

D.N. Babakhanova*, M.E. Seitova

*Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, Turkistan, Kazakhstan
(*Corresponding author's e-mail: babakhanova.dana@gmail.com)*

Orcid 0000-0002-6358-706X

Orcid 0000-0002-0735-2469

Analysing listening anxiety levels of learners in the EFL classrooms

Listening is considered a difficult skill, and also listening is often neglected compared to other skills, exactly reading, writing, and speaking skills. Listening is one of the essential skills in second or foreign language learning that gives opportunities to communicate with other language speakers, as without listening communication cannot be complete. In oral communication listening has the significant role and anxiety has influence on students' listening comprehension. Anxiety is the powerful factor, which blocks learners' listening comprehension. The purpose of the present research was to analyze listening anxiety levels of learners in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning classrooms. The participants of this research were 109 students from two different schools in Turkistan. The participants consisted of 10th -11th grade students from №2 Hamza general secondary school (n=46) and №17 Ataturk gymnasium school (n=63). This study used quantitative descriptive research design. A survey method using questionnaire was used in order to collect necessary data and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. According to the results, it was found that EFL learners have a high listening anxiety level. More precisely, it was found that EFL students face more difficulties when they hear different kind of pronunciations.

Keywords: listening anxiety, anxiety, listening comprehension, a foreign language, quantitative research, survey, learning English, comprehension.

Introduction

Learning a foreign language has become significant for different reasons. Foreign language learning gives the opportunity for better job, incomes and life. Listening is essential skill in second (L2) or foreign language that gives opportunity to communicate with other language speakers, as without listening communication cannot be complete. People with the help of effective listening can create and improve relationships, and also can become better communicator. As people consider listening is not simple, especially when the English language has statute as a foreign language for people [1]. In learning process listening has a huge role, because it is quite important to receive given information in classes. Listening comprehension is a complicated process, listeners of which need to have an active role in communication [2]. According to F.B. Fanandi we can improve our speaking skill with the help of learning to listen [3]. If the person is not good listener and do not hear, the person cannot learn the language. Thus, it is significant to have effective listening in order to learn a foreign language. In conversation without understanding what is being said, it is impossible to save and continue the conversation. Listening is one of the complicated skills in learning English, for this reason listening causes anxiety. In lessons students are listeners because they mostly spend their time to listen, for instance teachers explain theme, ask questions and so on [4]. Teachers mostly pay attention to the teaching of writing, reading and vocabulary in lessons. For the most part teachers don't pay attention to speaking and listening skills, thus it may be one of the reasons why students get nervous and anxious in listening classes. In learning a second or foreign language it is quite important to understand spoken language, since listening is often used in daily life [5].

Anxiety has a significant role in learning process and it has impact on the students' performance. Anxiety is considered as a negative factor for the reason that anxiety creates obstacles in learning process [6]. Students who are learning a foreign language more often feel anxious in learning process. Anxiety will reduce the listeners' attention on the listening materials and also sensitivity of the sensory receptor. In addition, distraction from environment and peers can bring the students feelings, like anxiety, nervousness, and worry in listening. Distraction form surroundings can be spontaneously and this can distract students' attention. Someone who is sneezing or coughing also may interrupt other students' attention and students may lose their concentration on a recording [7]. Another factor that provokes students' listening anxiety may be their classmates or teachers.

Because, students are afraid to make mistakes when they do listening tasks, thinking that their teachers will swear them for their mistakes and classmates will taunt them.

There are two types of anxiety. They are state (situational) or trait anxiety. Trait anxiety is a type anxiety when a person is anxious despite the situation and anxiety is a part of her/his nature. State or situational anxiety is a type of anxiety when a person feels anxious when she/he makes a public speech, and she/he feels anxious in certain circumstances [8]. As R. Susilowati stated EFL students often suffer from anxiety in English classes. Because, English for EFL students is a foreign language, and they do not use English in daily conversation. That's why EFL learners get nervous and worry in listening classes [9]. According to E. Namaziandost, M. Hafezian and S. Shafiee mostly listening anxiety is one of the most ignored and possibly the most enervating type of anxiety [10]. For teachers the greatest barrier is learners' language anxiety, which they must defeat in foreign language classrooms [11]. According to M.M. Mohamad creating a good atmosphere in a classroom is the teachers' responsibility [12]. A cozy and friendly atmosphere benefits on learners to decrease listening anxiety. The teachers need to be attentive in order to make the classroom an attractive place with minimal stress. Furthermore, listening materials also play a significant role. Listening materials should be appropriate with students' level and the rate of speech should be not fast. For beginners it may be correct to choose slow recordings, since they can lose their motivation while they listen fast recordings. If English recording contains many unknown words, it will provoke students' anxiety. Too many accented speech of the speakers or unfamiliar accent also can be one of the factors that cause the listening anxiety. Therefore, teachers should to assist their students to be aware of other different native speakers' accent and the difference between British and American accent. Listening anxiety affects listening ability. Students participate actively when in the classroom a low anxiety environment. Additionally, teachers need to assist their students to overcome the listening anxiety and teach students efficient listening comprehension strategies.

The purpose of the study was to analyze listening anxiety levels of learners in the EFL classrooms. The study sought the answer for the following research questions:

1. What level of listening anxiety do EFL learners have?
2. Does listening anxiety in learning English differ according to the learners' grades?
3. Is there any difference between students' listening anxiety levels according to their schools?

Experimental

Research Design. The present study employed a quantitative research design. Quantitative research design connected to an object that can be expressed in terms of quantity or something that can be calculated [13]. In order to examine participants' listening anxiety level a questionnaire was conducted. Questionnaire is a tool to gather quantitative data through questions (items) in written form, and people can answer to the questions after reading the questions one by one [14]. The present study is considered as descriptive study. Descriptive study is the study that describes the participants' condition with research instruments and without changing the condition [13].

Participants and setting. The samples of this research were students of №2 Hamza general secondary school (n=46) and №17 Ataturk gymnasium school (n=63) in Turkistan. Totally 109 students took part in this study: 10th grade (n=22) and 11th grade students (n=24) from №2 Hamza school, 10th grade (n=30) and 11th grade students (n=33) from №17 Ataturk school.

Research Instrument. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) developed by J.H. Kim was employed in this study [15]. The questionnaire includes 14 questions and 6 subscales: 1) Unable to catch the word (5 items); 2) Related to pronunciation speaker (2 items); 3) Rapid rate of speech (1 item); 4) The limited time (3 items); 5) The lack of vocabulary (2 items); 6) The lack of concentration (1 item). The first subscale "unable to catch the word" measures students' ability of catching words in English recording. When students listen English recording, students often unable to catch the words from recording. This becomes a barrier for the students to understand the main idea of the records. The second subscale "pronunciation speaker" assesses the ability of students to distinguish word from other words which pronounced same but have various meanings. For the purpose of understanding the main idea of English recording it is essential to understand the speakers' pronunciation. The third subscale "raped rate of speech" assesses the students' ability of catching the words that are spoken quickly. The fourth subscale "limited time" measures students' ability of getting the meaning of recording at once. There are students who get nervous when recording played only once, because at first time it cannot be understandable for everyone. Students feel worry when they have a little time to think what has been said The next fifth subscale "the lack of vocabulary", students can be nervous when they listen the recording and do not

know the meaning of the words. Students face with unfamiliar words, because they are lack of vocabulary. It also can be obstacle for being anxious in listening English recording. The last sixth subscale “lack of concentration”, students often do not concentrate what is said in English recording, because they do not concentrate and focus on recording. When they listen the recording, many students do not focus on the speakers’ speech, and that’s why they can feel anxious and worry [5].

This study used 4 scale of Likert scale 1= “strongly agree”, 2= “agree”, 3= “disagree”, 4= “strongly disagree”. The answer neutral was not included in this questionnaire. The results of Cronbach’s Alpha are given in Table 1.

Table 1

The results of Cronbach’s Alpha

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,774	14

The Cronbach’s Alpha value of the scale was 0.774, which shows that the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) is a reliable instrument.

Data collection procedure and analysis. The questionnaire was carried out among 10th and 11th grade students from №2 Hamza general secondary school and №17 Ataturk gymnasium school in the end of the first term of the 2022-2023 academic years. The questionnaire was formed using Google forms. The questionnaire was sent through “WhatsApp” application. The samples were chosen randomly. Firstly, the aim of the research was explained and then asked students to complete the questionnaire. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. and descriptive statistics was conducted in the present study as well as inferential statistics in the form of Mann-Whitney U-test by the researchers.

Results and Discussion

Test of normality. Firstly, a test of normality was performed. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test significant value showed that distribution is non-normal $p < 0.05$. Thus, in the study were implemented non-parametric tests during the analysis.

Preliminary descriptive statistics was employed to obtain the answer to the first research question “What level of listening anxiety do EFL learners have?” The results are related to first research question are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unable to Catch the Word	109	1,00	4,00	2,6881	,57377
Pronunciation Speaker	109	1,00	4,00	2,8349	,68737
Rapid Rate of Speech	109	1,00	4,00	2,6514	,97540
The Limited Time	109	1,00	4,00	2,7217	,61282
The Lack of Vocabulary	109	1,00	4,00	2,6972	,68387
The Lack of Concentration	109	1,00	4,00	2,7064	1,00280
Total	109	1,07	4,00	2,7163	,47205

The total mean ($\bar{x}=2.71$) and Std. Deviation $SD= .47205$) showed that EFL learners have moderate level of listening anxiety. Since the maximum score is deemed 4.00. Results revealed, the highest mean score was found on the “pronunciation speaker” among all the subscales ($\bar{x} =2.83$). Mean score of the limited time was found ($\bar{x}=2.72$). According to the results, on the “the lack of vocabulary” mean score of participants was found ($\bar{x}=2.69$); on the “the lack of concentration” $\bar{x} (= 2.70)$. Results indicated that mean score of participants on the “unable to catch the word” subscale was ($\bar{x} =2.68$). Among all other subscales’ mean score on the “rapid rate of speech” subscale was found the lowest mean score ($\bar{x}=2.65$).

To receive the answer for the second research question “Does listening anxiety in learning English differ according to the learners’ grades?” was employed Mann-Whitney u-test. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Mann-Whitney U-test results for the comparison 10th and 11th grade students' listening anxiety

	Grade	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	P
Unable to Catch the Word	10th grade	52	56,33	2929,00	1413,000	,673
	11th grade	57	53,79	3066,00		
Pronunciation Speaker	10th grade	52	56,41	2933,50	1408,500	,647
	11th grade	57	53,71	3061,50		
Rapid Rate of Speech	10th grade	52	57,21	2975,00	1367,000	,464
	11th grade	57	52,98	3020,00		
The Limited Time	10th grade	52	53,66	2790,50	1412,500	,664
	11th grade	57	56,22	3204,50		
The Lack of Vocabulary	10th grade	52	60,15	3128,00	1214,000	,095
	11th grade	57	50,30	2867,00		
The Lack of Concentration	10th grade	52	57,95	3013,50	1328,500	,330
	11th grade	57	52,31	2981,50		
Total	10th grade	52	58,05	3018,50	1323,500	,335
	11th grade	57	52,22	2976,50		

Table 2 demonstrates that according to the total outcome there was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students according to their results concerning the listening anxiety ($U=1323.5$, $p=.335$). However, results showed that mean rank of 10th grade students was $MR=58.05$ whereas the mean rank was $MR=52.22$ for 11th grade students, which was lower as compared with 10th grade students. There was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students according to the results concerning the first subscale “unable to catch the word” ($U=1413.0$, $p=.673$). Anyhow, results showed that 11th grade students mean rank was $MR=53.79$, while the mean rank was $MR=56.33$ for 10th grade students, which was higher as compared with 11th grade students. It was observed that there was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students according to the outcomes regarding the second subscale “pronunciation speaker” ($U=1408.5$, $p=.647$). Nonetheless, the mean rank of 10th grade students was higher than 11th grade students (10th grade students, $MR=56.41$; 11th grade students, $MR=53.71$). According to the results regarding the third subscale “rapid rate of speech”, there was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students ($U=1367.0$, $p=.464$). It was found that mean rank of 10th grade students was higher than 11th grade students (10th grade students, $MR=57.21$; 11th grade students, $MR=52.98$). Statistically significant difference was not found on the fourth “the limited time” subscale between 10th and 11th grade students ($U=1412.5$, $p=.664$). Surprisingly, mean rank of 11th grade students was higher than 10th grade students (10th grade students, $MR=53.66$; 11th grade students, $MR=56.22$). According to their results regarding the fifth subscale “the lack of vocabulary”, there was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students ($U=1214.0$, $p=.095$). Nevertheless, the mean rank result of 10th grade students was higher than 11th grade students (10th grade students, $MR=60.15$; 11th grade students, $MR=50.30$). Finally, there was not discovered statistically significant difference between 10th grade and 11th grade students according to their results regarding the last sixth subscale “the lack of concentration” ($U=1328.5$, $p=.330$). Nonetheless, mean rank of 10th grade students was higher than 11th grade students (10th, $MR=57.95$; 11th grade students, $MR=52.31$).

To obtain the answer for the third research question “Is there any difference between students' listening anxiety levels according to their schools?” Mann-Whitney U-test was applied. The results are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Mann-Whitney U-test results for comparison two schools students' listening anxiety

	School	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	P
Unable to Catch the Word	№2 Hamza	46	48,13	2214,00	1133,000	,051
	№17 Ataturk	63	60,02	3781,00		
Pronunciation Speaker	№2 Hamza	46	51,71	2378,50	1297,500	,340
	№17 Ataturk	63	57,40	3616,50		
Rapid Rate of Speech	№2 Hamza	46	48,60	2235,50	1154,500	,058
	№17 Ataturk	63	59,67	3759,50		
The Limited Time	№2 Hamza	46	47,84	2200,50	1119,500	,038*
	№17 Ataturk	63	60,23	3794,50		

The Lack of Vocabulary	№2 Hamza	46	51,70	2378,00	1297,000	,338
	№17 Ataturk	63	57,41	3617,00		
The Lack of Concentration	№2 Hamza	46	47,79	2198,50	1117,500	,033*
	№17 Ataturk	63	60,26	3796,50		
Total	№2 Hamza	46	44,75	2058,50	977,500	,004*
	№17 Ataturk	63	62,48	3936,50		

*p<0,05

As demonstrated in Table 3, total outcome showed that there was statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to their results concerning the listening anxiety ($U=977.5$, $p=.004$). Since, p -value is .004 which is lower than <0.05 . There was statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students' mean rank results (Hamza, $MR=44.75$; Ataturk, $MR=62.48$). It was noted that there was no statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to their outcomes regarding the first subscale "unable to catch the word" ($U=1133.0$, $p=.051$). Nonetheless, there was statistically difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students mean rank results (Hamza, $MR=48.13$; Ataturk, $MR=60.02$). It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to the outcomes concerning the second subscale "pronunciation speaker". Even so, according to their mean rank results concerning the second subscale there was statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students. Mean rank of Hamza school students was $MR=51.71$, whereas the mean rank was $MR=57.40$ for Ataturk school students, which was higher as compared with Hamza school students. Results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to their outcomes regarding the third subscale "rapid rate of speech" ($U=1154.5$, $p=.058$). Though, there was statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students mean rank results (Hamza, $MR=48.60$, Ataturk, $MR=59.67$). According to the Mann-Whitney U-test results there was statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students regarding the fourth subscale "the limited time" ($U=1119.5$, $p=.038$). There was high difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students mean rank results, mean rank of Ataturk school students was higher than Hamza school students (Hamza, $MR=47.84$; Ataturk, $MR=60.23$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to their results regarding the fifth subscale "the lack of vocabulary" ($U=1297.0$, $p=.338$). According to mean rank results, there was significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students (Hamza, $MR=51.70$; Ataturk, $MR=57.41$). It was discovered that there was statistically significant between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to results regarding the last sixth subscale "the lack of concentration" ($U=1117.5$, $p=.033$). According to results Hamza school students mean rank was $MR=47.79$, whereas the mean rank was $MR=60.26$ for Ataturk school students, which was higher as compared with Hamza school students.

The present study aimed to analyzing listening anxiety levels of learners in the EFL classrooms. The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) was employed to assess participants' level of listening anxiety.

According to the findings of descriptive statistics it was found that EFL learners' level of listening anxiety is high, as the results showed medium level of mean scores. Mean score of the second subscale "pronunciation speaker" was higher than other subscales. It means that while EFL students listen to recording it is challenging for them to distinguish one word to another word. Earlier research about the listening anxiety in English showed the same results. Z. Lili in her study investigated the freshmen students' listening anxiety level. According to the results, it was found that freshmen of English majors have a little higher listening anxiety level [16]. In addition, the findings of the present study are in line with S.R. Annisa, A. Adnan and L. Marlina's study results, which found that students have a high listening anxiety level. The study was conducted to English Department students at Universitas Negeri Padang who were taking Basic Listening class [4]. M.N. Tahsildar and Z.S. Yussof in their study investigated L2 students' listening anxiety. Participants were undergraduate university students from Malaysia. According to the results they found that 58% of the learners have high level of listening anxiety [17].

Moreover, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students according to their results concerning the listening anxiety. However, mean rank of 10th grade students was higher than 11th grade students. It denotes that 10th grade students feel more anxious in listening than 11th grade students.

Anyhow, there was statistically significant difference between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to their results concerning the listening anxiety. According to the findings it was found that mean rank of Ataturk school students was higher than Hamza school students. It explains that Ataturk school students have higher level of anxiety than Hamza school students. Among subscales there were only statistically significant differences between Hamza and Ataturk school students according to their results concerning “the limited time” and “the lack of concentration” subscales. Both subscales mean score results showed that mean score of Ataturk school students was higher than Hamza school students. It means that Ataturk school students feel more anxious when they listen recording only once than Hamza school students. Ataturk school students feel more worry and anxious when they have a little time to think after recording than Hamza school students. Ataturk school students feel more worry when they cannot understand every word in recording than Hamza school students.

Conclusions

Listening anxiety levels of learners in the EFL classrooms was analyzed in this present study. According to the results, it was found that EFL learners have a high listening anxiety level. The reason of this may be that English is not their native language, that’s why they face difficulties in English listening classes. There was no statistically significant difference between 10th and 11th grade students concerning their listening anxiety level. Anyhow, there was statistically significant difference between №2 Hamza general secondary school and №17 Ataturk gymnasium school regarding their listening anxiety level.

Anxiety can be factor which ruins the success of learning, if teachers do not overcome it. Teachers need to recognize the problems in learning, even if the problems do not cause them anxiety. Then, teachers need to know what kind of anxiety is commanding learners’ mind in order to create the great teaching plan and lending support. Students also should realize that anxiety is normal in learning process. Students should face listening anxiety boldly and try to decrease the worry and fear in English listening classes. In order to increase listening proficiency is suggested to students to learn listening strategies.

For future researchers there are given some suggestions by the researchers. It is recommended to find out the factors which influence listening anxiety. For subsequent researchers, it is suggested to investigate the influence of anxiety on students’ speaking and reading skills. It will be interesting to explore difference between young and adult language learners’ listening anxiety level. It will be interesting to discuss and compare public and private school students’ listening anxiety.

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Д.Н. Бабаханова, М.Е. Сейтова

Ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретіндегі оқитын сыныптарда оқушылардың тыңдаудағы мазасыздық деңгейін талдау

Тыңдау қиын дағды болып саналады, сонымен қатар басқа дағдылармен, атап айтқанда оқу, жазу және сөйлеу дағдыларымен салыстырғанда жиі назардан тыс қалады. Тыңдау — екінші немесе шет тілін меңгерудің маңызды дағдыларының бірі, ол басқа ана тілінде сөйлейтіндермен сөйлесуге мүмкіндік береді, өйткені тыңдаусыз қарым-қатынас толық бола алмайды. Ауызша қарым-қатынаста тыңдау маңызды рөл атқарады және мазасыздық оқушылардың есту қабілетінің түсінуіне әсер етеді. Мазасыздық бұл оқушылардың есту қабілетіне кедергі келтіретін күшті фактор. Зерттеудің мақсаты ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретіндегі оқитын сыныптарда оқушылардың тыңдау кезіндегі мазасыздық деңгейін талдау. Зерттеуге Түркістан қаласындағы екі мектептен 109 оқушы қатысты. Олар Хамза атындағы №2 жалпы орта мектебінің (с=46) және Атагүрік атындағы №17 мектеп-гимназиясының (с=63) 10-11 сынып оқушылары. Бұл зерттеуде сандық сипаттамалық зерттеу дизайны қолданылған. Қажетті деректерді жинау үшін сауалнаманы қолдана отырып, сауалнама әдісі қолданылды және ол деректер Әлеуметтік ғылымдарға арналған статистикалық пакеттің (SPSS) 23.0. нұсқасын пайдалану арқылы сипаттамалы түрде талданды. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелеріне сәйкес, ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде үйренушілердің тыңдау кезінде мазасыздық деңгейі жоғары екендігі анықталды. Дәлірек айтқанда, ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде үйренушілер өзгүрлі айтылымдарды естігенде көбірек қиындықтарға тап болатыны айқындалды.

Кілт сөздер: тыңдаудағы алаңдаушылық, мазасыздық, тыңдап түсіну, шет тілі, сандық зерттеу, сауалнама, ағылшын тілін үйрену, түсіну.

Д.Н. Бабаханова, М.Е. Сейтова

Анализ уровня тревожности в аудировании учащихся в классах английского языка как иностранного

Аудирование считается трудным навыком, а также им часто пренебрегают по сравнению с другими навыками, а именно навыками чтения, письма и разговорной речи. Аудирование — один из важнейших навыков владения вторым или иностранным языком, который дает возможность общаться с другими носителями языка, поскольку без слушания общение не может быть полным. В устном общении аудирование играет значительную роль, и тревога оказывает влияние на понимание учащимися на слух. Тревога является мощным фактором, который блокирует понимание учащимися на слух. Цель настоящего исследования состояла в том, чтобы проанализировать уровни беспокойства при прослушивании учащихся в классах английского как иностранного языка. Участниками этого исследования были 109

учащихся из двух разных школ Туркестана. В нем приняли участие учащиеся 10–11 классов Общеобразовательной средней школы № 2 имени Хамзы (к=46) и Школы-гимназии №17 имени Ататюрка (к=63). В работе использовался количественный описательный дизайн исследования. Для сбора необходимых данных был применен метод опроса с использованием вопросника, который был проанализирован с помощью Статистического пакета для социальных наук (SPSS) версии 23.0. По результатам было обнаружено, что изучающие английский как иностранный язык имеют высокий уровень тревожности при прослушивании. Точнее, было обнаружено, что студенты, изучающие английский как иностранный, сталкиваются с большими трудностями, когда слышат разные виды произношения.

Ключевые слова: тревога слушания, тревожность, понимание на слух, иностранный язык, количественные исследования, опрос, изучение английского языка, понимание.

Information about authors

Babakhanova, D.N. — Master student, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, Turkistan, Kazakhstan;

Seitova, M.E. — PhD, Assistant Professor, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, Turkistan, Kazakhstan.

Букетов Университет