THE IMPORTANCE OF TARGET LEARNERS IN TEACHING FOUR BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS IN TURKISH

A IMPORTÂNCIA DOS ALUNOS-ALVO NO ENSINO DE QUATRO HABILIDADES BÁSICAS DA LÍNGUA EM TURCO

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, teaching Turkish to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds has become essential for effective communication. Factors such as native language, learning goals, and cognitive abilities affect the pace of language learning. Recently, the students who come to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) from third world countries for education have shown an intense interest in learning Turkish language, and consequently, Turkish has started to be taught as a foreign language to these students both at universities and private institutions. This study aims to determine the pace of Turkish language learning of foreign students who came to TRNC to study at university. The study was conducted in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year with a total of 75 students learning Turkish as a foreign language at TRNC universities. The participants were students from different countries such as Syria, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Congo, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Palestine and Germany, studying in various departments in TRNC. Using a mixed-method approach, the study employed a pre-test and post-test one-group design. Results showed that Azerbaijani students had the highest scores in both tests, Iranian and Syrian students made notable progress, and Congolese students showed the least improvement.

Keywords: Language, Turkish, Four basic language skills, Language teaching.

RESUMO

No mundo de hoje, ensinar turco para pessoas de diversas origens culturais e linguísticas se tornou essencial para uma comunicação eficaz. Fatores como língua nativa, objetivos de aprendizagem e habilidades cognitivas afetam o ritmo de aprendizagem de línguas. Recentemente, os alunos que vêm para a República Turca do Chipre do Norte (TRNC) de países do terceiro mundo para estudar demonstraram um interesse intenso em aprender a língua turca e, consequentemente, o turco começou a ser ensinado como língua estrangeira para esses alunos, tanto em universidades quanto em instituições privadas. Este estudo tem como objetivo determinar o ritmo de aprendizagem da língua turca de alunos estrangeiros que vieram para a TRNC para estudar na universidade. O estudo foi conduzido no semestre de outono do ano acadêmico de 2022-2023 com um total de 75 alunos aprendendo turco como língua estrangeira nas universidades da TRNC. Os participantes eram alunos de diferentes países, como Síria, Irã, Líbano, Líbia, Sudão, Nigéria, Congo, Paquistão, Azerbaijão, Palestina e Alemanha, estudando em vários departamentos da TRNC. Usando uma abordagem de método misto, o estudo empregou um projeto de pré-teste e pós-teste de um grupo. Os resultados mostraram que os alunos azerbaijanos tiveram as maiores pontuações em ambos os testes, os alunos iranianos e sírios fizeram progressos notáveis, e os alunos congoleses mostraram a menor melhora.

Palavras-chave: Idioma, Turco, Quatro habilidades básicas de idioma, Ensino de idiomas.

Introduction

Language is the identity that reflects nations and distinguishes them from others. Language is the living space of our values and behavioural patterns (Erol, 2021). It is a communication tool that people use to express their feelings, thoughts, and desires. In order to be competent both in mother tongue and foreign language, it is necessary to be able to use the relevant language effectively in all four basic skills. However, learning a foreign language or being proficient in using it in all four basic skills is not an easy process.

Because in the process of learning a foreign language, individuals' native languages, learning goals, cognitive competencies, etc., affect the speed of language acquisition. The continuity of societies can be ensured by transmitting their language and culture to other societies. In today's world, where inter-societal communication has increased, teaching Turkish to people from different cultures and languages holds significant importance for gaining multidimensionality in social communications (Gedik, 2009). Thus, the society whose language is transmitted gains a strong position in the global world.

Foreign language has been one of the most effective ways for societies to recognise and understand each other throughout the ages. Foreign language has increased the intensity of interaction between countries, enabling individuals to

learn different languages and recognise different cultures around the world. In today's rapidly globalizing world, increasing international relations and the closeness of societies have made foreign languages more important (İnan, 2014). Turkish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and is preferred by more and more foreign language learners day by day.

Durukan and Maden (2013) stated that Turkish, with all its dialects, is among the top five languages with the highest number of speakers in the world. In terms of foreigners, the increase in interest in Northern Cyprus in recent years due to reasons such as education and inter-university studies has accelerated the learning of Turkish by foreigners. One of the main factors to be considered in teaching Turkish as a foreign language is the characteristics of the target group. The characteristics of the target audience such as the purpose of learning Turkish, their interests and needs, and their age group are the issues that should be taken into consideration in this process (Nurlu, 2019). When considered in a broad framework, it is seen that the target audience in teaching Turkish as a foreign language has a very wide age range (Balcı & Melanlıoğlu, 2020).

The development of teaching Turkish to foreigners in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has a shorter history compared to Turkey. Turkish language instruction is provided within the preparatory departments to foreign students who come for educational purposes at the Turkish departments of universities. In addition to universities, there are courses for families who come to TRNC for work and for their children, offered by private institutions.

Yunus Emre Institute (YETEM) continues its activities in Nicosia. Since Turkish language to foreigners is a new field, it has been observed that there are very few studies on this topic in the TRNC literature.

Research Problem

A foreign language is one that is not traditionally spoken by the people of a country and is learned later for various purposes. With global developments and needs in different sectors, foreign language teaching has become widespread. The expansion of the influence of European Union institutions has increased

relationships between countries. These developing relationships have also increased educational and scientific cooperation between countries. Although Turkey is not a full member of the EU, the studies carried out with EU countries are increasing day by day. Faculty member and student exchange programmes within the scope of the Erasmus programme have brought different mobility to the field of education in Turkey. One of these mobilities is the development of teaching Turkish as a foreign language due to the preference for Turkish universities (Yağmur, 2013). From this point of view, answer to the following question will be sought: "Do the pre-test and post-test results of the students who come to TRNC and learn Turkish as a foreign language differ according to the countries?".

Research Focus

People from many countries who come together to learn Turkish differ in their goals, cultures, native languages, and other characteristics. The increasing demand for Turkish as a foreign language for various reasons has necessitated academic research on the regions where Turkish will be taught and the people learning it. Due to the fact that such a study has not been carried out before in the field of Teaching Turkish to Foreigners, this study is considered very important in terms of contributing to the field, researchers and teachers.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The general aim of the research is to determine the learning pace of Turkish for foreign students coming to Northern Cyprus from different countries and to identify the difficulties faced by the target group during learning. It will increase the quality of Turkish teaching. Therefore, knowing in which language skills Turkish as a foreign language learners have difficulty and classifying them to various categories such as 'Persians, Arabs, Germans, French' will undoubtedly make Turkish teaching more effective and provide guidance in preparing content and training teachers.

In this framework, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Do the pre-test and post-test results of students who learn Turkish as a foreign language differ according to the countries?

2. What are the views of students who learn Turkish as a foreign language about their learning process?

Methodology

In this section, information about the research methodology will be given. In this context; information about the research design, participants, data collection tools and process is provided.

General Background

In this research, the "Mixed Methods" approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative research designs, was preferred. It was aimed to support quantitative data by adding qualitative data (student opinion form) to the experimental research.

In the quantitative aspect of the research, an experimental design was used for data collection. This method utilizes a pre-test and post-test single group design as the research model. In the single-group pre-test and post-test model, an independent variable is applied to one group, and measurements are taken before and after the application process.

In the model, if there is a significant difference between the arithmetic mean of the pre-test and post-test scores of the group from the measurement tools, it is accepted that the application is effective (Karasar, N. 2002).

Semi-structured interview technique was applied to collect the data of the qualitative dimension of the research. In this technique, the respondent can partially correct and edit the questions prepared by the researcher. The researcher and the respondent can reorganise some questions together depending on the interview flow (Sönmez&Alacapınar, 2013). Content analysis technique was used to analyse the data collected through semi-structured interview form.

Sample

This study was conducted with 75 students (29 female and 46 male) learning Turkish as a foreign language at universities in Northern Cyprus during the fall semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. The participants were selected using a convenient sampling method. Due to limitations in time, money, and labour, this method was used to choose easily accessible and feasible units for the sample (Büyüköztürk, 2019). Care was taken to ensure that all students participating in the study were volunteers and their consent was obtained.

These students came from different countries such as Syria, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Congo, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Palestine, and Germany for educational purposes and enrolled in various departments. They chose these departments with their own preferences, willingly, and with the knowledge that the language of instruction is Turkish.

Table 1 – Country Distribution of the Participants

Countries	Number of Participants
Syria	14
Iran	12
Lebanon	8
Libya	8
Sudan	7
Nigeria	5
Congo	5
Pakistan	4
Azerbaijan	4
Palestine	4
Germany	4

Instrument and Procedures

In accordance with the purpose of the study, quantitative data were collected through pre-test and post-test. Firstly, a pre-test consisting of 30 questions was administered to the foreign students determined at the beginning of the application process and the data of the pre-test were kept by the researcher. The implementation process lasted a total of 6 weeks.

At the end of the 6-week implementation, an evaluation form was prepared for the post-test. This evaluation form consisted of a 30-question form, which was given within 6 weeks and consisted of questions of similar difficulty to the first test. At the same time, in order to determine the suitability of these forms for the purpose of the study and the developmental levels of the students, they were examined by 4 faculty members who are experts in the field and these forms were finalised in line with the opinions received.

A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used to collect the data of the study. Each of the students was given questionnaires that were previously prepared and reviewed by 4 field experts. The questions in the interview form, which was finalised in line with the expert opinions and consisted of 4 questions, were applied to the students. Before students began answering the questions, they were asked to review the paper with the questions and were provided with necessary explanations. One class hour was allocated for administering the interview form, and during this time, necessary explanations were provided to the participants to complete their responses. The researcher guided the students during the interview. After written opinions were collected from the students, the papers containing their responses were preserved for analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis is a method that aims to collect and analyse numerical information about a specific object or groups. The researcher presented the results of the pre-test data numerically and kept the pre-test data. After a 6-week implementation, the researcher analysed the post-test scores of the students and

compared the pre-test and post-test student scores numerically and presented these statistics in tables.

Qualitative data analysis is a process in which the researcher organises, analyses and synthesises the data, finds important variables and reflects the information obtained in the report (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), qualitative data analysis is a type of data analysis that involves summarizing and interpreting data obtained through various data collection techniques that provide flexibility and creativity to the researcher, based on pre-determined themes. In this study, descriptive analysis technique, one of the qualitative study methods, was used because the written opinions of the students were analysed one by one.

In descriptive analysis, the analyses are organized according to pre-determined themes. While data in descriptive analysis are placed into pre-determined themes, in content analysis, categories are created according to the content. The main purpose of this type of analysis is to present the findings to the reader in a summarised and interpreted form. In this process, the data are brought together in a meaningful and logical integrity. The researcher can define the organised data and make direct quotations where necessary. At the end of the process, the researcher interprets, relates, and compares, the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

In this study, the learning experiences of students learning Turkish as a foreign language were examined through a semi-structured interview form based on their written opinions, and data were obtained through descriptive analysis. Subsequently, the students' responses to the questions were coded within the framework of themes. The data, analysed according to the research questions, were interpreted and discussed in the results section. Based on the study's problem, the students' written opinions were reviewed, and the findings were presented in tables. Direct quotes from the participants' responses were provided with codes. Participants were coded according to their countries as follows: Syria (SUR 1), Iran (İR 1), Lebanon (LÜB 1), Libya (LİB 1), Sudan (SUD1), Nigeria (NİJ 1), Congo (KON

1), Pakistan (PAK 1), Azerbaijan (AZ 1), Palestine (FİL 1), and Germany (AL 1). In this study, direct quotations were made from the students' responses.

Results

In this study, the learning status of the students who learn Turkish as a foreign language in TRNC has been determined by considering their countries of origin and the languages of instruction in these countries. To this end, the tables that show the results of the application are provided below:

Table 2 – Findings regarding the participants' pre-test and post-test results of 'Reading and Listening'

Countries	Reading and listening	
	Pre-test %	Post-test %
Syria	47	82
Iran	41	78
Lebanon	33	39
Libya	31	34
Sudan	24	32
Nigeria	16	23
Congo	14	20
Pakistan	24	26
Azerbaijan	82	88
Palestine	23	28
Germany	14	21

As seen in Table 2, in terms of progress in 'Reading and Listening' pre-test and post-test results, Iranian students made the most progress with a rate of 37%, followed by Syrian students with 35%, and Sudanese students with 8%. On the other hand, Pakistani and Libyan students made the least progress with 2% and 3% respectively. Azerbaijani students received the highest score. Based on the findings, it was determined that there was a positive improvement in the post-test scores of

the students after the applications. A significant number of students stated that they had difficulties in reading and listening skills due to reasons such as pronunciation and insufficient vocabulary.

Students' views on reading and listening skills are as follows:

> Pronunciation in Turkish is very difficult. (St. Fil 3).
> All language skills are difficult. Pronunciation in Turkish is different from my language. (St. Nij 1).
> All language skills are difficult. They speak too fast and I can't understand when I listen. (St. Kon 2).
> The alphabet is different so everything is problem. (St. IR 9).
> Pronunciation and spelling are very difficult. The alphabet is different. (St. SUD 2).
> Reading is easier because there are similar words in my own language. (St. SUD 2).
> Reading, listening and speaking are easy because we have similar words. I watch Turkish TV series, I am interested in reading. (St. SUR 14)
> Reading is easier than other skills. (St. AL 2).
> Speaking and reading is a bit easy. There are similar words in Arabic. (St. SUD 5).
> All of them are difficult, it is very difficult to understand Turkish without basic knowledge. I don't know many Turkish words. (St. NİJ 3).

Table 3 – Findings regarding the participants' pre-test and post-test results of 'Writing'

Countries	Writing	
	Pre-test %	Post-test %
Syria	35	70
Iran	33	48
Lebanon	27	33
Libya	22	30
Sudan	21	28
Nigeria	14	20
Congo	9	15
Pakistan	22	28
Azerbaijan	78	83
Palestine	18	25
Germany	12	19

As seen in Table 3, in terms of progress in 'Writing' pre-test and post-test results, Syrian and Iranian students made the most progress with 35% and 15%, respectively, while Azerbaijani students made the least progress with 5%, followed by Pakistani, Nigerian, Congolese and Lebanese students with 6%. Azerbaijani students achieved the highest scores again. Based on the findings, we can say that students received lower scores in writing compared to their reading and listening skills. Students emphasized that the differences between Turkish spelling rules and those of their native languages, as well as differences in the alphabet, negatively affect their success in writing.

Students' views on writing skill are as follows:

> I am not used to writing and its rules, it is very difficult and different. (St. SUD 1)
> I don't know writing and grammar. (St. SUD 2)
> There are too many rules in Turkish and it is very difficult. (St. Nij 1)
> Writing is difficult. It is necessary to learn conjugations and affixes with all their rules. (St. Kon 2)
> Writing rules are difficult, a lot of practice is needed. (St. İr 7)
> Pronunciation and spelling are very difficult; words are too long. (St. SUD 2)
> Writing requires knowing many rules. (St. İr 10)
> I don't have time to practise writing. (St. İr. 4)
> Almost all of them are easy, but I have disliked writing and rules since I was a child. (St. AZ 1)
> Rules are very difficult. (St. NİJ 4).

Table 4 – Findings regarding the participants' pre-test and post-test results of 'Speaking'

Countries	Speaking	
	Pre-test %	Post-test %
Syria	33	74
Iran	41	65
Lebanon	29	37
Libya	22	34
Sudan	29	40
Nigeria	18	39
Congo	13	29
Pakistan	40	61
Azerbaijan	81	84
Palestine	35	54
Germany	11	26

As seen in Table 4, in terms of pre-test and post-test results in 'Speaking' skill, Syrian students made the most progress with a rate of 41%, Iranian students made the second highest progress with 24%, and Pakistani students made the least progress with a rate of 3%. Azerbaijani students received the highest score.

Students' views on speaking skill are as follows:

> Speaking is very difficult and it is impossible to apply the written rules properly while speaking. (St. SUD 3)
> Speaking is easier than writing. there are no rules. (St. Nij 1)
> All of them are difficult in Turkish. (St. Kon 2)
> Speaking is very necessary for me, but unfortunately I have difficulties. (St. PAK 3)
> Everything is difficult. Turkish is different but I like it. I want to learn to speak. (St. PAK 1)
> Speaking is easy because I spent a lot of time with my Turkish friends. (St. İR 4)
> Reading, listening and speaking are easy because there are similar words and I learnt them from my friends and by watching TV series. I am interested in learning. There are many rules for writing and grammar (St. SUR 14)
> Speaking and reading are a bit easy, we have similar words. (St. SUD 5).

Tablo 5 – Findings regarding the participants' pre-test and post-test results of 'Grammar'

| | Grammar | |
	Pre-test %	Post-test %
Syria	27	63
Iran	28	45
Lebanon	22	31
Libya	18	27
Sudan	20	29
Nigeria	12	19
Congo	9	13
Pakistan	19	27
Azerbaijan	55	63
Palestine	14	19
Germany	9	16

As seen in Table 5, in terms of the pre-test and post-test results of the 'Grammar' exams, Syrian students made the most progress with 36%, Iranian students with 17%, Congolese students with 4% and then Palestinian students with 5%. Syrian and Azerbaijani students received the highest score with 63 points. Iranian students ranked third with 45 points. Based on these findings, it has been determined that students experienced the most difficulty in grammar.

Students' views on grammar skill are as follows:

> I cannot apply grammar sufficiently, so I have difficulty in speaking as well. (St. SUD 9)
> Grammar is very difficult and complicated. (St. SUR 8)
> All of them are difficult for me but grammar is very very difficult. (St. Nij 1)
> All of them are difficult but grammar is very difficult. (St. Kon 2)
> I have difficulty in speaking because I do not know grammar well. (St. PAK 3)
> All of them, but grammar has lots of rules. (St. Fil 2)
> Grammar, tenses and affixes are very difficult. (St. İr 5)
> All of them are difficult because you need to know grammar well. (St. Nij 3)

Grammar is different and difficult. (St. Kon 3)
Grammar is very different. (St. SUR 4)
In my language, the verb comes before the subject, but Turkish is different and difficult. (St. SUR 8)
The sentence order is different in my language and there are many affixes in Turkish. (St. NİJ 2)
Turkish grammar is very complicated. (St. SUD 9)
Everything is completely different and difficult. (St.. NİJ 1)
Turkish grammar is very difficult to learn. (St. KON 3)
Turkish sentence structure is different. (St. SUD 6)
Grammar in Turkish is more difficult than my language. (St. İR 6)
Grammar is very different, I don't understand it, it is like maths. (St. SUR 7)
Everything is different, mostly grammar. There are many rules. (St. Fil 2)
"It is very difficult to understand Turkish without good basic knowledge. (St. NİJ 3).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, in which we aimed to determine the pace of Turkish language learning of students from different countries studying in TRNC, remarkable and meaningful results were obtained. The native language of the target learners has a significant impact on their learning of the four basic language skills in Turkish. Students' interest and curiosity towards Turkish also played a major role in their learning speed. Pre-test scores before the implementation were very low in all four basic language skills, except for Azerbaijani students. However, by the end of the 6-week period, students from some countries showed significant progress and development.

When evaluating the six-week period concerning reading and comprehension skills, it is possible to say that the post-test results indicate students made further progress in their reading and comprehension skills.

Demirci, in his study titled 'determinations related to reading aloud skills of Syrian Turkish learning students in level B1' in 2015, stated in a similar way that the mental dictionary, in which information such as sound, meaning and spelling about words are stored, provides an advantage to the student in reading instruction or during the reading of a text. In fact, he emphasised that Turkish has a suitable structure in terms of creating and developing a mental lexicon (Demirci, 2015: p. 353).

he Arabic alphabet, the Persian alphabet, and the Latin-based Turkish alphabet differ in several ways, including the number of letters (28 letters in the Arabic alphabet, 29 letters in the Latin alphabet, and 35 letters in the Persian alphabet) and the direction in which texts are written.

In his study titled "The Writing System of Turkish Throughout History," Tekin emphasized that differences in the number of letters between two alphabets are unlikely to cause significant difficulties in reading. He even argued that having a large number of sounds in a language can facilitate the process of learning to read and write. Tekin also highlighted that the richness of sounds in Turkish, along with the rhythm and musical structure of words, aids in the oral encoding of language in individuals (Tekin, 2013, pp. 92; 96).

In this study, based on student opinions, it was noted that students face difficulties in the pronunciation of Turkish. When examining these difficulties, it is observed that pronunciation challenges are among the primary difficulties students encounter during the process of learning Turkish.

Çarkıt in his article titled "Evaluation of Turkish Language Learning Experiences of African Origin Higher Education Students: A Phenomenology Study," concluded that the difficulty in pronouncing high pitch sounds in Turkish, the absence of certain Turkish sounds in the native languages of foreign students, and the high number of affixes in Turkish, which complicates their pronunciation, are significant challenges faced by students (Çarkıt, 2024, p. 1601).

The study also found that students experienced difficulties in learning Turkish grammar and in developing their writing skills during the Turkish language learning process. It was reported by the students that the large number of affixes in Turkish, the various functions of these affixes, and the presence of sounds in Turkish that are not found in their native languages made learning and using these sounds challenging.

İnan (2014) reported in his study that the most frequent errors in students' writing skills were related to vowel harmony. Additionally, he noted that students often confused front and back vowels. The study concluded that students particularly struggled with sounds that are not present in Persian, and they had

difficulty fully grasping the phonetic harmony of affixes added to roots and stems (İnan, 2014, p. 647).

The analysis of the pre-test and post-test results for the four basic language skills in this study revealed that Azerbaijani students achieved the highest scores.

In his study titled "An essay about how Azerbaijan students understand Turkish and Turkish students understand Azerbaijan Turkish" Karaman found that many elements in Turkey and Azerbaijani Turkish, which are two branches of Western Turkish, are quite similar. Additionally, he concluded that Azerbaijan's transition to the Latin alphabet after the dissolution of the Soviet Union facilitated reading and understanding texts, thus maximizing the comprehension rates for Azerbaijani students in both Azerbaijani and Turkish contexts (Karaman, 2010, p. 35).

The high scores of Azerbaijani students in reading and comprehension skills are an expected result due to the fact that both languages come from the same language family. On the other hand, the most significant progress was made by Iranian and Syrian students. This result can be explained by the students' need for Turkish, which is influenced by factors such as proximity to neighbour countries, job opportunities, education, and social activities. Conversely, Pakistani students made the least progress, which can be attributed to the differences in alphabets and language families between their native languages and Turkish.

In terms of speaking skills, Syrian students made the most progress, with a 41% improvement rate. This is likely due to their recent migration, which has motivated them to put in more effort to express themselves better and learn Turkish. Additionally, the proximity of Syria to Turkey and their ongoing interactions have positively influenced this success. Similarly, in writing skills, Syrian students also demonstrated the most improvement, with a 35% increase. It can be inferred that Syrian students prioritize developing their writing skills more due to the challenges they face in official matters in Turkey. In addition, Azerbaijani students received the highest score in writing skills. Some of the Syrian students who participated in the research conducted by Tunagür and Kardaş in 2021 stated that they had to learn Turkish because they started a new life in Turkey. In the same

study, some of the students stated that they learnt Turkish in order to get a good education and help their families (Tunagür & Kardaş, 2021: p.128;130).

The least progress, with a 3% improvement rate, was made by Pakistani students. Factors contributing to this include their tendency to speak their native language consistently with friends outside of school, which reduces their need to use Turkish. Additionally, not needing to use or practice Turkish outside of school, as well as the tendency of English-speaking students to pronounce certain sounds similarly to English, have negatively impacted their learning of Turkish.

In grammar skills, Iranian students made the most progress, with a 37% improvement rate. This can be attributed to the shared vocabulary between the two languages and the geographical proximity of the two countries. Considering the historical context between the two nations, the students' success in grammar becomes even clearer. Boylu and Çangal, in their 2014 study titled "the language needs analysis in teaching Turkish to foreigners: an example of Iran" noted that the Turkish language learning needs of Iranian students can be explained by historical, cultural, socio-economic, and political factors between Iran and Turkey (Boylu & Çangal, 2014, p. 146). The least progress in grammar skills was made by Congolese students, with a 4% improvement rate. This can be attributed to the fact that Turkish is an agglutinative language, whereas French is a fusional language. Additionally, in Turkish, the standard sentence structure is Subject + Object + Verb, while in French, it is Subject + Verb + Object. These significant differences in grammatical structure might contribute to the difficulties students face in learning the language.

Based on the findings of the study, it has been determined that foreign students face the most difficulty with grammar and writing rules, followed by pronunciation, when learning Turkish. This situation arises because Turkish writing skills and grammatical rules are perceived as different and challenging compared to the students' native languages. Turkish is different from other languages except Azerbaijani Turkish in terms of both sentence order and being a suffixed language.

Suggestions

1. To help students improve their skills in reading-listening, speaking, writing, and grammar in Turkish, it is essential to identify the similarities and differences between Turkish and their native languages. Educators should be informed about the identified similarities and differences between the two languages.

2. By taking into account the students' needs, it is possible to develop high-quality language learning environments and activities that can help them learn Turkish more effectively.

3. Since the students have expressed that they face more difficulties in grammar and writing skills, it is important to ensure that they learn Turkish grammar topics through indirect methods in lessons and to provide practice opportunities.

4. In the initial stages of learning Turkish as a foreign language, grammar and composition training should be provided concurrently. This approach helps students apply what they have learned in their written expression.

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