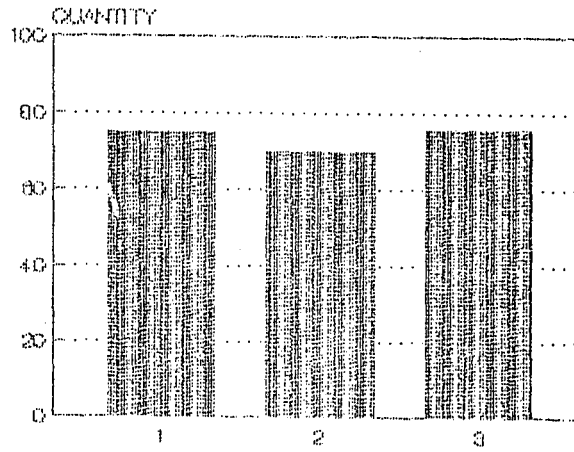


Figure 12

MEANS OF COUNTABLES IN TURKISH-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

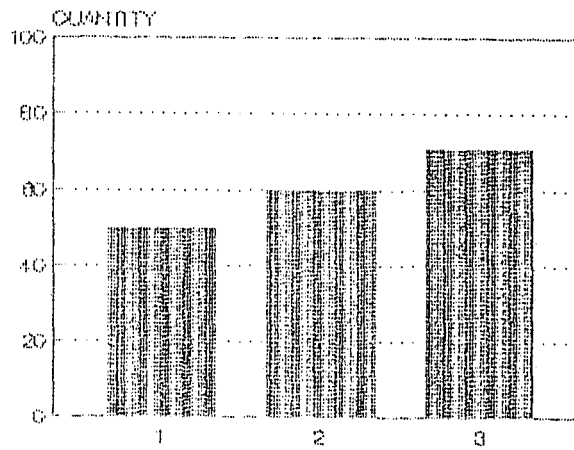
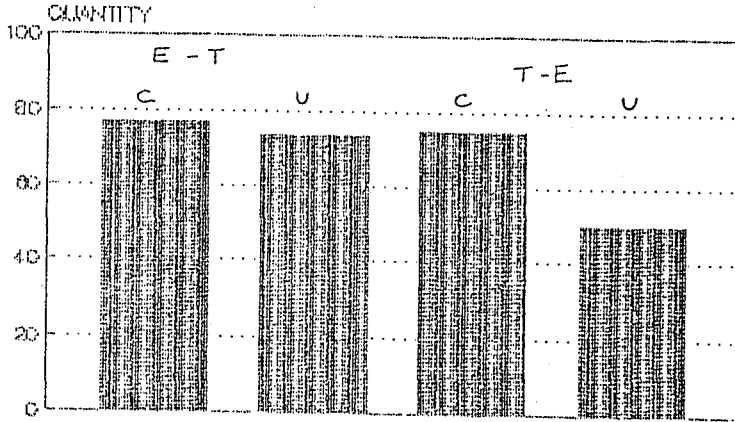


Figure 13

MEANS OF UNCOUNTABLES IN TURKISH-ENGLISH TRANSLATION



E = English
 T = Turkish
 C = countables
 U = uncountables

Figure 14

MEANS OF ALL TRANSLATIONS IN GROUP I

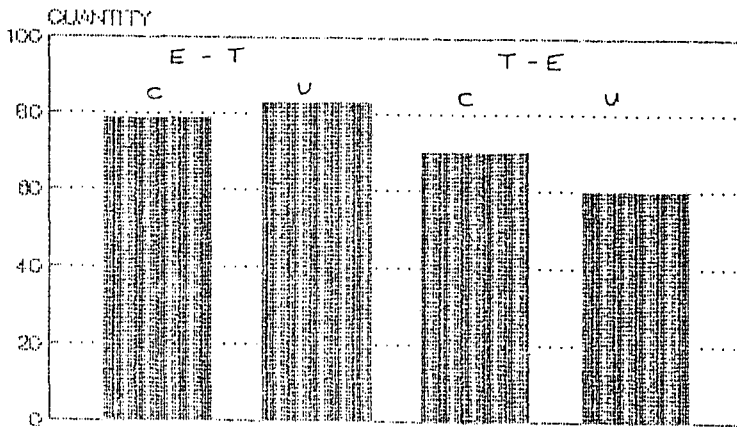


Figure 15

MEANS OF ALL TRANSLATIONS IN GROUP II

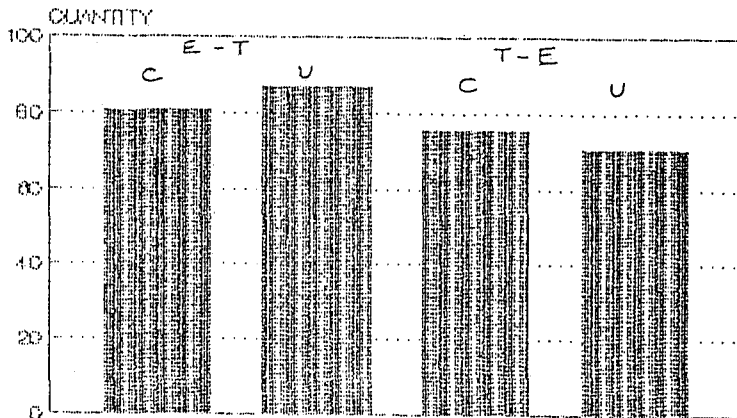


Figure 16

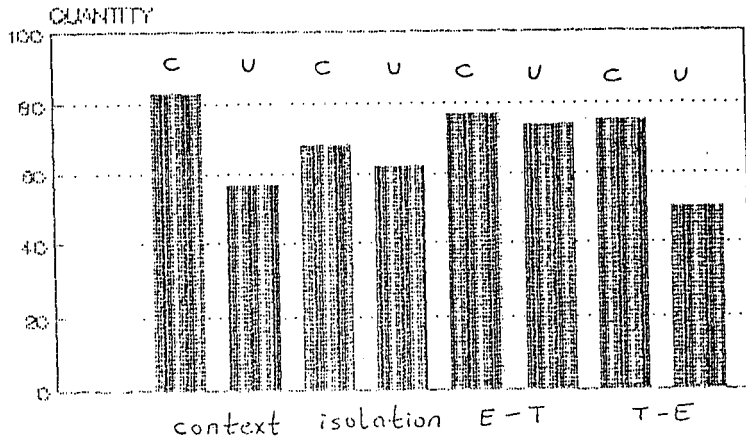
MEANS OF ALL TRANSLATIONS IN GROUP III

4.4.8 MEANS OF ALL TESTS IN EACH GROUP

Figures 17, 18, and 19 show the means of the results of each group in itself. Group I (Fig: 17) is less successful with uncountables than with countables in context relatively less successful with uncountables than countables in isolation; more or less the same with countables and uncountables in English-Turkish translations; much less successful with uncountables than countables in Turkish-English translations.

Group II (Fig: 18) is relatively less successful with uncountables in context; quite the same with countables and uncountables in isolation and in English-Turkish translations; a little less successful with uncountables than with countables in Turkish-English translations.

Group III (Fig: 19) scored more or less the same with countables and uncountables in context, in isolation, and in both translations.



E = English
 T = Turkish
 c = countables
 u = uncountables

Figure 17

MEANS OF ALL TESTS IN GROUP I

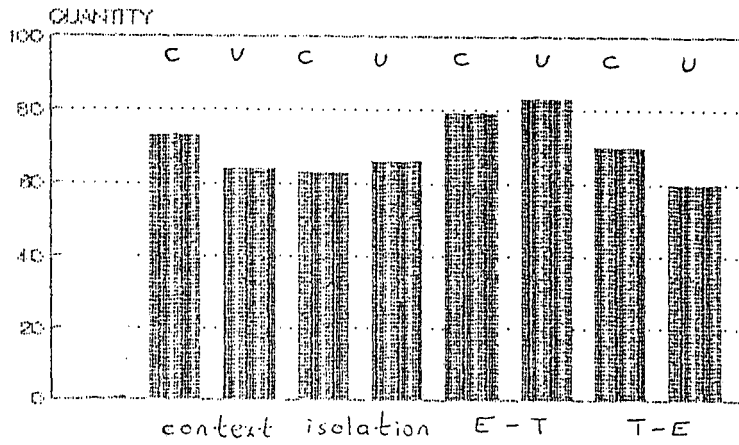


Figure 18

MEANS OF ALL TESTS IN GROUP II

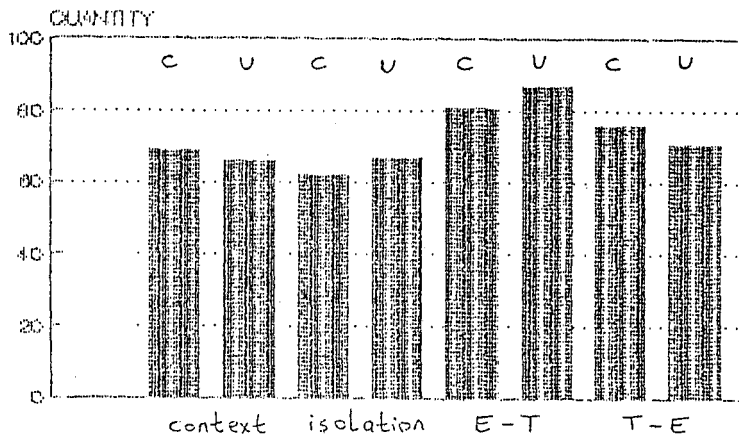


Figure 19

MEANS OF ALL TESTS IN GROUP III

4.4.9. MEANS OF ALL GROUPS TOGETHER

Fig: 20 shows that when the three groups are taken as one whole group, they are less successful with uncountables than countables in context; nonsignificantly less successful with countables than with uncountables in isolation and with countables than with uncountables in the English-Turkish translation test, and less successful with uncountables than with countables in the Turkish-English translation test.

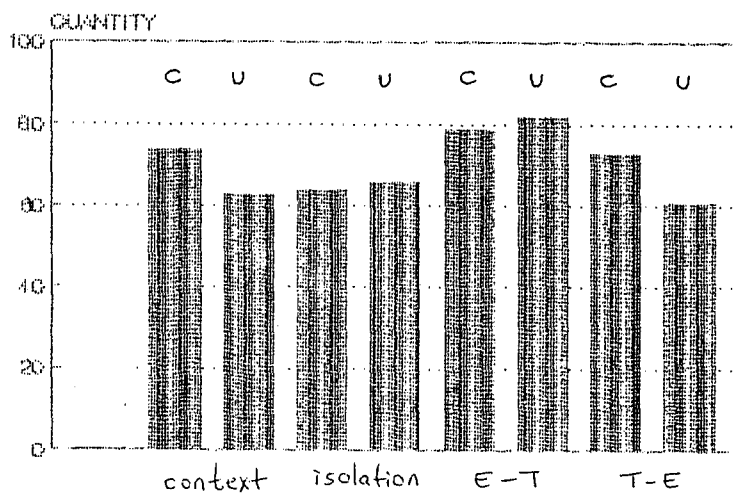


Figure 20

MEANS OF ALL TESTS INCLUDING ALL GROUPS

4.4.10. NATIVE SPEAKERS AND THREE GROUPS

The native speakers scored almost 100% coherent in the testing of countables and uncountables in context. Obviously there is a discrepancy between their scores and the students'. Nevertheless, they did not obtain the same scores in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation. Also, as it can be seen in Fig: 21 the native speakers' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation are much higher than the students' whereas their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation are the same level as the students'

4.4.11. NATIVE SPEAKERS AND ALL GROUPS TOGETHER

The scores of the native speakers obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables are compared with all groups together in Fig: 22. As stated in 4.4.10. above they scored lower with uncountables in isolation than with countables in isolation.

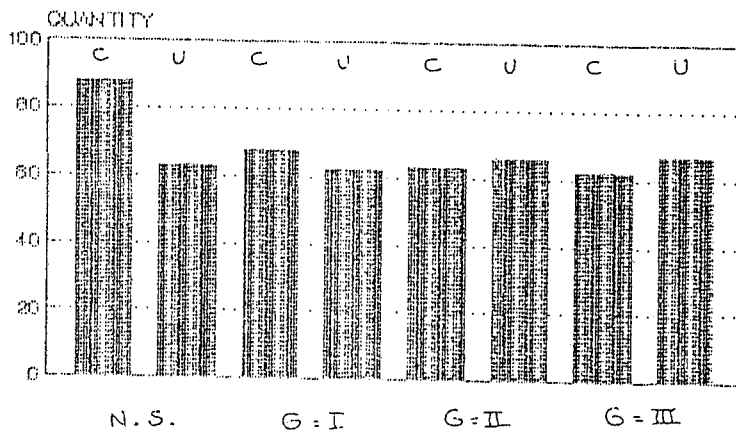


Figure 21

N.S.: Native Speakers

MEANS OF NATIVE SPEAKERS AND THREE GROUPS

G = Group

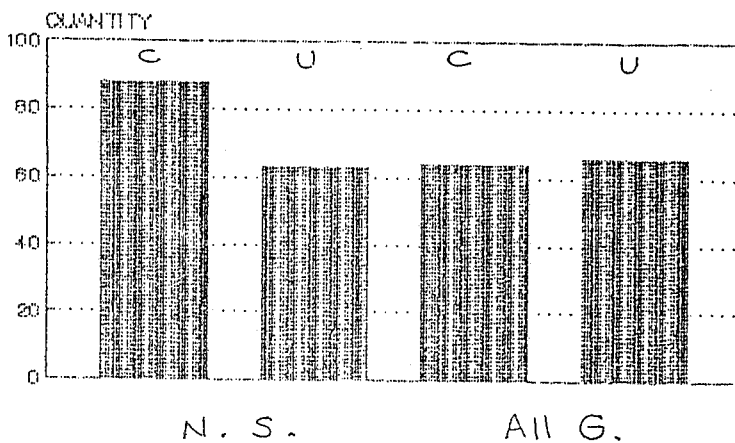


Figure 22

MEANS OF NATIVE SPEAKERS AND ALL GROUPS TOGETHER

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

When the results are analysed it can be seen that countable and uncountable nouns deserve special attention in teaching English to Turkish students as a foreign language.

The analyses of the results are discussed referring to different statistical calculations.

5.1.1. CORRELATIONS AND SCATTERGRAMS

At first sight the correlations show that Turkish students' level of English has little to do with their success with countables and uncountables in context and in isolation.

However nonsignificant, the correlations may seem, as the number of the students tested was high the figures obtained in the correlations still deserve attention. When the correlations are examined closely it can be seen that, as the level of English increased the success with countables in context marginally increased while this increase is observed to be much less with countables in isolation. The same is true with uncountables with lower correlations.

The marginally higher correlation between the students' level of English and their scores obtained in the testing of counts in context (Fig: 1) compared with the correlation between their English

level and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation (Fig: 2); and the higher correlation between their English level and their scores of uncountables in context (Fig: 3) compared with the correlation between their English level and their scores of uncountables in isolation (Fig: 4) show that English level helps students with countables and uncountables in context rather than in isolation. The reason for this is that, obviously, context helps students use countables and uncountables accurately.

The above results indicate that English level helps students with countables rather than uncountables. In other words, uncountables seem to be more difficult for them. The reason may be that Turkish does not grammatically divide nouns into countables and uncountables while in English this division is fundamental (L.G. Alexander, 1988:38).

5.1.2. T-TEST RESULTS

The t-test between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation showed a significant difference (see Table 1). This result shows that Turkish students are more successful with countables and uncountables in context than in isolation.

The t-test between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and uncountables in context showed a significant difference (See Table 2). This result indicates that countables in context are easier than uncountables in context for Turkish students.

The reason for this may be because in Turkish uncountables can grammatically be used like countables (see appendix A). As a result, Turkish students may be transferring this usage from their mother tongue into English, using uncountables like countables.

The t-test between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation showed no significant difference (See Table 3). This result shows that in isolation neither countables and uncountables are easier for Turkish students of English.

The t-test between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of countables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of countables in isolation showed a significant difference (See Table 4). This means that Turkish students are more successful with countables in context than in isolation. So, countables should be taught and used in context rather than in isolation.

The t-test between Turkish students' scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in context and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation showed no significant difference (See Table 5). This result indicates that, for Turkish students of English success with uncountables differs neither in context nor in isolation, which is interesting because context helped their success with countables. This shows that uncountables are more difficult than countables. Other t-test result showed that success with countables in isolation was not different from success with uncountables in isolation (See Table 3). These together may mean that the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation does not give meaningful

results in general (see native speakers' performance in 4.3. in this study).

5.1.3. BAR GRAPH RESULTS

The fact that the top group was the least successful among the three groups in the testing of uncountables in context (Fig:7) and relatively less successful in the testing of uncountables in isolation (Fig:9) shows that the more proficient the learners get in English the less successful they are with uncountables in context and in isolation. This may be because they reach a level of English with which they feel satisfied and stop paying attention to such details. Another possibility is that because they have been exposed to more English - structures, words, concepts, usages, etc. - they may have not digested all these sufficiently, which may lead to a confused state in their minds, leaving them unable to use correctly what they have learnt.

Thus, having been more exposed to English the top group may also be more likely to choose the marked forms, less common meanings, of the uncountable nouns, marking them countable (see native speakers' performance in 5.3. in this study).

The fact that all the groups were more successful in using countable nouns in context than in using uncountable nouns in context (Fig: 17, 18, 19) shows that they have more difficulty with uncountables in context than with countables in context.

It is interesting to observe in Figs: 17, 18, and 19 that the difference in success between countables in context and uncountables in context increases from the low to the top group: success in countables becomes higher while success in uncountables becomes lower. The reason may be that when students are at the beginning level they are taught countables and uncountables and given intensive exercises and as their level of English becomes higher it may be taken for granted that they know the difference between countables and uncountables and they are assumed to be able to apply the rules of countables and uncountables accurately. Therefore, teachers may stop emphasizing this difference and correct usages any more, which may lead students to forget or not to give attention to countables and uncountables any more. This may cause especially the use of uncountables to get less accurate because of the grammar of Turkish, which does not strictly specify the use of countables and uncountables by determiners and quantifiers as does the grammar of English.

When their success in using countables and uncountables is considered in isolation (Figs:8 and 9), the results show that the top group is marginally more successful in considering countables (Fig:8), and the other groups in considering uncountables (Fig:9). In fact, giving them tests including countables and uncountables in isolation is like examining their dictionary knowledge of meanings of nouns especially considering that the usages of nouns change in time which affect the order of the usages in a dictionary. This is not very realistic if the purpose of teaching a foreign language is to enable the students to use the target language to communicate - give and take information.

By looking at the results of the translation exams, in Figs:10, 11, 12 and 13 it can be seen that the top group again is the least successful in translating uncountables from English into Turkish and from Turkish into English, and the rate is greater from Turkish into English, which supports the idea of 'the more proficient in English the more confused in uncountables'.

When the three groups are taken as one whole group, (Fig:20) the means of the translation results show that they are more successful in translating from English into Turkish while they are less successful in translating from Turkish into English, especially in translating uncountables. The reason for the difficulty of translating from Turkish into English may be that they are less efficient in using English, which is not their mother tongue. Also, in Turkish countable and uncountable nouns are not strictly divided in form and the students may carry this usage into English while translating: "The conceptual systems are not identical in different languages," (R.R.K. Hartmann,1988 p:159). On the other hand, while translating from English into Turkish, students have the advantage of being able to use countables and uncountables more freely: in Turkish, all nouns are singular in plain form and may take the plural suffix (Tahir Nejat Gencan, 1984:149).

5.2. COUNTABILITY IN ENGLISH

As Rodney Huddleston claims (1984:245-248) not all nouns in English pragmatically fall into two distinct classes like countables and uncountables but some fall into the intermediate classes: uncountable class at one extreme, fully countable class at the other extreme, and intermediate classes inbetween ordered according to the countability degree of nouns from less countable to the more countable; for example, uncountable 'equipment' at one extreme, 'knowledge', 'clothes', 'cattle', 'police' inbetween and countable 'dog' at the other extreme.

On the other hand, the same noun may carry a countable aspect in one context and an uncountable aspect in another context (Valerie Adams, 1973:213). Meanwhile a noun's meaning may stay the same whether it is used as a countable or an uncountable as in, "I would like to drink some coffee, please." and "I would like to drink a coffee, please." while the same noun's meaning may change as in, "This is a better coffee than that one." (meaning: "This is a better kind of coffee than that one.") (See also Wallace L. Chafe, 1970:108, 109)

To summarize, English grammatically distinguishes between countables and uncountables. But, the degree of countability may not be clearcut: nouns not only fall into two distinct classes as countables and uncountables but there are also intermediate classes (Rodney Huddleston, 1984:245-248). In addition, some nouns may carry countable and uncountable meaning depending on the context. The use of determiners and suffixes are decided according to this countability degree.

Turkish does not distinguish the countability degree of nouns by using such rules: English uses the rules (a/an, plural suffix: /-(e)s/, etc.) for distinguishing countables and uncountables while Turkish may make use of these rules (bir 'a/an', /-ler/ 'plural suffix: /-(es)/) both for countables and uncountables.

All the reasons given above may account for the difficulty in using countables and especially uncountables for Turkish students.

5.3. NATIVE SPEAKERS' PERFORMANCE

Four native speakers of English, teachers of English at the prep school, were given the same exams, except for the translations. As could be expected, the four native speakers were almost hundred per cent accurate in using countables and uncountables in context. However, while deciding on whether a noun was countable or uncountable in isolation they were not as accurate. The means of their results also showed that they were less accurate with uncountables than countables (Fig:22).

It can be concluded, from the above result, that the more one knows English the more they know about different meanings a noun may carry, which leads to a confusion between the unmarked and marked meaning of a noun. On the other hand, the groups who know less English are limited in concepts. They often only know about the unmarked meanings of nouns: if a noun is uncountable in its unmarked meaning, the students are only aware of the uncountable aspect of that noun. But as they learn that an uncountable noun can also carry a meaning which renders it countable, then they may think that in its unmarked form the noun is countable when faced in

isolation while it is actually uncountable. This may also be true for the native speakers. For example, when one of the four native speakers was shown the results, he objected to them. He said he had marked 'bread' as countable because at first sight he thought of kinds of bread such as, wholewheat, white, etc., and when he was told that it should be uncountable in its unmarked form as it is shown to be in Collins Dictionary he was still not satisfied. He also added that the instructions on the exam paper were not clear and he had not realized that he was to mark the nouns as countable or uncountable in their so called 'unmarked' forms and that the same must have been true for the other native speakers. This is open to discussion (See 5.9. in this study).

5.4. CONCLUSION

As a result of this study the following results are reached:

1. Countables are easier than uncountables for Turkish learners when they are used in context.
2. In isolation there is no significant difference in their ability to differentiate between countables and uncountables.
3. Countables as well as uncountables are to be taught in context, but not in isolation since the scores of the native speakers obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in isolation are lower than their scores obtained in the testing of countables and uncountables in context, and their scores obtained in the testing of uncountables in isolation are not higher than the scores of the students.

4. In translating nouns from Turkish into English, uncountables are more difficult because of the interference from Turkish. In English the division of the nouns into 'countables and uncountables' is fundamental (L.G. Alexander, 1988:38) whereas in Turkish grammar nouns are not grammatically divided into 'countables and uncountables'. This causes Turkish students to use uncountables in English as if they were countables.

5.5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

- In this study, it is shown that countables are easier than uncountables and countables are easier when they are used in context than when they are used in isolation. This means that, following the teaching strategy of Hill (1979: 1-10), who suggests that certain noun classes should be presented in the early stage while others in the intermediate and late stages successively.

- As is shown in this study, the ability to use uncountables decreases as proficiency in English increases. Therefore, remedial exercises are advised in upper intermediate and advanced classes.

- Translating countables and uncountables from Turkish into English is shown to be more difficult than translating countables and uncountables from English into Turkish. This means that use of countables and uncountables in English is more difficult for students. Constant exercise in class in countables and uncountables is suggested to consolidate students' ability to use them accurately.

5.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- A further study on countables and uncountables can be made.

- A study on group nouns, singular nouns, plural nouns, partitive nouns, collective nouns (See Collins Dictionary: 1987) can be made.

- A detailed study on the use of Turkish nouns can be made.

- A detailed study on the use of partitive nouns in Turkish can be made (see 2.1.1.5. in this study).

- A comparative study on Turkish and English partitive nouns can be made (See 2.1.1.5. and 2.2.3.4. in this study).

- A detailed study on the use of Turkish quantifiers can be made.

- A study on the use of uncountable nouns in Turkish can be made to answer the following questions: a) in which contexts do uncountables stay singular, b) in which contexts do uncountables take the plural suffix?

- A comparative study on the degree of 'countability' of nouns in English and in Turkish can be made.

- The discussion with a native English Speaker mentioned in 5.6. in this study can be further made in a group of native speakers.

- A study can be made by using Turkish students' compositions in order to examine the use of English countables and uncountables.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Examples showing that some uncountable nouns in English can take the singular article: 'bir' (a/an) or can be used in the plural form in Turkish:

"Sen küpü orada kır, yağlar yere dökülsün." (Hilmi Yücebaş, 1976:257)

"Sen o zaman, dikenli çalılara sarılan altın yünleri toplarsın." (Halikarnas Balıkçısı, 1984:232)

"Aphrodite'nin çıplak güzelliğini kurban dumanları örtmüyordu, eski kurbanların külleri de çoktan buz gibi soğumustu. (Halikarnas Balıkçısı, 1984:230)

"İncecik bir akşam yeli kekik kokularıyla yüklü." (Erdal Öz, 1975:42)

"Ayakların çukurlar tepeler arasında dolaşiyor durmadan, düz serinlikler arıyor." (Erdal Öz, 1975:45)

"Bu torba unlar kaç kilo?" (Cetin Altan, 1978:8)

"Yağmur damlaları süzülüyordu uçağın camlarından." (Cetin Altan, 1978:26)

"Nihayet beklenmedik bir biçimde, pantolonundaki kumları silkerek ayağa kalktı." (Çetin Altan, 1978:34)

"İki tane lüks sabun istiyorum." (Çetin Altan, 1978:37)

"..., bilinçsizce elini başına götürdüğün oluyordu; kesilmiş saçlarının yokluğuna alışmayı deniyordun. (Erdal Öz, 1975:6)

"Kapının solunda, duvara yanaştırılmış eski bir su kûpü. Dibi eski yeşil yosunlarla kaplı gibi;..." (Erdal Öz, 1975:7)

"Sızan sular, hemen altına konmuş yarıdan yukarısı kesik plastik bir kova artığına tıp tıp damlıyor." (Erdal Öz, 1975:7)

"Kendine büyük önemler vererek bir aşağı bir yukarı gezinmeye başladı." (Erdal Öz, 1975:15)

"Meryemce, etekleri esen bozkır borasında, ak başörtüsü dalgalanarak koyun içinden koşuyordu." (Yaşar Kemal, 1978:386)

"Yere eğildi, karların arasından bir ağır cinke taşı aldı. (Yaşar Kemal, 1978:386)

"Durgun, dalgasız bir suya benziyorlardı." (Yaşar Kemal, 1978:386)

"Eğer ermiş olmuşa, o çocukların önünde ağızlarını şapırdatarak etleri yiyenlere bir diyeceği olacaktı." (Yaşar Kemal, 1978:427)

"Toplanan plastikler, demirler, şişeler, kağıtlar, çevre atölyelere satıldı." (Latife Tekin, 1984:21)

"Kıymetli taşlar, altınlar yerine ellerde kan kırmızısı yaralar açıldı." (Latife Tekin, 1984:22)

"Rüzgar fabrikalardan çıkan kokuları cöp kokularına kattı."
(Latife Tekin, 1984:22)

"Hatta konduların içinde bile yeşil otlar bitecekti."
(Latife Tekin, 1984:30)

"Gelenin sakalları, kuyudan tasan yıldızlara batıp çıktı."
(Bekir Yıldız, 1984:16)

"Sönmüş bir ocaktı. Ama dumanları, kıvılcımları kanımda dolaşıyordu hala. Bu duman, bu kanımda dolaşan kıvılcımlar atalarımın bendeki kalıntılarıydı kuşkusuz." (Bekir Yıldız, 1984:76)

"Mutluluklar!"

"Sonsuz saadetler!" (Bekir Yıldız, 1984:80)

"Ateşim yükseldi gene. Terler... Ah, terlerimle ıpslak olmuş giysilerimi değiştirecek birisi olsa.." (Bekir Yıldız, 1984:97)

"..., çukurları bol olan kaldırım taşları arasında yürürken."
(Bekir Yıldız, 1984:109)

"ceylanların tüyleri parlak ve cilalanmış gibi derilerine yapışmış simli ağır kumaşlarında
..." (Ercüment Uçarı, 1989:27)

"...

eski bir tramvay paslarını silkip

sökülmüş raylarını arıyor

..." (Tuğrul Tanyol, 1989:37)

"Allah, dedim yatağına dayandım

Ben seninçün al kanlara boyandım."

(E. Uçarı, 1989:27)

APPENDIX B

The copies of the tests given to the Turkish students studying English as a foreign language and four native speakers of English:

Name: _____

You have to put in 'a/an' or 'some' or 'any' or leave a space.

Examples:

- a) Have got a pen?
 - b) Did you buy a pair of trousers yesterday?
 - c) I don't want any water.
 - d) He wants to drink some tea.
 - e) I have just drunk a glass of water.
 - f) All animals and people need -- water in order to live.
 - g) -- water has no color when it is pure.
 - h) I'd like some information about trains, please.
 - i) He gave me a very interesting piece of information about his past.
-
- 1. I eat big meal in the evenings.
 - 2. He is studying psychology.
 - 3. There isn't mail for you today.
 - 4. The funeral was terrible experience.
 - 5. You look like chicken when you wear this dress.

6. Do you like _____ ice-cream?
7. It is essential to learn _____ foreign language.
8. I need _____ sugar to make a cake.
9. They received the guests in _____ room.
10. Wrap the parcel in _____ paper.
11. I've had such _____ wonderful life.
12. I think it takes time for _____ true democracy to work.
13. There was a bright light and _____ loud sound.
14. He has a different attitude to _____ life and _____ death.
15. Would you like to _____ actor?
16. He plans to do his career in _____ music.
17. Is there _____ interesting news?
18. You can buy _____ tobacco in this shop.
19. She wants to have _____ glass of water.
20. I've got _____ work to do.
21. Physics is _____ science.
22. I hate _____ noise.
23. She needs _____ help to get up the stairs.
24. _____ rest is necessary after hard work.
25. She wrote _____ paper on the Iran-Iraqe war.
26. He went to the kitchen to bring _____ glass to have some tea.
27. Do you have _____ light by your bed?
28. _____ youth is the time to experience everything that life has to offer.
29. When I was _____ child I used to go to concerts.
30. He wants to buy _____ furniture.

31. This is _____ good piece of work.
32. She has _____ beautiful hair.
33. He picked up _____ stone and threw it at me.
34. _____ fire burns.
35. Blue is _____ color.
36. A good dictionary would be _____ help.
37. We decided that after each two hours we would stop and take _____ rest.
38. There is _____ room for you in the car.
39. Turkey is _____ democracy.
40. _____ death has been caused in the accident.
41. All plants need _____ light.
42. I wanted to write _____ poem but I didn't.
43. I had _____ short walk after work.
44. I don't need _____ advice.
45. I think _____ happiness is relative.
46. There is _____ money in my pocket.
47. I didn't eat _____ bread at lunch today.
48. Can you think of _____ time when you were very happy?
49. This job requires _____ experience.
50. I have _____ very bad memory.
51. Never give up _____ hope.
52. There is _____ luggage left under the seat.
53. _____ butter is made from cream.
54. _____ fire severely damaged part of the school.
55. He's had _____ good education.

56. I had _____ talk with him.
57. _____ color adds pleasure to life.
58. Do you like chicken?
59. I don't like _____ idle talk.
60. Why don't you accept this job? They are offering _____ high salary and provide _____ accommodation.
61. I've got _____ bad cold.
62. You need _____ visa to visit foreign countries, but not all of them.
63. What _____ beautiful garden!
64. Jack has got very long legs, so he is _____ fast runner.
65. Where can I buy _____ blue bag?
66. The students demand _____ freedom of action.
67. She doesn't want to do _____ homework.
68. Wash your hands with _____ soap and water.
69. Have you got _____ outgoing personality?
70. There is _____ hair in my soup. Where did it come from?
71. This is _____ beautiful work of art.
72. _____ sudden noise made him jump.
73. _____ education should be _____ preparation for life.
74. He will start _____ new travel business.
75. Light travels faster than _____ sound.
76. Sam's got _____ measles. He has to stay in bed.
77. _____ language is means of communication.
78. That firm does _____ business with Britain.
79. I shall need _____ peace and quiet in which to practise.

80. He wanted to buy _____ daily paper.

81. I knitted _____ sweater for my brother.

82. He found _____ job at a factory.

Put a next to a countable word, for example, book: a

or b next to an uncountable word, for example, water: b

Look at the examples first: dog a, girl a, air b, advice b, tea b

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. meal | 26. poem | 50. rest |
| 2. experience | 27. short walk | 51. education |
| 3. mail | 28. advice | 52. travel business |
| 4. chicken | 29. happiness | 53. glass |
| 5. ice cream | 30. money | 54. measles |
| 6. language | 31. bread | 55. means of communication |
| 7. hard work | 32. personality | 56. peace |
| 8. room | 33. time | 57. daily paper |
| 9. foreign language | 34. bad memory | 58. sweater |
| 10. paper | 35. pair of scissors | 59. job |
| 11. life | 36. hope | 60. cube of sugar |
| 12. democracy | 37. luggage | 61. child |
| 13. sound | 38. butter | 62. furniture |
| 14. work | 39. cream | 63. beautiful hair |
| 15. death | 40. sheet of paper | 64. stone |
| 16. actor | 41. talk | 65. fire |
| 17. music | 42. idle talk | 66. color |
| 18. news | 43. light | 67. bag |
| 19. tobacco | 44. salary | 68. freedom |
| 20. glass of water | 45. accommodation | 69. action |
| 21. piece of work | 46. cold | 70. homework |
| 22. science | 47. visa | 71. soap |
| 23. noise | 48. garden | 72. sugar |
| 24. help | 49. runner | 73. youth |
| 25. hair | 50. work of art | |

Translate the following sentences into Turkish.

Example: Do you have scissors?

Makasın var mi?

1. She tried to hide her jewelry while going through the customs.
2. These are two very good pieces of news you've brought.
3. Don't walk on the grass.
4. I have only one piece of baggage.
5. You're not expected to ask her such questions.
6. Have you got a headache?
7. You will need some soap to wash your hands.
8. I am going to buy a loaf of bread.
9. Do you have any questions to ask me?
10. A light rain had begun to fall.
11. There was some good news on television.
12. Five lives were saved.
13. There is always a lot of traffic at this hour.
14. There was a knock on the door.
15. Some of the sheep were stolen.
16. He is having financial difficulties.
17. I bought two kinds of loaves of bread.
18. A lot of research has been done on this subject.
19. The photograph was part of the evidence in a divorce case.

Translate the following sentences into English.

Example: Saçları sarı.

His (Her) hair is blond.

1. Havalar ısınıyor.
2. Paralarımı bulamıyorum.
3. Sakalları uzamış.
4. Kırık camlara basma.
5. Kızgın kumların üzerinde güneşleniyorlar.
6. Tebeşir tozları beni rahatsız ediyor.
7. Bir sürü insan onu bekliyor.
8. Üzerine sütleri dökme.
9. Kedinin tüyleri dökülüyor.
10. Yerdeki sulara basma.
11. Camdaki kirleri temizle.
12. Duvarın boyaları dökülüyor.
13. Günde iki ekmek yiyorum.
14. Sana iyi haberim var.
15. Kağıtları masadan kaldır.
16. Suları yere döküyorsun.
17. Bana kitap getirdin mi?
18. Tabağında yumurta bırakma.
19. Ülkemiz için önemli bilgiler çalınmış.
20. Saçlarımı taradım.

APPENDIX C

The nouns (21) used with countable meanings in the first test are:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. a big meal | 60. a high salary |
| 15. an actor | 61. a bad cold |
| 21. a science | 62. a visa |
| 26. a glass | 63. a beautiful garden |
| 29. a child | 64. a fast runner |
| 31. a pair of scissors | 65. a blue bag |
| 33. a stone | 69. an outgoing personality |
| 42. a poem | 73. a preparation |
| 43. a short walk | 81. a sweater |
| 48. a time | 82. a job |
| 50. a very bad memory | |

The nouns (22) used with uncountable meanings in the first test are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. -- psychology | 46. -- money |
| 3. -- mail | 47. -- bread |
| 6. -- ice-cream | 51. -- hope |
| 8. -- sugar | 52. -- luggage |
| 16. -- music | 53. -- butter |
| 17. -- interesting news | 60. -- accommodation |
| 18. -- tobacco | 66. -- freedom of action |
| 28. -- youth | 67. -- homework |
| 30. -- furniture | 68. -- soap |
| 44. -- advice | 76. -- measles |
| 45. -- happiness | 79. -- peace |

The nouns used with countable (21) and uncountable (22) meanings in the first test are:

4. a terrible experience	49. -- experience
5. a chicken	58. -- chicken
7. a foreign language	77. -- language
9. a room	38. -- room
11. a wonderful life	14. -- life
39. a democracy	12. -- true democracy
13. a loud sound	75. -- sound
40. a death	14. -- death
71. a beautiful work of art	20. -- work
72. a sudden noise	22. -- noise
38. a help	23. -- help
37. a rest	24. -- rest
80. a daily paper	25. -- paper
25. a paper	
27. a light	41. -- light
70. a hair	32. -- beautiful hair
54. a fire	34. -- fire
35. a color	57. -- color
55. a good education	73. -- education
56. a talk	59. -- idle talk
74. a new travel business	78. -- business

The countable nouns (11) used in the English-Turkish Translation Test are:

2. two very good pieces of news (iki iyi haber)
4. one piece of baggage (bir bağaj)
5. such questions (öyle sorular)
6. a headache (bařaĝrısı)
8. a loaf of bread (bir ekmek)
9. any questions (sorular)
12. five lives (beř hayat)
14. a knock (kapı vurulması)
15. some of the sheep (koyunlardan bazıları)
16. financial difficulties (mali-pârasal- güçlükler)
17. two kinds of loaves of bread (iki çeşit ekmek)

The uncountable nouns (8) used in the English-Turkish Translation Test are:

1. her jewelry (mücevherleri)
3. the grass (çimen)
7. some soap (biraz sabun)
10. a light rain (hafif bir yağmur)
11. some good news (bazı iyi haberler)
13. a lot of traffic (çok trafik)
18. a lot of research (bir çok araştırma)
19. the evidence (delil)

The countable nouns (3) used in Turkish-English Translation Test are:

7. bir sürü insan (a lot of people)
13. iki ekmeđ (two loaves of bread)
17. kitap (a book)

The uncountable nouns (17) used in Turkish-English Translation Test are:

1. havalar (the air)
2. paralarım (my money)
3. sakalları (his beard)
4. camlar (glass)
5. kumlar (the sand)
6. tebeşir tozları (chalk dust)
9. kedinin tüyleri (the cat's fur)
10. sular (water)
11. kirler (dirt)
12. duvarın bovaları (the wall's paint)
14. haber (news)
15. kağıtlar (paper)
16. sular (water)
18. yumurta (egg)
19. bilgiler (information)
20. saçlar (hair)