



Türkiye'de Yabancı Dil Öğretimi: Tarihsel Gelişim, Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri

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Öz

Yabancı bir dil öğrenmek çok çeşitli kültürler, geleneklere ve bakış açlarına açılan bir kapı sunar, dolayısıyla yabancı dil öğretimi, insanlar için yaşamın önemli bir yönü haline gelmiştir. İkinci bir dile hakim olmak, farklı dilsel geçmişlerden gelen insanlar arasında anlayışı teşvik eder ve kültürlerarası farkındalığı geliştirir. Ayrıca, öğrencilere uluslararası ticaret, diploması, akademi ve bilimsel araştırma gibi küresel alanlara başarılı bir şekilde katılmak için ihtiyaç duydukları özgüveni verir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretiminin genel yönlerini, yabancı dil öğrenmenin değerini, Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretimine kısa bir tarihsel bakışı ve yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin hizmet öncesi eğitimi, yabancı dil öğretmenleri için istihdam uygulamaları, yabancı dil öğretimi için fiziksel koşullar, eğitim materyalleri, öğretim yöntemleri ile öğretim yönetimi ve denetimi gibi yabancı dil öğretimindeki zorlukları ele almaktadır. Bulgular, Türkiye'de yabancı dil eğitiminin, birden fazla çözümü ve tüm sistem paydaşlarının aktif katılımını içeren kapsamlı bir strateji gerektiren çeşitli zorluklarla karşı karşıya olduğunu göstermiştir. Sonuç olarak, birden fazla çözümü ve tüm sistem paydaşlarının aktif katılımını içeren bütüncül ve işbirliğine dayalı bir stratejiye ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Öğretimi, Tarihsel Gelişim, Sorunlar, Çözümler

Foreign Language Teaching in Türkiye: Historical Development, Problems and Solutions

Abstract

Learning a foreign language offers a portal to a wide range of cultures, traditions, and viewpoints. A solid command of a second language fosters understanding between people from different linguistic backgrounds and improves intercultural awareness. Additionally, it gives students the self-assurance they need to participate successfully in global spheres like international trade, diplomacy, academia, and scientific research. The present study addresses general aspects of foreign language teaching in Türkiye, the value of learning a foreign language, a brief historical overview of foreign language teaching in Türkiye, and difficulties in teaching foreign languages, such as problems in pre-service training of foreign language teachers, employment practices for foreign language teachers, physical conditions for teaching a foreign language, educational materials, teaching methods, and teaching management and supervision. The findings showed that Türkiye's foreign language education faces a variety of challenges entailing a comprehensive strategy which includes multiple solutions and the active participation of all system stakeholders. As a result, a holistic and collaborative strategy comprised of multiple solutions and active participation from all system stakeholders is required.

Key Words: Foreign Language Teaching, Historical Development, Challenges, Solutions.

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Introduction

In the contemporary interconnected global milieu, the importance of foreign language education assumes utmost significance. Proficiency in languages beyond one's native tongue has become indispensable for personal growth, professional advancement, and fostering international cooperation (Babayiğit & Çelik, 2023a; Çelik & Babayiğit, 2023b). The domain of foreign language education goes beyond mere linguistic acquisition, serving as a gateway to diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives. A strong command of foreign languages enhances intercultural awareness and promotes mutual understanding among individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, it empowers learners with the confidence to effectively engage in global arenas, spanning international trade, diplomacy, academia, and scientific research. In Türkiye, given its strategic geopolitical position and thriving tourism industry, foreign language education plays a pivotal role in establishing meaningful connections with neighbouring nations and forging international collaborations (Çapan, 2021; Saricoban, 2012).

The landscape of foreign language education in Türkiye has evolved in response to societal needs and educational policies. English, being a global lingua franca and ubiquitous language in science, technology, and commerce, has emerged as the dominant foreign language taught in Turkish schools. The integration of foreign language education begins in primary schools and continues through secondary education, underscoring the lifelong relevance of language proficiency. Additionally, higher education institutions recognize the crucial role of foreign language instruction in preparing students for academic and professional success in an increasingly globalized world (Çapan, 2021; İnceçay, 2012; Saricoban, 2012).

However, despite commendable progress, foreign language education in Türkiye faces significant challenges that hinder its effectiveness. A primary concern revolves around the scarcity of qualified and proficient foreign language teachers. Insufficient access to teachers well-versed in modern teaching methodologies and possessing native-like language skills can impede students' language learning progression (Oktay, 2015; Valizadeh, 2021). Moreover, large class sizes and limited availability of contemporary language teaching resources can hamper personalized instruction and interactive learning experiences. A notable obstacle arises from limited exposure to authentic language usage outside the classroom. Optimal language learning occurs when students engage in real-life interactions with native speakers, yet such immersion experiences may be restricted in certain regions, leading to a disconnection between classroom learning and practical language application (İnceçay, 2012; Saricoban, 2012; Solak & Bayar, 2015). Additionally, the traditional emphasis on grammar-based instruction and examinations may skew the focus towards formal language structures, potentially undermining the development of strong communicative language skills. To address this challenge, advocating for more communicative language learning approaches can encourage students to effectively utilize the language in real-life contexts (Ozsevik, 2010).

Foreign language education holds the key to nurturing culturally adept and globally engaged citizens in Türkiye. While remarkable strides have been made, addressing the challenges encountered in foreign language teaching remains vital to fully harness its transformative potential. This article delves into the pivotal role of foreign language education, provides an overview of foreign language teaching in Türkiye, highlights the challenges faced in the process, and offers potential solutions to overcome these obstacles.

1. Foreign Language Learning

The concept of foreign language or second language pertains to languages that differ from the learner's native tongue and are not commonly spoken by the local community or native speakers in the region (e.g., English being spoken in Türkiye) (Mitchell et al., 2019). Nevertheless, it is essential to

distinguish between second language acquisition and foreign language learning as distinct processes. A second language is one used for public communication within a specific country or region, acquired by individuals residing in an area where the language is commonly spoken. Acquisition of a second language occurs through natural exposure in authentic environments. On the other hand, a foreign language is any language distinct from the one spoken by the inhabitants of a particular place and is not widely used in that country. Foreign language learning usually takes place outside the native environment where the language is commonly spoken (Ellis, 1989; Cook, 2016).

The main distinction between the two lies in the usage and context of the language. Second language acquisition involves learning a language used for public communication in a specific country, while foreign language learning refers to acquiring proficiency in a language that is not widely spoken in a particular place. In second language acquisition, the assimilation of the language is subconscious and natural, whereas foreign language learning involves a conscious study of a non-native language, utilizing diverse methods and strategies (Krashen, 1983).

Throughout history, in a world boasting over 6,000 languages, the significance of acquiring foreign language skills has persisted, irrespective of the specific target language (Bulak, 2020). Human beings have consistently sought to swiftly and proficiently learn foreign languages for multifarious purposes. The contemporary era, characterized by the widespread accessibility and affordability of mass media, facilitated international travel, and the growing necessity of intercultural communication, has further amplified the importance of foreign language education.

2. The Importance of Foreign Language Learning

Acquiring proficiency in a language other than one's native tongue offers individuals a valuable opportunity to communicate with a broader audience in their personal and professional lives. As foreign language proficiency is highly desirable in many sectors, possessing foreign language skills provides individuals with a competitive advantage over their monolingual peers in career choices (Demirkan, 2008). It is also widely acknowledged that language learning yields numerous cognitive benefits. Multilingual individuals exhibit better memory, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, multitasking abilities, improved listening skills, and higher levels of motivation compared to monolingual individuals (Karadüz, 2010). Additionally, bilingual or multilingual individuals display signs of increased creativity and flexibility (Leikin, 2013). Furthermore, being bilingual or multilingual assists in preventing cognitive aging and cognitive decline (Marian & Shook, 2012).

Cultural awareness is an integral and inseparable part of foreign language learning. Communicating in another language enables individuals to understand the traditions, customs, religions, arts, history, and, in short, the culture of the speakers of that language, promoting an increase in understanding, tolerance, and empathy levels. This increase facilitates the expression of positive attitudes and respect towards different cultures (Byram & Doye, 2005; Byram & Fleming, 1998). Moreover, knowing a foreign language provides comfort and security during travels and allows for more opportunities to meet new people. It also facilitates easier access to information through mediums like films, books, magazines, international newspapers, and news (Demirkan, 2008). These and many other reasons underline the profound significance of foreign language learning.

English, the most widely spoken third language globally, serves as the dominant medium of communication in fields such as science, art, commerce, aviation, entertainment, television, the internet, diplomacy, and the business world (Crystal, 2003; Nunan, 2003). Consequently, there is a significant demand for learning English worldwide, making it the most commonly taught foreign language across the globe (Beare, 2018). Nevertheless, while English is the most commonly learned

language worldwide, Latin has historically held great importance in education, science, commerce, religion, and politics in much of the Western world for centuries. As a result, Latin was extensively taught. However, during the late 16th century, due to political developments in Europe, Latin was gradually replaced by French, Italian, and English (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Since then, foreign language education has undergone various changes and developments, giving rise to numerous language teaching methods.

3. Historical Development of Foreign Language Education in Türkiye

The development and significance of foreign language education in Türkiye have evolved in response to global advancements in language learning. The establishment of the Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law after the formation of the Republic marked a pivotal moment, bringing all local and foreign schools under the Ministry of National Education's supervision and emphasizing Western languages as compulsory subjects, with some schools offering elective second language courses (Bilir, 2011; Çelik, 2012; Ozfidan et al., 2018).

In the period between 1820 and 1923, foreign schools operated autonomously due to the capitulations, but the acceptance of secularism in education led to the limitation of religious education and the dominance of Turkish as the language of instruction in various subjects. Subsequently, the first private Turkish school offering instruction in a foreign language emerged, leading to a gradual increase in schools providing foreign language education, with English eventually becoming the dominant language taught in Türkiye (Nergis, 2011).

The adoption of the "one foreign language for every student" policy in 1960 aimed to promote language proficiency, but challenges arose due to the growing number of students and limited schools. Consequently, foreign language courses were made mandatory in state schools with varying hours per week, while private high schools had the flexibility to offer more extensive language programs. Additionally, universities began offering education in a foreign language (Nergis, 2011; Saricoban, 2012).

To meet the rising demand for foreign language learning, "Foreign Language Based High Schools," later renamed "Anadolu High Schools," were introduced in 1992. These schools provided intensive English education in the preparatory class, selecting students based on academic performance. The "8-Year Compulsory Education System" implemented in 1997 extended compulsory education to eight years and introduced foreign language education in the 4th grade. The subsequent "4+4+4" system, introduced in 2012, extended compulsory education to twelve years, with English lessons starting in the 2nd grade. Moreover, universities underwent changes and revisions in their English education programs (Sönmez & Köksal, 2022; Nergis, 2011).

To sum up, the historical trajectory of foreign language education in Türkiye exemplifies a dynamic and progressive response to global trends in language learning. The transformative journey began with the establishment of the Republic and the Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law, which led to the inclusion of Western languages as compulsory subjects in schools. Subsequent shifts saw the dominance of Turkish as the language of instruction in certain subjects and the gradual rise of English as the primary foreign language taught in the country. Throughout the years, the Turkish education system adapted to societal demands, introducing policies such as the "one foreign language for every student" initiative and implementing specialized schools focused on intensive language education. Additionally, changes in compulsory education systems and university language programs further underscore the nation's commitment to equipping individuals with foreign language proficiency to thrive in an interconnected world. The ongoing significance placed on foreign language education stands as a testament to Türkiye's efforts to remain globally engaged and competitive in an ever-evolving landscape.

4. Challenges in Foreign Language Teaching in Türkiye

It is a challenging task to assert that foreign language teaching in Türkiye has achieved the desired level of success, as research studies reveal a significant lack of foreign language proficiency among a considerable majority of young individuals aged 15 to 29 (Demirpolat, 2015). Türkiye's English Proficiency Index (EPI) score places it in the category of low proficiency, ranking 34th out of 35 European countries and 64th out of 111 countries globally based on EPI data (EF EPI, 2022). Despite some countries achieving moderate success in English language education according to EPI data, they are still perceived to encounter challenges in their language teaching methodologies. Japan, for instance, acknowledged weaknesses in its students' speaking practices and implemented new policies to address this concern (Kam, 2002).

The question of "Why can't we learn a foreign language?" continues to be extensively examined, with much of the discussion centring on the qualifications of foreign language teachers. It is frequently noted that many English teachers rely on conventional teaching methods, citing difficulties in implementing innovative approaches in overcrowded classrooms, and they may encounter challenges with their own speaking or writing skills, similar to their students' experiences (British Council and TEPAV, 2013; Soner, 2007). However, attributing the shortcomings solely to teachers would be an oversimplification, as teachers face struggles in finding their place within the system and have limited involvement in decision-making processes concerning foreign language education (Haznedar, 2010). Moreover, the question of why certain foreign language teaching systems succeed in other countries but encounter obstacles in Türkiye prompts a careful examination of language family relationships and the opportunities for language exposure within European Union member states. Consequently, addressing the challenges in foreign language education in Türkiye requires context-specific evaluation and tailored solutions (Demirpolat, 2015).

The multifaceted challenges in foreign language teaching in Türkiye stem from interconnected dimensions, presenting complex obstacles to the language learning process. Comprehensive and systematic strategies are essential to overcome these challenges, with a specific focus on enhancing teacher qualifications, adopting effective teaching methodologies, and considering the country's unique sociocultural context. By embracing a well-coordinated approach, the field of foreign language education in Türkiye can progress towards enhanced effectiveness and improved language proficiency among students (Nergis, 2011; Valizadeh, 2021). This section will present an overview of the current problems and proposed solutions.

a. Challenges in Pre-Service Training of Foreign Language Teachers

The qualifications of both foreign language teachers assigned from outside their field of expertise and those who graduate from education faculties may be subject to doubts and uncertainties. Özoğlu (2010) identifies that education faculties often lack sufficient human resources, adequate physical infrastructure, and technological capabilities necessary for producing highly qualified teachers. This inadequacy in teacher preparation results in English teacher candidates graduating with varying teaching philosophies and competencies, leading to divergent approaches and techniques being applied, even within the same educational institution. As a consequence, some teachers may emphasize speaking skills through the target language, while others may resort to traditional grammar-translation methods. The absence of a common philosophy for foreign language education exacerbates these discrepancies and hinders the establishment of a cohesive and effective approach (Demirpolat, 2015).

Another pressing issue is that English teacher candidates may complete their education without ample opportunities to use the language they are expected to teach in authentic contexts. Although some larger universities offer instruction from native English speakers, many universities

lack native English-speaking faculty members within their English Language Teaching Departments. Consequently, students who do not have the chance to study abroad graduate without experiencing genuine communication with native speakers, leaving a gap in their language learning journey (Demirpolat, 2015; Nergis, 2011; Valizadeh, 2021).

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive improvements in the education faculties' resources and training programs for future English teachers. Investing in human resources, providing appropriate physical infrastructure, and incorporating technological advancements are crucial steps toward producing well-qualified and competent language instructors. A coherent and standardized approach to foreign language education should be developed, encompassing modern teaching methodologies that prioritize effective language communication and cultural understanding. Additionally, initiatives to enhance students' exposure to real-life interactions with native speakers should be promoted, offering language learners authentic language practice and invaluable cultural insights. By embracing these measures and fostering an environment of continuous professional development for language teachers, Türkiye can cultivate a new generation of highly skilled educators and elevate the overall quality of foreign language education in the country (Demirpolat, 2015).

b. Challenges in Employment Methods of Foreign Language Teachers

In addition to the challenges in pre-service education, the process of employing teachers in the field of foreign language teaching presents a range of issues that contribute to the shortcomings in language instruction. Over the years, individuals from diverse fields, such as economics or public administration, have been assigned as English teachers in Türkiye, giving rise to doubts about their proficiency in foreign language education. Despite recent changes that now limit appointments to only education faculty graduates, a considerable number of current teachers lack the specialized training necessary to effectively teach English (Çinkır & Kurum, 2015).

The current method of appointing foreign language teachers in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education (MEB) involves success in the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS). In the past, this examination did not assess specialized knowledge in foreign languages. While the introduction of language-related questions in the KPSS in 2013 marks a positive step towards evaluating candidates' subject knowledge, it remains evident that teacher competencies cannot be fully determined through test-based methods alone. This is especially true in the context of foreign language teaching, where effective communication and language usage skills are pivotal. Regrettably, the teacher selection process often prioritizes test-taking abilities over assessing the candidates' actual teaching skills (Erdoğan & Savaş, 2022). As Bayraktaroğlu (2012) highlights, foreign language learning and teaching differ significantly from the education of other subject areas. Unlike traditional knowledge transfer in other subjects, foreign language teaching necessitates a unique form of professional education that encompasses the assimilation and application of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Therefore, evaluating foreign language teachers' listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities becomes imperative, and employing them without properly measuring their proficiency in teaching these skills can be detrimental to the quality of language education.

To address these issues, a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to the selection and employment of foreign language teachers is essential. The emphasis should be placed not only on their test performance but also on their practical language proficiency and pedagogical skills. Incorporating practical assessments and performance evaluations that specifically target the four language skills would help identify competent and qualified language instructors. Furthermore, creating tailored professional development programs for foreign language teachers can provide them with the necessary tools and methodologies to enhance language learning experiences for their students. By prioritizing both language proficiency and teaching expertise, Türkiye can take

significant strides toward improving foreign language education and fostering a new generation of capable language educators (Demirpolat, 2015; Nergis, 2011).

c. Challenges in Physical Conditions for Foreign Language Teaching

Teachers indeed play a crucial role in the language learning process; however, their effectiveness in influencing student learning is contingent upon meeting certain essential conditions. Among these critical factors, physical facilities stand out as a vital component in successful foreign language teaching. Particularly, class size assumes significant importance in ability-based instruction. It is widely recommended that class sizes should be limited to no more than 20 students to ensure optimal learning outcomes. In overcrowded classrooms, conducting pair and group work, which is instrumental in enhancing communication skills, becomes a challenge. Even during speaking activities, the limited number of students who can actively engage in the target language within a single class hour can hamper the progress of language learning. Consequently, as classroom capacity increases, the amount of time students have to practice speaking English, the primary setting for language practice, diminishes (Jones, et. al, 2020; Yi, 2008).

In addition to class size, technological infrastructure within classrooms significantly impacts language learning experiences. Listening and viewing activities play a crucial role in exposure to the target language, which in turn helps in the development of listening and pronunciation skills. Unfortunately, many classrooms lack the necessary technological resources to effectively carry out such activities, limiting students' exposure to the target language. Ideally, students should have ample opportunities to be immersed in the language as much as possible. However, due to inadequate funding, some schools with technological infrastructure only use it sparingly, leading to underutilization of these valuable resources. In socio-economically disadvantaged areas, some schools face further challenges, as they lack the financial means to maintain and repair their technological equipment, thereby hindering students' access to essential language learning resources (Demirpolat, 2015; Zhang, 2022).

To address these issues and create a conducive environment for effective foreign language teaching, it is imperative for educational institutions and policymakers to prioritize investing in physical facilities and technological resources. Allocating sufficient funds for the maintenance and regular updating of classroom technology can foster an enriched language learning experience. Moreover, reducing class sizes to the recommended levels would not only improve language learning outcomes but also enable teachers to implement interactive and communicative teaching methodologies effectively. By creating an environment that fosters language immersion and active engagement, Türkiye can cultivate a generation of proficient and confident language learners, equipped to communicate effectively in a globalized World (Demirpolat, 2015; Nergis, 2011; Oktay, 2015).

d. Challenges Related to Foreign Language Education Materials

The dominance of textbooks in foreign language education persists, despite the value of incorporating diverse visual and auditory materials in language instruction. Prospective English language teachers receive training in material preparation, development, and adaptation during their pre-service education. However, the lack of standardized curricula among universities makes it challenging to assess the adequacy of a single term's course on material design and development. Consequently, teachers often face obstacles such as economic impracticality in duplicating supplementary materials for students, the time-consuming process of creating new materials, and their own inadequacies in material development and adaptation. These factors perpetuate a heavy

reliance on the textbook as the primary instructional resource (Allen, 2008; Demirpolat, 2015; Valizadeh, 2021).

Textbooks pose several challenges in the field of foreign language education. Research conducted by the Ministry of National Education's Directorate of Research and Development in 2008 revealed critical feedback from teachers and students in primary schools regarding textbooks. Teachers expressed concerns about the lack of measurement and evaluation sections in the books, insufficient reinforcement elements in the content, and inadequate integration of sub-disciplines and other subjects. Particularly, English and social studies textbooks were singled out as problematic in the study (EARGED, 2008). Regarding the free English textbooks provided by the Ministry of National Education, several issues have been identified. One significant issue is the lack of a systematic and gradual progression of content, leading to abrupt shifts in difficulty levels and causing students to develop negative perceptions towards foreign language lessons. Moreover, these textbooks often contain language errors and inappropriate expressions, likely stemming from rushed or poorly written materials by individuals lacking expertise in book writing. Additionally, the reading and listening texts in these textbooks are not authentic English materials, depriving students of real-world context and relevance in their language learning. To compensate for the deficiencies, some schools resort to providing supplementary resources, placing a financial burden on parents and compromising the quality of English instruction, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged settings (EARGED, 2008).

To address these challenges, it is crucial to re-evaluate the design and content of English textbooks and consider incorporating authentic materials and age-appropriate content that aligns with students' language proficiency levels. Furthermore, establishing standardized training programs for material development and adaptation in teacher education can enhance teachers' capacity to create effective and engaging learning resources. By investing in high-quality and diverse language teaching materials, Türkiye can pave the way for a more engaging and successful foreign language education system, equipping students with the necessary language skills for a globalized World (Demirpolat, 2015).

e. Challenges Related to Foreign Language Teaching Methods

As previously highlighted, the variations in teacher training among universities contribute to the diverse perceptions and competencies of teachers in foreign language teaching methods and techniques. The challenge arises when teachers find that the ideal methods learned during their pre-service training are not always practical in real-world classroom settings. This disparity between theory and practice can hinder the effective implementation of innovative teaching approaches (Uysal, 2012).

Even if teachers receive adequate pre-service training in methodological aspects, there may be resistance to fully embracing communicative teaching methods. Instead, some educators continue to rely on traditional grammar-based methods in English language instruction. One significant factor contributing to this reluctance is the lack of training on how to implement communicative methods effectively in overcrowded classrooms during their pre-service education (Peker, 2012).

The examination system in Türkiye also plays a pivotal role in shaping the teaching approach. The prevalence of multiple-choice test questions in exams tends to direct English teachers' focus toward teaching grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and test-taking techniques. As a result, students often learn English with the primary aim of excelling in exams, which may not necessarily align with developing effective communicative language skills. Even when exams include questions related to communicative skills, the focus on test solving may overshadow the broader goal of developing communication abilities (Erdoğan & Savaş, 2022; Kirkgöz, 2007).

Moreover, English classes in the 12th grade are frequently neglected due to the pressures of exam preparation, leading to a common practice where students face reduced or simplified English instruction. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in schools where parents and administrators exert pressure on teachers to minimize English classes during the exam year. Consequently, in some schools, students may experience almost a year without proper language instruction, hindering their language development and communicative proficiency (Jones et al, 2020; Sönmez & Köksal, 2022).

To address these challenges, it is imperative to enhance teacher training programs to better align theory and practice. Providing teachers with practical guidance on implementing communicative methods in diverse classroom environments, including overcrowded classes, can empower them to effectively utilize innovative teaching approaches. Additionally, efforts to revise the examination system to include more communicative-based assessment methods can incentivize both teachers and students to prioritize language communication skills. Ensuring that English classes maintain their significance throughout the 12th grade can create a more balanced and comprehensive language learning experience for students, fostering their communicative competence and overall language proficiency (Demirpolat, 2015). By acknowledging and addressing these issues, Türkiye can foster a more conducive environment for foreign language education and empower students to develop practical and functional language skills that align with the demands of the globalized world.

f. Challenges Related to Foreign Language Teaching Management and Supervision

In Türkiye, the issue of teacher autonomy after appointment is widely acknowledged. School principals' competence in guiding and supporting foreign language teachers is a matter that warrants scrutiny. Recently graduated teachers often lack sufficient professional guidance and supervision, leaving them to navigate their teaching journey on their own (Uysal, 2012). Furthermore, when principals or other teachers visit classrooms during communicative activities, teachers may feel embarrassed due to the noise generated by active student participation. However, it is essential to recognize that the successful implementation of foreign language teaching requires coordination among various elements, including the teacher, administrator, students, curriculum, physical environment, and teaching materials (Şenel, 2012).

The lack of proper supervision and support in the Turkish education system gives rise to various issues. Although in-service training on communicative methods is provided to foreign language teachers for a short period, usually a week, there is a lack of follow-up and continued support afterward. Additionally, the fact that many school principals or supervisors do not speak a foreign language can hinder their intervention in incorrect teaching practices. Moreover, teachers may not be directed towards in-service training opportunities, and when they do engage in such training, it may not be adequately rewarded or recognized (Özoğlu, 2010). As a result, the incentive for teachers to participate in in-service training for their professional development is diminished.

Overall, due to gaps in management and supervision, foreign language teachers may not be adequately motivated or supported to improve their teaching skills. The absence of level classes in foreign language instruction also has a negative impact on the teaching process. In high schools, students entering the program may have varying language proficiency levels, but the lack of level-specific classes makes it exceedingly challenging for teachers to bring students with different language abilities to a common level. This situation can be intimidating for students, particularly when they find themselves in the same class as those who are highly proficient in the foreign language.

To address these issues, it is crucial to establish a system of effective supervision and support for foreign language teachers. Principals and supervisors need to be equipped with the necessary

knowledge and skills to guide teachers effectively. Continued in-service training and follow-up support should be provided to help teachers implement communicative methods successfully in their classrooms. Recognizing and rewarding teachers' participation in professional development activities can incentivize continuous improvement. Moreover, considering the establishment of level-specific classes in foreign language education can create a more conducive learning environment for students with diverse language proficiency levels, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning experience for all (Nergis, 2011; Valizadeh, 2021). By addressing these challenges and promoting a supportive and coordinated approach to foreign language education, Türkiye can enhance the quality of language instruction and empower both teachers and students to excel in their language learning endeavours.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The challenges confronting foreign language education in Türkiye are multifaceted, necessitating a comprehensive approach that involves multiple solutions and the engagement of all stakeholders within the education system. The challenges confronting foreign language education in Türkiye are multifaceted, necessitating a comprehensive approach that involves multiple solutions and the engagement of all stakeholders within the education system. To effectively address the challenges in pre-service training, a comprehensive approach is essential. First and foremost, the development and nationwide implementation of a standardized curriculum tailored specifically for English language teacher education is imperative. This unified curriculum would serve as the cornerstone, providing a consistent and robust foundation for teacher candidates across the country. Furthermore, the establishment of continuous in-service training programs for current English language teachers is paramount. These programs should be designed to ensure that educators remain up-to-date with the latest teaching methodologies and approaches, particularly those related to communicative language teaching. In tandem, substantial investments should be directed toward faculties of education to address the persistent issues of resource shortages. This includes bolstering human resources, enhancing physical infrastructure, and improving technological capabilities. Collaborations with international institutions and partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations can play a pivotal role in securing the necessary resources to bridge these persistent gaps (Lessing & De Witt, 2007; Staub & Kirkgoz, 2019; TESOL International Association, 2019).

Addressing the intricate challenges in employment methods necessitates a multifaceted strategy. The development and implementation of specialized training programs for prospective teachers from diverse academic backgrounds are fundamental. These programs should prioritize the cultivation of practical teaching skills, a high level of language proficiency, and mastery of pedagogical practices specifically tailored to the field of language instruction (Balbay et al., 2018; Faulkner-Bond et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2018). Concurrently, the selection process for prospective teachers requires a comprehensive overhaul, shifting from traditional assessments primarily focused on test-taking abilities to assessments that thoroughly evaluate candidates' teaching skills and comprehensive language competence. This comprehensive evaluation should encompass reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiency. In addition to pre-service training, the enhancement of in-service teacher programs is essential. This involves the organization of regular workshops, seminars, or courses that introduce and reinforce effective language teaching methodologies and strategies. The emphasis here is on fostering a culture of continuous professional development among language educators to ensure that they are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of language instruction (Alqiawi & Ezzeldin, 2015; Klassen & Kim, 2019).

Improving physical conditions for foreign language teaching is a pivotal aspect of creating an optimal learning environment. One of the critical elements is the reduction of class sizes to levels recommended for effective language learning outcomes. This reduction not only allows for more

personalized attention to students but also empowers teachers to implement interactive and communicative teaching methodologies successfully (Morgan, 2000; Yi, 2008). Policymakers should prioritize the development and implementation of policies aimed at limiting class sizes, even considering innovative solutions such as multiple sessions of the same class or recruiting additional qualified teachers to meet demand, particularly in cases where space constraints or teacher shortages are prevalent. Moreover, directing substantial budget allocations toward technology that facilitates language learning is crucial. Modern technology integration into classrooms can significantly enhance language instruction, making it more engaging and effective (Gilakjan,, 2017). For schools located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, exploration of partnerships with willing organizations and businesses to sponsor or donate necessary equipment is a strategic move. Fundraising initiatives can also be leveraged to gather essential resources for technological improvements. Maximizing limited resources is possible through the organization of centralized resource centres equipped with listening and viewing equipment shared among various classes, optimizing resource utilization. In cases where schools lack technological infrastructure for listening and viewing activities, educators can strategically leverage freely available online resources. This approach involves providing students with a list of recommended websites, online radios, podcasts, and YouTube channels for out-of-classroom access.

To effectively tackle challenges related to foreign language education materials, a multi-pronged approach should be considered. First and foremost, education authorities must prioritize the development of a standardized curriculum specifically tailored for the design and development of foreign language teaching materials across universities. This standardization process ensures a consistent level of quality in teacher training, equipping future educators with the essential skills needed for effective material development and adaptation (Loyalka et al., 2019). Existing teacher training programs should be revamped and enhanced to equip teachers with the necessary skills for creating or adapting teaching materials. This includes comprehensive training on how to effectively locate and utilize open educational resources, mitigating concerns related to the cost and time constraints associated with material development. Moreover, fostering a culture of collaboration among language teachers is paramount. Encouraging the sharing of resources, experiences, and innovative teaching strategies can significantly reduce the individual burden associated with material creation or adaptation and promote the development of more effective approaches to delivering linguistic content. Implementing a rigorous review process for textbooks is a critical step. This review process should be conducted by experts in language teaching and material development to ensure a gradual progression of content, accuracy of language usage, and appropriateness of expressions within textbooks provided by the Ministry of National Education. Furthermore, to enhance language learning experiences, textbooks should incorporate more authentic English materials. Authentic texts expose students to real-world language usage, thereby fostering more effective language acquisition (Guo, 2012; Hwang, 2005).

Addressing the complex challenges related to foreign language teaching methods necessitates a multifaceted approach aimed at fostering effective supervision and support for foreign language teachers. Establishing a robust system of supervision and support is paramount, as it equips principals and supervisors with the requisite knowledge and skills to guide teachers effectively, thereby ensuring the successful implementation of communicative methods in their classrooms (McGreal, 1983; Stronge & Xu, 2021). Continuous in-service training and follow-up support are vital components of this system, serving to help teachers integrate effective teaching strategies continuously. Acknowledging and rewarding teachers' active participation in professional development activities can further incentivize continuous improvement. Moreover, the consideration of level-specific classes within the foreign language education framework is essential. This approach can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment, accommodating students with varying language proficiency levels. By addressing these multifaceted challenges and promoting a supportive and

coordinated approach to foreign language education, Türkiye can significantly enhance the quality of language instruction, empowering both teachers and students to excel in their language learning endeavours.

In conclusion, addressing the multifaceted challenges in foreign language education in Türkiye requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. This involves the development and implementation of a standardized curriculum, continuous in-service training, and substantial investments in faculties of education. Additionally, strategies such as language immersion programs, digital platforms for language interaction, and the employment of native speaker academics can significantly enhance language proficiency and pedagogical skills. Borrowing successful models from other countries and focusing on practical teaching skills, language proficiency, and cultural competence in teacher training programs can further elevate language instruction quality. Moreover, comprehensive changes in the selection process, the integration of practical teaching sessions, performance reviews, and feedback systems are essential to improving employment practices and teacher quality. Finally, addressing physical conditions through class size reduction, technological infrastructure improvements, and leveraging online resources can create a more conducive learning environment. By implementing these strategies, Türkiye can pave the way for a more effective and globally competitive foreign language education system, equipping students with the language skills needed for success in a globalized world.

Yazarların Makaleye Katkı Oranları

Yazarların katkıları eşittir.

Çıkar Beyanı

Sorumlu yazar eğer yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması yok ise “Bu çalışmada yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.” şeklinde tüm yazarlar adına beyanı bildirir. Tek yazarlı metinlerde bu beyanın yer almasına gerek yoktur.

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