

Methodological Tendencies of Theses Made in the Fields of Four Basic Skills in Turkish Education

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Abstract

The method that determines the way a study will be conducted, guides researchers, and is followed throughout the research. Method is a must-have element in every academic study. The aim of this research is to determine which research methods are used and how often in thesis studies on four basic skills (Listening, speaking, reading, writing). In the research, firstly theoretical information about research methods was given, and then the findings regarding the theses were interpreted. In this research, meta-synthesis research method, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. The theses included in the research consist of master's and doctoral theses in the "YÖK Academic" database, which focus on four basic skills related to teaching Turkish. The sample of the study consists of studies published at <https://tez.yok.gov.tr> between January 2015 and August 2022. As a result of the research, it was determined that 12 of 52 academic theses were conducted with qualitative method, 31 with quantitative method and 9 with mixed method. In addition, it has been observed that in the last seven years, the most studies have been done on writing, one of the four basic skills. According to the findings, it is recommended that researchers give due importance to qualitative and mixed methods as well as quantitative methods. Apart from this, it is recommended that additional emphasis be given to studies in the fields of listening, speaking and reading. Because each basic skill has its own importance. Finally, it is recommended that the methods of articles written other than thesis studies on this subject be included in the scope.

Keywords: Four Basic Skills, Scientific Research Methods, Turkish Education

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Knowing the origin of the word science creates action. Knowing means having knowledge about something, understanding it and assimilating it. Science, on the other hand, is defined as the accumulation of recorded information that humanity has accumulated to date, by explaining cause-effect relationships that are accepted as valid (Karasar, 2008:10). Thanks to science, which is the foundation of the sense of knowing, humankind has created today's civilization. One of the most necessary things for science is to do research as well as thinking and questioning. According to the Turkish Language Association (2021), research is a methodical work of science and art. The methodical studies expressed here form the basis of our research in terms of scientific methods and techniques. When the history of science is examined, it is understood that the first scientific research emerged with the discovery of agriculture and then the invention of calendars. Following this development, the relationship between nature and humans was examined in the context of cause and effect, and it was seen that the effect of nature on humans turned into the influence of humans on nature over time, and that the general understanding progressed from a physical understanding to a positivist understanding after a certain point. Positivism is a view that sees metaphysics and religion as obstacles to human progress and is based only on modern science (Cevizci, 2010: 1292). The father of this idea is Saint Simon, but it was his student Auguste Comte who systematized it. Studies carried out with this understanding were subjected to experimental examinations and the results obtained were found to be universal values. However, since science has a structure that can constantly improve itself, it has always been possible for new phenomena to emerge. The positivist approach, which remained influential until the beginning of the 20th century, began to be questioned with Albert Einstein's "theory of relativity" and Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle" theories and the view that science is not only an objective production process (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008: 27). In the light of these developments, the modern research methods most frequently used by researchers today and the research that forms the basis of scientific research methods have been used to model the impact of this and have paved the way for the emergence of three types of research today: qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed research methods.

Qualitative Research Method

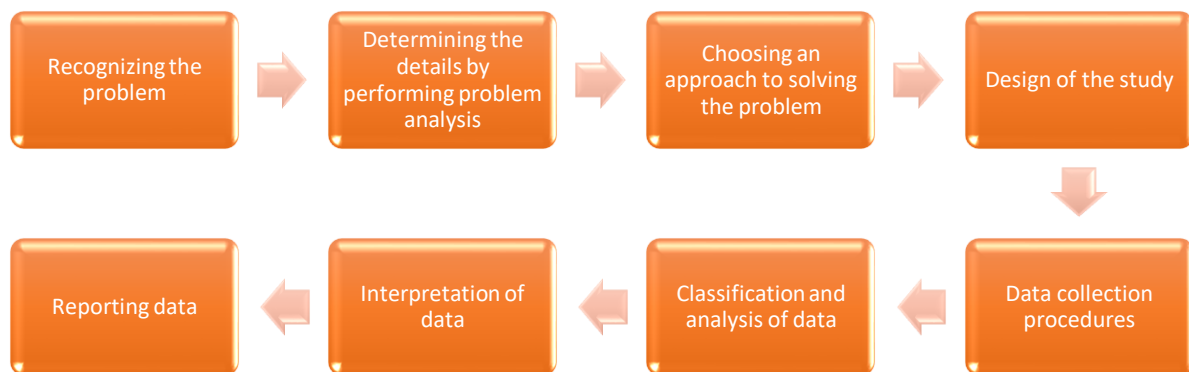
Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008, p. 39) define qualitative research as research in which qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and a qualitative process is followed to present the perceptions and events in the natural environment in a realistic and holistic manner. Data in qualitative research must be collected simultaneously in natural environments rich in written and visual data as soon as possible, and for this purpose, the researcher strives to be in the environment where the event occurs (Gay, Mills and AirAsia, 2006; as cited in Reynolds et al., 2013). This method is one of the ways of producing knowledge developed by humans to discover their social depths shaped by their own efforts by solving their own secrets (Özdemir, 2010, p. 326). The validity and reliability parameters that the qualitative researcher reaches at the end of the research must be as detailed as possible, as well as the opinions and experiences, observations, data or documents of the subject individual (Patton, 1990, p. 34-38). In a study where the qualitative research method is preferred, the facts and events under investigation are considered in their own context and interpreted within the framework of the meanings that individuals attribute to these facts (Altunışık et al., 2010, p. 302).

It is very difficult to generalize in qualitative research. The reason for this is that, due to the nature of social events, it is very difficult to find samples that represent the relevant universe in qualitative research, and qualitative research findings cannot be generalized to other social events because it is not possible to experience the same social event again (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). It is seen that researchers using qualitative research method work on three types of data sets:

1. Data sets related to nature and environment: The demographic or physical environment is examined in the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).
2. Data sets related to the research process: Events and facts that occurred before or during the research are examined (Patton, 1990).
3. Data sets regarding the perception of the researched event and phenomenon in individuals: Internal changes, conflicts, etc. of the researcher. and/or events and facts investigated during the research process. (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

Figure 1

Stages of the Research Process in a Qualitative Research According to Creswell (2002)



When the literature is examined, it is seen that three data collection techniques are generally used in qualitative research: observation, interview, and document review. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018, p. 169), observation is used to describe in detail the behavior occurring in an environment. The researcher should use this method if he wants to obtain a detailed, comprehensive, and time-spanning view of behavior occurring in an environment. Interviewing is an effort to understand the feelings and thoughts of individuals participating in the research about a topic determined by the researcher. The main purpose here is to try to understand individuals' perspectives. In this way, unobservable information such as individuals' experiences, attitudes and thoughts are tried to be accessed. Structured, semi-structured, unstructured and focus group interview techniques are available as four different interview techniques (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, p. 69; Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2011, p. 78). Document analysis is a systematic qualitative research method used to examine and evaluate all documents, whether printed or electronic. According to this analysis, it is necessary to make sense of the research and create an understanding of the relevant subject. Additionally, data needs to be examined and interpreted to improve empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Quantitative Research Method

Quantitative research is an attempt to decipher the relationships between variables using mathematics-based methods based on statistical and numerical data (Patton, 2005). Quantitative research method, whose basic principle is to express and measure the information obtained as numerical values, is a research method that is tested based on hypotheses (October 2020). Creswell (2017) classified quantitative research designs into two types: experimental and non-experimental designs. Büyüköztürk et al. (2019) classified quantitative research methods designs as survey research, correlational research, causal comparison research, experimental research, design and development research, and meta-analysis research. The purpose of quantitative research is to explain, predict and generalize causal relationships. The researcher collects quantitative data, analyzes and tries to prove the relationships between variables (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Decadeniz, & Demirel, 2016).

Şimşek (2012, p. 86-88) lists the features of the quantitative research method as follows:

- Quantitative research is based on positivist understanding.
- According to quantitative research, the truth is single and definitive. Moreover, reality is outside the individual and independent of the individual.
- Quantitative research is an objective, reductionist method based on observation and experimentation that adopts a deductive approach.
- Quantitative research focuses on answers to quantitative questions about the topic it studies.
- Reaching generalizations is the primary goal in quantitative research. The research process has a hierarchical structure. In this research method, numerical data is collected.
- In quantitative research, the literature is scanned depending on depth and breadth criteria.
- Deductive method is followed in quantitative research. Therefore, the steps of integration, limitation and definition are followed to define the problem.
- In quantitative research, assumptions are made because many variables are not fully controlled.
- In quantitative research, the sample size must be large, the sample must be representative of the universe, and probability-based sampling must be done.
- Statistical analysis methods are used in quantitative research. In this research method, external and formal language is used.
- Quantitative research produces results that are considered definitive until proven otherwise.
- In quantitative research, unobservable behaviors are tried to be measured based on observable behaviors.
- In quantitative research, human behavior is seen as predictable and produces the same results when faced with similar effects that do not vary according to context.

Figure 2

According to Neuman Stages of the Research Process in a Quantitative Research (Neuman, 2008, p. 22)

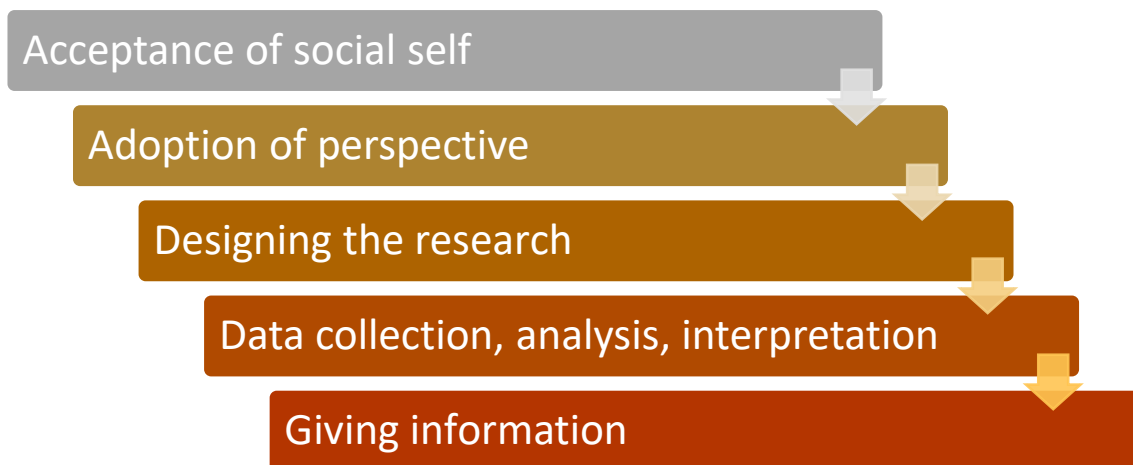


Figure 3

Differences Between Qualitative and Quantitative Research (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, p. 49)

<i>Quantitative Research Methods</i>	<i>Qualitative Research Methods</i>
Hypothesis	
Reality is objective.	Reality is individual.
What matters is the method.	What matters is the conditions.
Variables and their relationships can be measured.	Variable relationships are difficult to measure.
The researcher is not a participant.	The researcher is also a participant.
Purpose	
Making generalizations, predictions, and is to explain causality.	Ability to describe, interpret and interpret participants' perspectives in depth to be able to understand.
Approach	
It starts with theory and hypothesis.	It ends with theory and hypothesis.
It takes place in the form of experiment-application-control.	It is in integrity and natural.
Standard data collection tools are used.	It is the researcher's own data collection tool.
Analysis of the parts is performed.	Emerging patterns are formed.
There is a search for compromise and norms.	There is a search for multiplicity and difference.
Numerical representation of the data is made.	It is realized as the description of the richness and depth of the data.
Role of the Researchers	
<i>They are an event and not a reality, it is impartial and objective.</i>	They are involved in events and facts, she is subjective, she is empathetic.

Mixed Research Method

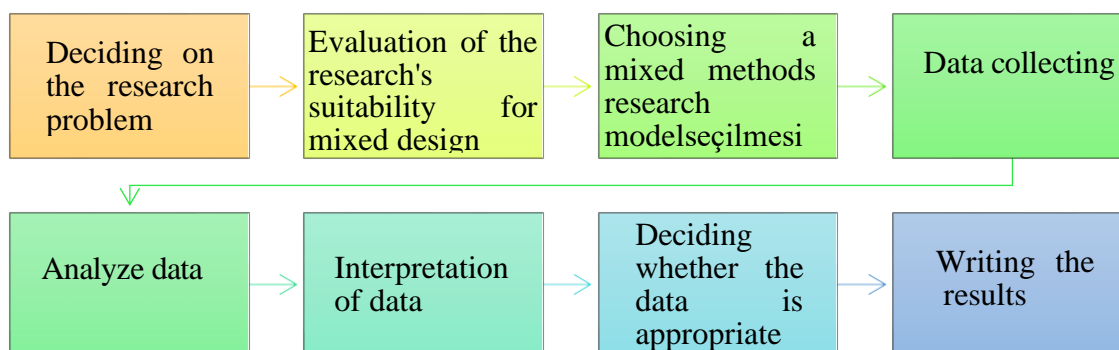
Mixed research is the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data from a single study or studies in research (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009,

p. 266). In the mixed study method, there is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Tashakori and Teddlie, 1998). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methods and approaches in research. Creswell (2012) states that mixed method research problems and questions are better understood than when qualitative and quantitative methods are used separately. This research method provided a bridge between qualitative and quantitative research methods and paved the way for completing the deficiencies in either method and increased the need for higher quality research to take this method into consideration (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 15; Greene, 2005, p. 209).

It is defined as a mixed method research study or the combination of concepts and approaches in a study where qualitative and quantitative methods are used by many researchers (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). According to Johnson and Turner (2003), in mixed methods, the researcher must collect more than one data using different strategies, methods and approaches. Cresswell (2006) stated that the use of quantitative and qualitative data in mixed methods will contribute to a better understanding of research problems.

Figure 4

Stages of Mixed Research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004)



Suhonen (2009) lists the advantageous aspects of mixed research as follows:

- It eliminates the limitations of working with a single method.
- 2-Provides a holistic view of the event.
- It allows numerical values to be explained with words.
- Adds meaning to numbers through words and pictures.
- Allows research to provide strong evidence.

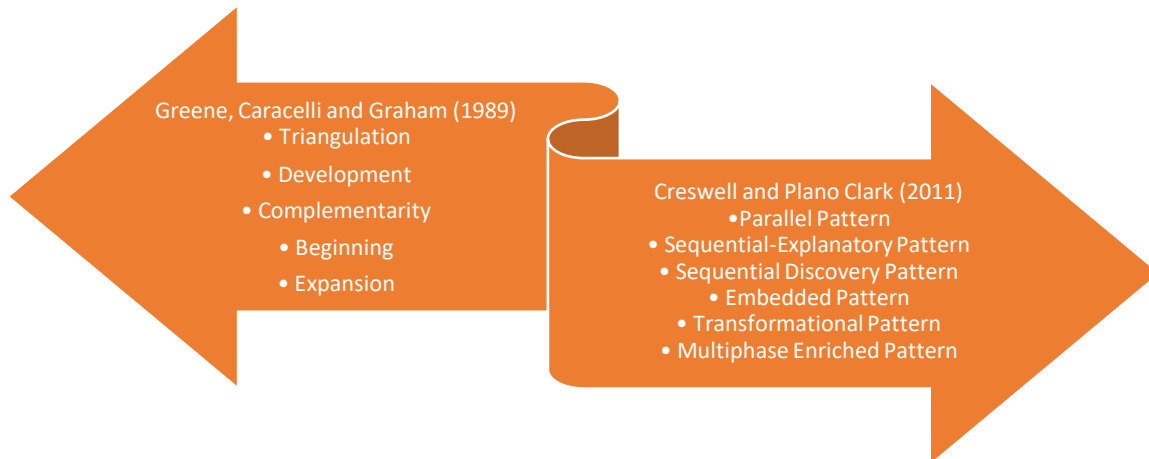
According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), considering the limitations of the mixed method:

- Using both methods can be laborious and requires teamwork.
- It is financially expensive and can waste time analyzing both written and numerical data.
- If the researcher is going to use this method, he must be familiar with more than one method and approach.

When the literature is examined, different designs of the mixed research method are mentioned by researchers. Some researchers have made classifications as follows:

Figure 5

Classification of Mixed Research Method



The problem statement of this research is "What are the methods used in thesis studies on the four basic skills in Turkey?" It is in the form. Depending on this problem sentence, the sub-problem sentence is arranged as follows:

- What is the rate of use of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods in thesis studies on the four basic skills in Turkey?

This section provides information about the research design, data collection tools, data collection process and data analysis. In this study, the meta-synthesis research method, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. According to Çalık and Sözbilir (2014), the meta-synthesis method is defined as the qualitative comparison of studies that use a certain theme or subject of the research in line with the main template and synthesize the interpretation or understanding in a certain field with a critical understanding. The stages of the research method in question are as follows (Polat and Ay, 2016):

- Determining research questions,
- Scanning the literature with appropriate keywords,
- Supply, control, identification and evaluation of resources,
- Determining the criteria to be included or excluded from the research and selecting the studies to be included in the evaluation,
- Making inferences by synthesizing the findings within the framework of determined themes,
- Detailed reporting of the process and findings.

Data Collection Tools and Process

In this research, the methods used in the studies obtained by scanning academic theses related to the four basic skills in the "YÖK Academic" database were examined. Academic theses regarding four basic skills and published at <https://tez.yok.gov.tr> between January 2015 and August 2022 were included in the research. During the research process, 52 academic theses were examined. The studies obtained are stated under the heading of Appendices. The studies included in the research were reached by searching with the terms "speaking training", "speaking skills", "reading teaching", "reading skills", "listening training", "listening skills", "writing training", "writing skills". Findings were obtained by examining the methods used in these studies.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive content analysis was used in the research. The studies included in the research were limited to four basic skills and the methods used in the research conducted under these themes were examined. The results obtained were interpreted qualitatively.

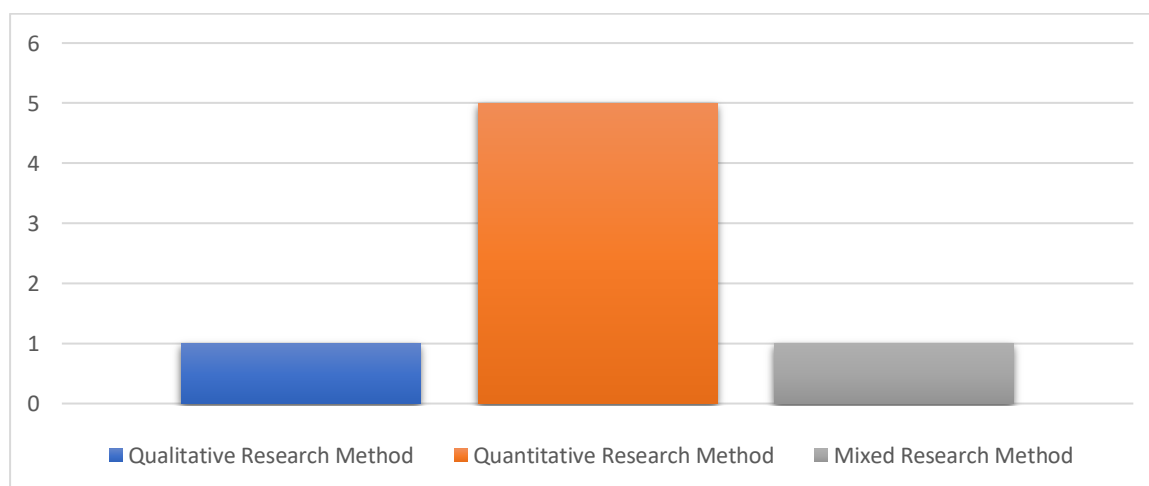
Findings

The studies examined were examined under four headings: listening education/skill, speaking education/skill, reading education/skill, and writing education/skill. The data regarding these headings were arranged considering the research method used. When the literature was examined, 52 academic theses were found, seven of which were on listening education/skill, fourteen on speaking education/skill, seven on reading education/skill and twenty-four on writing education/skill. The resulting academic theses were evaluated under four basic skills headings.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are seven academic theses on listening education/skill. The methods used in these theses are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Methods Used in Academic Theses on Listening Education/Skills



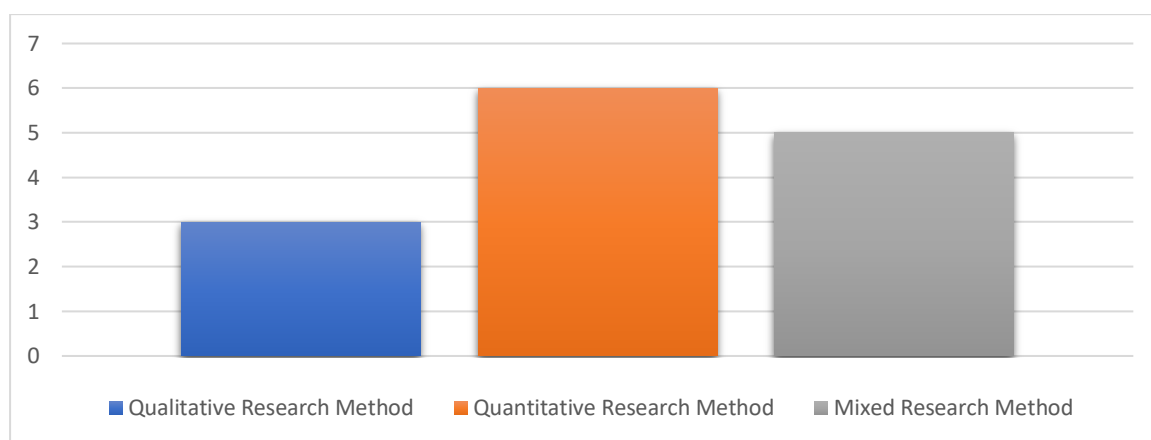
When Figure 5 was examined, it was determined that one qualitative, five quantitative and one mixed method were used in academic theses on listening education/skills. In the study where the qualitative method was used, a case study (Kaya, 2015) was used. In one of

the studies using the quantitative method, a single-subject quasi-experimental design (Atila, 2018), screening model (Yılmaz Abalı, 2019; Aydın, 2020), and quasi-experimental model based on pretest-posttest were used. In two of the studies (Çelebi, 2020) and descriptive research method (Kaya, 2020) were used. Finally, in the research where mixed methods were used, the mixed method integrated action research model (Boyras, 2021) was used.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are fourteen academic theses on speaking training/skills. The methods used in these theses are shown in Figure 6.

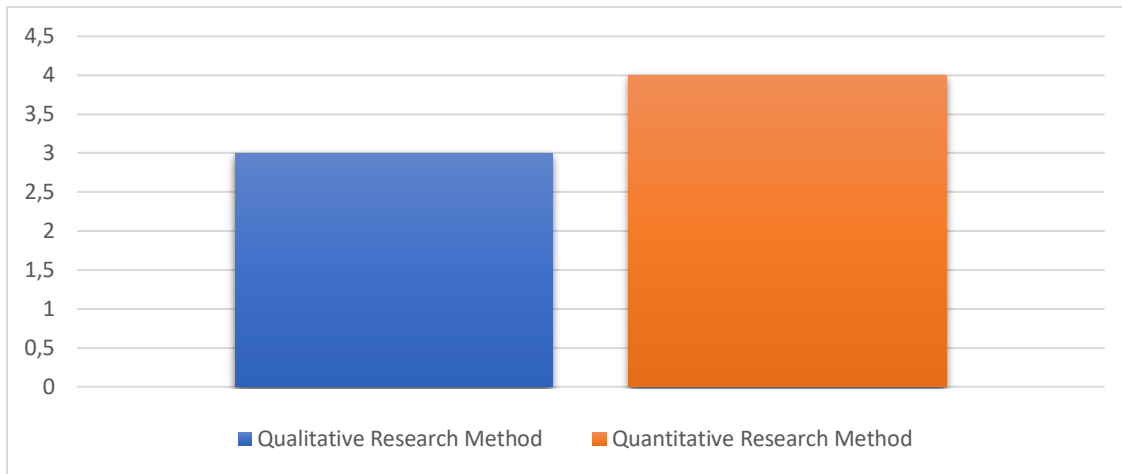
Figure 6

Methods Used in Academic Theses on Listening Education/Skills



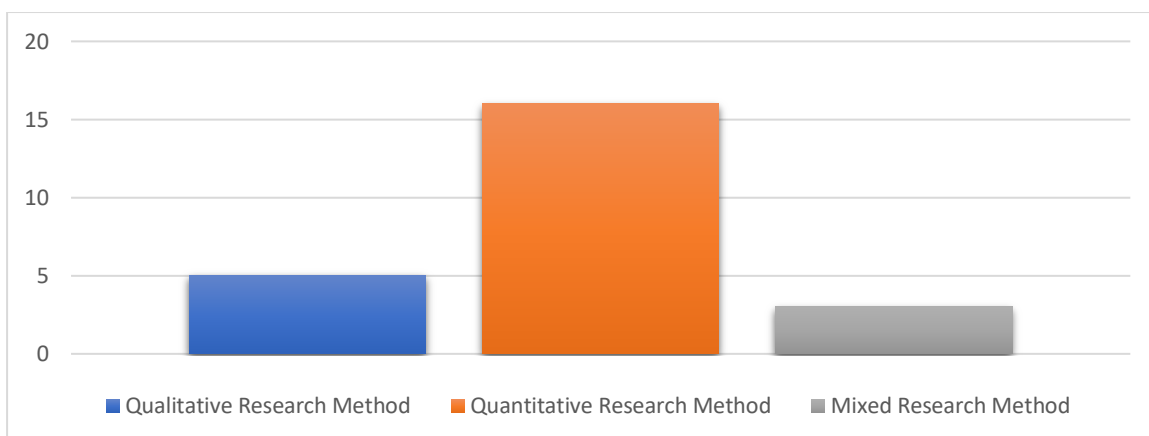
When Figure 6 was examined, it was determined that three qualitative, six quantitative and five mixed methods were used in academic theses on speaking training/skills. In studies using the qualitative method, case study (Kaya, 2019), situation science (Yüksel, 2022) and document analysis (Uzbek, 2019) were used. The screening model (Pehlivan Coşkun, 2015; Yazıcı, 2018; Coşkun Çınar, 2015; Özcan, 2021; Sağlık, 2018; İleri, 2019) was used in six of the studies using the quantitative method. In one of the studies using mixed methods, embedded design (Akdeniz, 2018) was used. In other studies, a mixed method study was used as a qualitative method using interview, observation and document review among quantitative assessment tools and scoring methods (Altın, 2018), and in another study, interview was used as a qualitative method and quantitative method was used as preliminary evaluation. In another study, a test and post-test experimental design with a control group was used (Anlar, 2018), in the research conducted by Doğan (2022), a different study was used as a qualitative interview and observation method, and a single group pre-test and post-test was used as a quasi-experimental model as a quantitative method. has been detected. In a recent study, document analysis was used as a qualitative method and scanning model (Karabıyık, 2018) was used as a quantitative method.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are seven academic theses on reading education/skills. The methods used in these theses are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7*Methods Used in Academic Theses on Reading Education/Skills*

When Figure 7 was examined, it was found that three qualitative methods and four quantitative methods were used in academic theses on reading education/skills. There are no studies using mixed methods. In two of the studies using the qualitative method (Esemen, 2020; Genç, 2019), document analysis was used, and in one study (Kurban, 2018), action research was used. It was determined that in two of the studies in which the quantitative method was used, a screening model (Suak, 2019; Temiz, 2015), an experimental model with a pre-test - post-test control group (Çelik, 2022), and a Jultified control group model (Sarikaya, 2018) were used in the other.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are seven academic theses on writing education/skill. The methods used in these theses are shown in Figure 8.

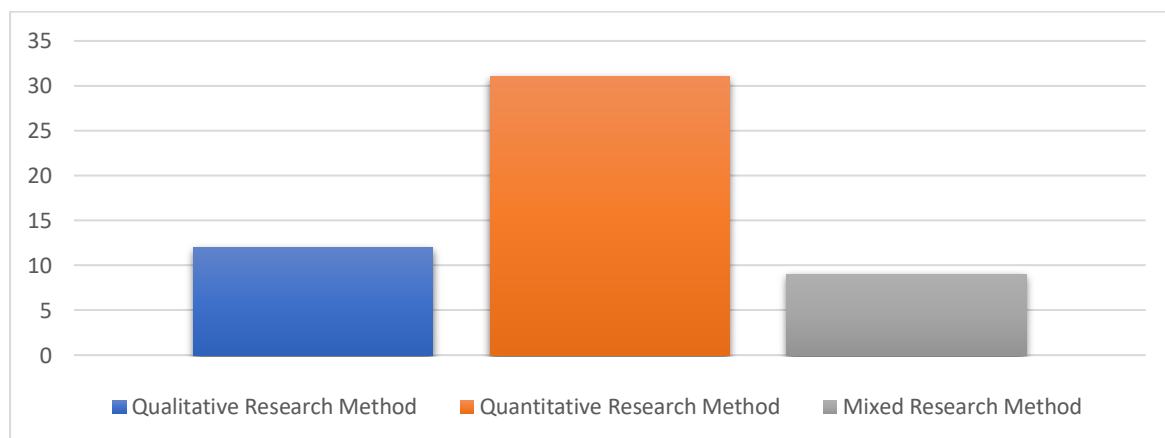
Figure 8*Methods Used in Academic Theses on Writing Education/Skills*

When Figure 8 was examined, it was determined that five qualitative, sixteen quantitative and three mixed methods were used in academic theses on writing education/skills. In studies using the qualitative method, four document analyzes (Atlas, 2021; Gönç, 2015; Kurt, 2015; Keleş, 2015) and one survey technique (Taşdemir, 2020) were used. In nine of the studies using the quantitative method, the survey model (Demir, 2017; Sayed,

2017; President, 2018; Bakir, 2015; Yuvaç, 2019; Baran, 2021; Hattatođlu, 2019; Őengül, 2019; Özlek, 2021), three experimental models (AŐçı). , 2019; Hamarathı, 2015; Korkmaz, 2015), pre-test and post-test single-group quasi-experimental model study (Anlar, 2018), test/post-test control groups asynchronous model in pre-test and quasi-experimental model study (Dorlay, 2018). , it was determined that in another study, a pretest-posttest control group model was used (Terziođlu Ünveren, 2018), and in a different study, a quasi-experimental design with pretest-posttest application (Kolikpınar, 2021). In one of the academic theses where mixed method was used (Kaya, 2019), a survey was used as a quantitative method and document analysis method was used as a qualitative method. In another study, semi-structured interview questions were used as a qualitative method, researcher observation, and a single-group pretest-posttest was used in students' papers as a quantitative method. test model (Kaplan, 2018), in the other study, case study was used as a qualitative method and multiple probe model (Polat, 2022) was used as a quantitative method.

Figure 9

Methods Used in Academic Theses Included in the Research



When Figure 9 is examined, it is understood that 52 academic theses were included in the research. It was determined that the quantitative method was used in 31 of 52 academic theses, the qualitative method was used in 12 and the mixed method was used in 9.

Discussion and Suggestions

In this study, the methods used in academic thesis studies on four basic skills between January 2015 and August 2022 were examined. Academic theses were accessed at <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi>. The resources in the research were accessed by searching with the terms "speaking training", "speaking skills", "reading teaching", "reading skills", "listening training", "listening skills", "writing training", "writing skills". According to these studies, in which 52 academic theses were examined, it was concluded that the quantitative method was used most frequently in 31 studies, the qualitative method in 12 studies, and the mixed method in 9 studies.

It has been concluded that the quantitative method, which originates from the positivist understanding, has not lost its validity, and is frequently used. It is thought that the reason for this is that the presence of numerical data in research gives confidence to

researchers. However, the fact that the quantitative method can be generalized in the field of science and mathematics does not mean that it can also have a generalizing feature in the field of social sciences. Therefore, both qualitative and mixed methods are equally important.

The following suggestions can be made to researchers in future studies:

- Comparative studies should be conducted by examining the methods of theses published in foreign languages.
- Researchers should give due importance to qualitative and mixed methods as well as quantitative methods.
- It has been observed that in the last seven years, the most studies have been done on writing, one of the four basic skills. Importance should also be given to studies in the fields of listening, speaking and reading. Because each basic skill has equal importance among themselves.
- Methods of articles written other than thesis studies should also be included in the scope.

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Adds

Theses Which Were Analyzed Within This Study

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About the Author

Ayhan DÖNMEZ: He is a PhD student at Dokuz Eylül University. He has studies on teaching Turkish as a mother tongue and a foreign language, educational sciences, Turkish fairy tales and computer-assisted teaching. He completed his undergraduate and graduate education at the same university.

Ethical Standards

Since no studies were conducted with humans, no ethics committee permission was received.