

A Needs Analysis for Learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language

Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğrenenlere Yönelik Gereksinim Çözümlemesi

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the topics, learning styles, language skills, learning environments, materials, out-of-class activities and assessment methods that are needed by learners of Turkish as a foreign language in the language learning process. The research was conducted with 305 foreign learners who were attending a language centre in Ankara to learn Turkish. The research utilised the "Needs Analysis Questionnaire for Learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language" that was developed by the researchers, and which analysed seven dimensions of the learning process: "themes, learning styles, language skills, learning environments, materials, out-of-class activities and assessment". The findings obtained through the questionnaire were calculated as frequencies and percentages. The findings of the research revealed that learners of Turkish as a foreign language are most interested in topics related to the Turkish culture, their own country and their work/job. It was also determined that the learners preferred audio-visual activities, watching videos or small group discussions in the language learning process. From the analysis of learner needs related to learning environments, it was seen that the learners preferred blended learning, but were adverse to a totally e-learning-based environment. For assessment, it was determined that the learners opposed self-assessment or peer assessment, but rather preferred to have the teacher assess their written/spoken work.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language, needs analysis, learner-centred language education

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğrenenlerin dil öğrenme sürecinde gereksinim duydukları konuları, öğrenme biçimlerini, dil becerilerini, öğrenme ortamlarını, ders materyallerini, sınıf dışı etkinlikleri ve değerlendirilme yollarını belirlemektir. Araştırma, bir dil öğretimi merkezinde öğrenim görmekte olan 305 öğrenciyle yürütülmüştür. Çalışmada araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen "Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğrenenler İçin Gereksinim Çözümlemesi Sormacısı" kullanılmıştır. Sormaca, "temalar, öğrenme biçimleri, dil becerileri, öğrenme ortamları, ders materyalleri, sınıf dışı etkinlikler ve değerlendirme" olmak üzere yedi boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Sormaca yoluyla elde edilen veriler, frekans ve yüzde değeri olarak hesaplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda, yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğrenenlerin en çok Türk kültürü, kendi ülkeleri ve işleri/meslekleri ile ilgili konulara ilgi duydukları görülmüştür. Ayrıca dil öğrenimi sürecinde öğretmeni dinleme, video izleme ve küçük grup tartışmaları gibi görsel ve işitsel etkinliklere ağırlıklı olarak gereksinim duydukları belirlenmiştir. Öğrenenlerin öğretim ortamı ile ilgili gereksinimlerinin çözülmesi sonucunda ise öğrenenlerin uzaktan destekli eğitime gereksinim duydukları halde tümüyle uzaktan eğitime dayalı bir ders ortamını yeğlemedikleri saptanmıştır. Öğrenenlerin, değerlendirme aşamasında ise özdeğerlendirme ve akran değerlendirmesi gibi uygulamaları yeğlemedikleri; buna karşılık, öğretmenlerinin yazılı/sözlü çalışmalarını değerlendirmesine gereksinim duydukları belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğretimi, gereksinim çözümlemesi, öğrenen merkezli dil eğitimi.

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Introduction

The number of people seeking to learn Turkish in Turkey or in other countries is witnessing a rapid rise, based on their desire to get to know the Turks and Turkey, and to communicate better with Turkish people. As a result, Turkish is today being taught as a foreign language in a number of different environments, including language schools, language courses affiliated to public or private institutions; the Turkish Armed Forces (for learners from other countries); Turcology centres or departments in foreign countries; language schools, distance education centres and units; as well as research and application centres affiliated to foreign language education departments of universities in Turkey. Turkish courses for foreigners are offered mainly through a three-level system, with courses provided in classes grouped according to skill level, being basic (A1, A2), intermediate (B1, B2) and advanced (C1, C2), and using materials that are appropriate for these levels (Karababa, 2009: 271). However, as mentioned by Lado (1964: p. 4), learning a foreign language in an environment in which the language is not used creates a challenging learning process. Brown (1994: 1), speaking on the difficulty of learning a foreign language, says that it is a complex process that contains variables of infinite number. While it is already difficult to gain proficiency in a foreign language owing to the complex structure of the language, learning a language outside the environment in which it is spoken and used makes the learning process even more difficult (Gömleksiz & Elaldi, 2011: 444).

Given that foreign language learning process is so difficult and complex, it should be organized carefully following a scientific and systematic approach. In this respect, when teaching Turkish as a foreign language (TTFL) it is necessary to adopt an approach that places the learner at the centre, attaches importance to the learner's interests, skills and expectations, and internalises modern methods and techniques.

Grouping learners of Turkish based on placement tests to assess their level, then assigning them to a class based on the results and teaching Turkish to them focusing solely based on their levels is not sufficient. Recent research in educational sciences has demonstrated that interests, skills, expectations and needs can vary among learners with a similar knowledge level, thus emphasising that personal differences should absolutely be taken into account in the learning process. As it is also stated by Ekmekçi (1983), each learner has different listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, meaning that the language learning process is different for each learner. Accordingly, a single method cannot be sufficient to facilitate the learning process for each learner in the same way.

Learning a language is a multidimensional process, requiring the use of textbooks, materials and syllabuses that meet the needs of the various teaching environments, and above all, teachers who recognise learners and know the teaching methods that are required for teaching a language successfully (Karababa, 2008: p. 174). In this context, teachers of Turkish to foreign students need to be determined.

Needs Analysis

A needs analysis is the determination of materials, methods and techniques that are appropriate for the language content and learning process to be used for a certain learner group (Nunan, 1999: p. 149). Needs analysis is an efficient process that determines firstly the needs of the learner related to the target language use, i.e. language environment, instruments, language variety, language skills, and learner attitudes and behaviours, and finally the learning needs, i.e. the educational background, motivation, proficiency level, preferred activities and study habits of the learner (Diken, 2006: p. 30).

The term needs analysis gained importance in the 1970s as a result of the intense work of the European Council Working Group, which argued that learning a language successfully cannot be ensured by teaching linguistic components at the utmost level, but by deciding on learner needs in the target language (Sabuncuoğlu, 2010: p. 39). The Modern Languages Project of the European

Council considers needs analysis as the first step in determining learning objectives (Sert, 2002: p. 32). The needs of learners in the language learning process can be determined by the teacher through an analysis of personal information and the information of language proficiency and models of language-use. According to Long (2005: p. 1), the determination of learner needs in foreign language teaching is a prerequisite that becomes increasingly more important for efficient course design. According to Lüdtke and Schwienhorst (2010), a full-scale needs analysis is seen as a beneficial tool for a language centre that thinks strategically and seeks long-term development.

The purpose of a foreign language-teaching programme that aims at increasing the learning capacity of the learners should be to ensure that they are aware of their weaknesses and strengths, which will lead to an efficient language teaching process, instead of making them a “good learner”. Such an approach will also make it possible for learners to review and develop the way they think about a language. Learners should know how to analyze their language needs in order to be able to determine their language learning objectives. In other words, they need to know that they do not learn a language for the sake of learning, that they should benefit from what they have learned at the utmost level, and that they should learn a language for reasonable purposes. In addition, learners should evaluate their language competences, and know which knowledge and skills they need in order to develop these competences (Aydoğdu, 2009: p. 71). A needs analysis, when administered to a learner group, will fulfil an important function to this end.

Education is a multidimensional and multivariate process, with the primary purpose being to reach and educate the learner. In this respect, an education process that does not consider the interests, skills and needs of the learner cannot be successful, meaning that the teacher needs to make a concerted effort to get to know the learners; and a needs analysis is one such way of doing this. Teachers can determine learner needs through a needs analysis, and can organize the education process according to the obtained data.

Method

This research defines the relevant events, individuals or objects in their own situation and as they are (Karasar, 2009), and so can be considered a descriptive research; while the events and phenomena are examined in their natural environment, and so this can also be defined as a “field research”.

Participants

The sample group was comprised of 305 learners who attend Turkish courses in the Gölbaşı Branch of the Ankara University Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Centre (TÖMER). Demographic information about the participants (proficiency level, region of origin, period of Turkish education) is presented in the tables below.

Table 1.

Distribution of Participants by Proficiency Level

| Proficiency Level | f | % |
|-------------------|-----|-------|
| Basic | 23 | 7.6 |
| Intermediate | 246 | 80.6 |
| Advanced | 36 | 11.8 |
| Total | 305 | 100.0 |

Table 2.

Distribution of Participants by Region

| Region | f | % |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| Far East | 32 | 10.5 |
| Africa | 81 | 26.6 |
| Middle East | 155 | 50.8 |
| America | 6 | 2.0 |
| Europe | 14 | 4.6 |
| Asia | 17 | 5.5 |
| Total | 305 | 100.0 |

Table 3.

Distribution of Participants by Turkish Education Period

| Period | f | % |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| 0-4 months | 31 | 10.1 |
| 4-8 months | 253 | 83.0 |
| 8-12 months | 11 | 3.6 |
| Over a year | 10 | 3.3 |
| Total | 305 | 100.0 |

Development and Administration of the Data Collection Instrument

The "Needs Analysis Questionnaire for Learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language" that was developed by the researchers was used in the research. The questionnaire was composed of 59 items, with each item rated on a three-point scale (agree, somewhat agree, disagree). The questionnaire aimed to analyse seven dimensions of language learning, which were: "themes, learning styles, language skills, learning environments, materials, out-of-class activities and assessment," and was prepared in both Turkish and English, taking basic-level learners into consideration.

The questionnaire items were formulated according to relevant literature and expert opinion (three language educators, two evaluation and assessment experts, and a material development expert). The questionnaire also benefitted from the questions proposed by Nunan (1999) for the Needs Analyses of foreign language learners. After the items were formulated, expert opinion was sought in the development of item content and function. The questionnaire was then pre-tested with a pilot study in two classes of 15 learners each, and based on the feedback and results of this pilot study, the final version of the questionnaire was formulated.

During the administration of the questionnaire, the teachers were informed of the questions that the learners were likely to ask, and any terms that may be unfamiliar to the learners. All questionnaires were administered in classrooms under similar conditions.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the research was analysed using the SPSS 15.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) package programme. During the data analysis, the frequencies and percentages of the responses given to the questionnaire items were calculated. The results were then presented in tables.

Findings

The preferences of learners of Turkish as a foreign language (TFL) related to the themes by which they want to learn a topic in the classroom environment were determined from the items in the “themes” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire. The frequencies and percentages of the learner opinions of these are presented in Table 4, which can be assessed to determine the needs of TFL learners.

Table 4.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Themes

| In my Turkish class, I would like to study topics about ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| my feelings | 206 | 67.5 | 62 | 20.3 | 37 | 12.1 |
| my attitude | 217 | 71.1 | 55 | 18.0 | 33 | 10.8 |
| my beliefs | 177 | 58.0 | 77 | 25.2 | 51 | 16.7 |
| my family | 170 | 55.7 | 63 | 20.7 | 72 | 23.6 |
| my work/job | 226 | 74.1 | 46 | 15.1 | 33 | 10.8 |
| my hobbies | 210 | 68.9 | 57 | 18.7 | 38 | 12.5 |
| my country | 228 | 74.8 | 43 | 14.1 | 34 | 11.1 |
| Turkish culture | 249 | 81.6 | 35 | 11.5 | 21 | 6.9 |
| academic subjects: psychology, literature, etc. | 193 | 63.3 | 60 | 19.7 | 52 | 17.0 |
| popular culture: music, film, etc. | 189 | 62.0 | 73 | 23.9 | 43 | 14.1 |
| current affairs and issues | 185 | 60.7 | 75 | 24.6 | 45 | 14.8 |
| controversial issues: underage drinking, etc. | 147 | 48.2 | 72 | 23.6 | 86 | 28.2 |

As can be seen in Table 4, the most popular themes among TFL learners were: the Turkish culture (81.6 %), their country (74.8 %) and their work/job (74.1 %); while the least popular themes were: controversial issues (48.2 %), their family (55.7 %) and their beliefs (58.0 %).

The frequencies and percentages of the learner opinions related to the items in the “learning styles” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Learning Styles

| In my Turkish class, I would like to learn by ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| work in pairs | 206 | 67.5 | 54 | 17.7 | 45 | 14.8 |
| small group discussions | 243 | 79.7 | 39 | 12.8 | 23 | 7.5 |
| individual work | 148 | 48.5 | 86 | 28.2 | 71 | 23.3 |
| group work: drama, role playing, etc. | 211 | 69.2 | 50 | 16.4 | 44 | 14.4 |
| homework | 219 | 71.8 | 50 | 16.4 | 36 | 11.8 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|----|------|----|------|
| listening to the teacher | 278 | 91.1 | 20 | 6.6 | 7 | 2.3 |
| watching videos | 273 | 89.5 | 26 | 8.5 | 6 | 2.0 |
| carrying out projects in the class with classmates | 234 | 76.7 | 42 | 13.8 | 29 | 9.5 |
| carrying out solo projects | 149 | 48.9 | 90 | 29.5 | 66 | 21.6 |

As can be seen in Table 5, the most popular learning styles among TFL learners are listening to the teacher (91.1 %), watching videos (89.5 %) and small group discussions (79.7 %). The most popular in-class activities were: individual work (48.5 %), individual projects (48.9 %) and work in pairs (67.5 %).

The frequencies and percentages of the learner opinions related to the items in the “language skills” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Language Skills

| In my Turkish class, I most want to improve my ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|---|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|-----|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| listening | 278 | 91.1 | 21 | 6.9 | 6 | 2.0 |
| speaking | 290 | 95.1 | 12 | 3.9 | 3 | 1.0 |
| reading | 273 | 89.5 | 28 | 9.2 | 4 | 1.3 |
| writing | 274 | 89.8 | 21 | 6.9 | 10 | 3.3 |
| efficient use of grammar | 250 | 82.0 | 45 | 14.8 | 10 | 3.3 |
| pronunciation | 251 | 82.3 | 41 | 13.4 | 13 | 4.3 |
| spoken interaction/dialogue | 255 | 83.6 | 38 | 12.5 | 12 | 3.9 |
| efficient use of vocabulary | 267 | 87.5 | 30 | 9.8 | 8 | 2.6 |

As can be seen from Table 6, all language skills scored over 80 % in the questionnaire, demonstrating that there is a desire to develop all language skills among TFL learners.

The learner opinions related to the items in the “learning environment” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire are presented in Table 7.

Table 7.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Learning Environment

| In my Turkish learning, I would like to study ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| in the classroom | 285 | 93.4 | 13 | 4.3 | 7 | 2.3 |
| at home | 135 | 44.3 | 57 | 18.7 | 113 | 37.0 |
| in an independent learning centre | 110 | 36.1 | 84 | 27.5 | 111 | 36.4 |
| in the library | 118 | 38.7 | 86 | 28.2 | 101 | 33.1 |
| through e-learning (only distance education) | 63 | 20.7 | 66 | 21.6 | 176 | 57.7 |
| through blended learning (face-to-face & distance) | 120 | 39.3 | 84 | 27.5 | 101 | 33.1 |

As can be seen in Table 7, the most popular learning environments among the TFL learners are: the classroom (93.4 %), blended (face-to-face & distance) learning (39.3 %) and the library (38.7 %); while the least popular were the e-learning environment (20.7 %), home (44.3 %) and independent learning centre (36.1 %).

The frequencies and percentages of the learner opinions related to the items in the “materials” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire are presented in Table 8.

Table 8.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Materials

| In my Turkish class, I would like to learn by ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|---|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| textbook | 281 | 92.1 | 17 | 5.6 | 7 | 2.3 |
| workbook | 271 | 88.9 | 25 | 8.2 | 9 | 3.0 |
| worksheets | 240 | 78.7 | 42 | 13.8 | 23 | 7.5 |
| computer-aided materials | 226 | 74.1 | 51 | 16.7 | 28 | 9.2 |
| listening materials: CD player, cassette player, etc. | 254 | 83.3 | 37 | 12.1 | 14 | 4.6 |
| reading materials | 248 | 81.3 | 37 | 12.1 | 20 | 6.6 |
| portfolios | 146 | 47.9 | 99 | 32.5 | 60 | 19.7 |
| pictures, flashcards, etc. | 214 | 70.2 | 59 | 19.3 | 32 | 10.5 |
| video, film, television | 268 | 87.9 | 26 | 8.5 | 11 | 3.6 |

As can be seen in Table 8, the most popular learning aids among TFL learners are textbook (92.1 %), workbook (88.9 %) and video, film and television (87.9 %); while the least popular were portfolios (47.9 %), pictures, flashcards, etc. (70.2 %) and computer-aided materials (74.1 %).

The frequencies and percentages of the learner opinions related to the items in the “out-of-class activities” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire are presented in Table 9.

Table 9.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Out-of-Class Activities

| Out of class, I like to ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|---|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| have conversations with native speakers of Turkish | 284 | 93.1 | 11 | 3.6 | 10 | 3.3 |
| practise Turkish with my friends | 245 | 80.3 | 37 | 12.1 | 23 | 7.5 |
| collect examples of Turkish that I find interesting: puzzles, riddles, idioms, etc. | 203 | 66.5 | 76 | 24.9 | 26 | 8.6 |
| watch TV, film and video in Turkish | 275 | 90.2 | 27 | 8.9 | 3 | 1.0 |
| read newspapers in Turkish | 215 | 70.5 | 61 | 20.0 | 29 | 9.5 |
| read simplified novels and stories in Turkish | 223 | 73.1 | 54 | 17.7 | 28 | 9.2 |
| read novels, news, etc. with the support of my mother tongue | 194 | 63.6 | 66 | 21.6 | 45 | 14.8 |

As can be seen in Table 9, the most popular out-of-class activities among TFL learners are having conversations with native speakers of Turkish (93.1 %), watching TV, film and video in Turkish (90.2 %), and practising Turkish with friends (80.3 %); while the least popular are reading novels, news, etc. with the support of their mother tongue (63.6 %), collecting examples of Turkish that are found interesting: puzzles, riddles, idioms, etc. (66.5 %) and reading newspapers in Turkish (70.5 %).

The frequencies and percentages of the learner opinions related to the items in the “assessment” dimension of the needs analysis questionnaire are presented in Table 10.

Table 10.

Distribution of Learner Opinions in Terms of Assessment

| I like to find out how much my Turkish is improving by ...: | Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| having the teacher assess my written/spoken work | 279 | 91.5 | 17 | 5.6 | 9 | 3.0 |
| having the teacher correct my mistakes in class | 269 | 88.2 | 17 | 5.6 | 19 | 6.2 |
| exams and quizzes | 226 | 74.1 | 45 | 14.8 | 34 | 11.1 |
| checking my own progress | 209 | 68.5 | 64 | 21.0 | 32 | 10.5 |
| correcting my own mistakes | 185 | 60.7 | 64 | 21.0 | 56 | 18.4 |
| assessing myself via portfolio etc. with feedback from the teacher | 196 | 64.3 | 73 | 23.9 | 36 | 11.8 |
| being corrected by my fellow classmates | 157 | 51.5 | 80 | 26.2 | 68 | 22.3 |
| seeing if I can use the language in real-life situations | 274 | 89.8 | 24 | 7.9 | 7 | 2.3 |

As can be seen in Table 10, the most popular assessment methods among TFL learners are having the teacher assess their written/spoken work (91.5 %), seeing if they can use the language in real-life situations (89.8 %), and having the teacher correct their mistakes in class (88.2 %); while the least popular are being corrected by their fellow classmates (51.5 %), correcting their own mistakes (60.7 %), and assessing themselves via portfolio etc. with feedback from the teacher (64.3 %).

Conclusion and Discussion

Taken into account within the framework of educational sciences research and within the scope of learner-centeredness, learner feedback constitutes an important data source for the processes of curriculum development, and for implementation and evaluation in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, as it is the case with any learning/teaching process. Organizing the learning process according to learner needs in teaching Turkish as a foreign language is particularly important, since the environments in which Turkish is taught to foreigners are multilingual, multicultural and multivariate in terms of age and proficiency level. Organizing the learning process to this end can only be realized in a sound way when based on data garnered through an efficient needs analysis.

In this research, a needs analysis was administered to learners of Turkish as a foreign language, from which learner needs were determined. From the results of the administration of the “Needs Analysis Questionnaire for Learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language” to 305 learners, it was determined that the learners preferred to learn Turkish through topics related

to the Turkish culture, their country and their work/job, while the controversial issues, family and beliefs themes were less popular. The responses to the first dimension (themes) of the questionnaire showed that the TFL learners were most inclined to learn Turkish through the topics related to Turkish culture, the reason being that they are curious about the subject, and wish to learn both the target language and the target culture. Alternatively, they assume that they can better learn the target language when able to associate it with the target culture. It is also natural that topics relating to the learners' countries may be interesting for them, as most will feel a sense of nostalgia for their home country and maintain an interest in any topic or event related to it. One of the most popular themes stated as important by the learners was their work/job, possibly because they need to learn Turkish for their professional lives, making the learning process more efficient and focused.

Based on the data received from the second dimension (learning styles) of the questionnaire, it was determined that the learning styles preferred most by the TFL learners are listening to the teacher, watching videos and small group discussions; while the least popular were individual work, individual projects and work in pairs. The teacher is the fundamental element in the education process, and since the participants of the research learn Turkish in a teacher-centred environment, it is natural that their preferred learning styles will be based on teacher interaction. Watching a video is an efficient way of language learning since it satisfies multiple senses; and similarly, small group discussions ensure interaction among learners and increase language learning quality.

The responses given to the third dimension (language skills) of the questionnaire demonstrated that TFL learners seek to acquire and develop all language skills equally.

According to the responses given to the fourth dimension (learning environment) of the questionnaire, the most popular learning environments among the learners are the classroom, blended learning environment and library; while the least popular are the e-learning environment, home and independent learning centres. Although the learners voiced a preference for blended learning, they do not wish the learning environment to be based entirely on e-learning. Of all the participants in the study, 57.7 % stated a lack of preference for e-learning.

The most popular materials among learners are textbooks, workbooks and the materials developed that require the use of videos, films and television. According to the data garnered from the questionnaire, the least preferred materials are portfolios, pictures, flashcards, etc., and computer-aided materials. In the opinion of Büyükaslan (2007), the effective use of information technologies in TTFL can be beneficial in terms of both achieving the desired target and promoting productivity in the field of study itself. Taking these benefits into consideration, Büyükaslan (2007) states that it is essential to pursue a policy of making Turkish a language that is "taught worldwide" through the use of information technologies in learning and teaching processes in TTFL. Textbooks have for many years been the primary teaching material in every stage of education, while workbooks have also proved to be efficient when used to support textbooks. Videos, films and television can both relieve boredom in the learning process and can facilitate learning by stimulating multiple senses. Accordingly, it is only natural that all these materials are of primary importance for learners.

According to the data garnered from the sixth dimension (out-of-class activities) of the questionnaire, the most popular out-of-class activities among learners are conversations with native speakers of Turkish, watching television, film and video in Turkish and practising Turkish with friends. In the study carried out by İşcan (2011: p. 939), it was stated that the use of Turkish movies in TTFL would lead to a rapid improvement of students' oral communication, speaking and listening skills. The least popular out-of-class activities are reading novels, news, etc. with the support of their mother tongue, collecting examples of Turkish that they find interesting: puzzles, riddles, idioms, etc. and reading newspapers in Turkish.

The responses to the seventh dimension (assessment) of the questionnaire revealed that the most popular methods of assessment are having the teacher assess the learners' written/spoken work,

seeing if they can use the language in real-life situations and having the teacher correct their mistakes in class. In contrast, the least popular methods were being corrected by their classmates, correcting their own mistakes or assessing themselves via portfolios. In this context, it was determined that self-assessment and peer assessment were unpopular among TFL learners, which may be due to concerns about the objectivity of the person making the assessment. In addition, TFL learners may be uncomfortable with self-assessment due to the lack of information and guidance. According to Little (2009), learning to learn and lifelong learning skills can be developed using self-assessment, although this is only possible by informing and guiding the learner about self-assessment.

Recommendations

The opinions of learners about teaching and assessment should be taken into account in TTFL institutions. Teachers should give priority to the topics highlighted by learners, and make a deliberate effort to provide learners with texts about these topics. In addition, textbooks that are used in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language should include texts and themes on the preferred topics of the learners.

This research has revealed that the learning styles that are most popular among TFL learners are listening to the teacher, watching videos and small group discussions, and so it is of great importance that TFL teachers take this into account when planning the language teaching process.

Furthermore, the research has demonstrated that TFL learners desire to acquire and develop all language skills, and in this respect, TTFL institutions should give equal importance to all language skills in their syllabuses.

The data garnered during the research has shown that the materials that are most needed by TFL learners are textbooks, workbooks and materials developed for use with videos, films and television. In this context, all necessary efforts should be made to improve the quality of the textbooks and workbooks that are used to teach Turkish as a foreign language. In addition, all TTFL institutions should make sure that there is a television in every classroom, allowing the learners to benefit from videos and films in the most efficient way.

If the language learning process is limited to in-class activities, it cannot be successful; and so out-of-class activities should also be included in the syllabus. The ways in which learners can develop their Turkish outside the classroom should be given attention, and they should be offered guidance in out-of-class activities. Moreover, it should be remembered that assessment is one of the most important phases of the education process, and the preferences of learners in this regard should also be taken into consideration.

The data garnered during this research will contribute to improving the quality of TTFL when the results are taken into account by institutions engaged in TTFL. Furthermore, by administering the needs analysis detailed in this research to various groups, the multivariate nature of TTFL can be understood, thus contributing to the formulation of better quality learning environments and processes.

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