

Preservice Turkish Language Teachers' Opinions and Suggestions About the Teaching Turkish to Foreigners Course

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the opinions and suggestions of preservice Turkish language teachers about the Teaching Turkish to Foreigners (TTF) course. The research population consisted of 79 junior students studying in the Department of Turkish Education at the Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Atatürk University. A case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was employed in the study. A semi-structured interview form was used to collect data. The descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the data obtained from the interviews. Based on the study, it was found that the preservice Turkish teachers thought that the TTF lessons were interesting, adequate and fun in terms of content and scope. However, they thought that the credit hours were inadequate, that there was little chance to do practice in the lessons, and that the course did not achieve its goal in terms of practice. In addition to that, findings such as the following were obtained: The level thought to be the most difficult when teaching Turkish to foreigners was the beginner level (A1-A2); with this course, they thought they reached a competency level to teach this subject; however, there was a need for activities supported by various materials and practice courses offered in relevant centers.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish, preservice Turkish teachers, teaching Turkish to foreigners

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INTRODUCTION

There are two basic functions of language, such as to enhance the ability of an individual to analyze and synthesize, to think critically and creatively and to solve problems, and to help the individual enter a certain culture, experience the culture and sustain it (Yaşar, 2008). In today's world where borders are eliminated as a result of rapid progress and developments in science and technology, it has become almost inevitable that people and societies communicate with different people and societies. Therefore, although the desire to learn a new, different, and foreign language has existed since ancient times, it has now become a necessity. This is because language is universal with its characteristics of being an instrument of communication and thinking, in addition to the fact that it is national with its ability to transfer national and cultural values to future generations (Anılan & Kılıç, 2013). In addition to a native language, it is necessary to learn international common languages in order to establish and carry out all kinds of relations, including mutual and multiple relations with different levels of intensity, in the national and international arena, at an individual and institutional level, in the commercial, economic, political, military and scientific areas, or in the fields of business, tourism, education, culture, art and communication (Demircan, 1990). Along with political, economic and similar developments, both the aforementioned reasons and the increasing influence and importance of Turkey on the global scale have made it very important to learn and teach Turkish as a foreign language.

It is no doubt that Turkish is an international language, considering our country's commercial, political and cultural relations with many countries in the world in recent years, as well as the spread of Turkish people on a broad geography in the world. The use of Turkish not only as a mother tongue but also as a second language in a broad geography attracts attention to the teaching of Turkish (Demirel, 2011). In recent years, there has been a serious increase in the number of people who are in our country based on various agreements, projects, scholarships, and so forth, as well as by their own means or due to the activities of their institutions and organizations in Turkey. The number of people who want to learn Turkish in their country of residence has also increased. In this respect, the task of teaching Turkish to foreigners emerges to be an area that should be addressed and scrutinized from various aspects. With regard to Turkish education and teaching, only Turkish as a native language has been considered in the literature; in this context, curricula have been developed, materials have been produced, and studies have been carried out (Yıldız & Tunçel, 2012). Teaching Turkish to foreigners is one of the issues on which our country has been late to act and fallen behind. There have been many studies on this subject since the time of Divânü Lügâti't-Türk, which is considered as the first work on the teaching of the Turkish language — with a history going back a long way — to foreigners. There has also been a significant progress in the study and teaching of Turkish language in recent years, although not sufficient. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that Turkey is quite behind countries such as Britain, America and France that have developed methods on teaching foreign languages and that have been working on teaching their languages as a foreign language. There is no undergraduate program for teaching Turkish to foreigners in Turkey yet (Şahin et al., 2013). In this area, studies are being conducted in Turkish education departments of our universities (Alyılmaz, 2010). Moreover, graduate and doctoral programs related to the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language are also being established in universities (Ankara, Dokuz Eylül, Gazi, Hacettepe, İstanbul, Sakarya Universities and so forth), although not yet at a desired level, and in these programs, studies are being carried out to contribute to the field (Göçer & Moğul, 2011). Furthermore, the Yunus Emre Institute is one of the leading institutions for teaching Turkish to foreigners. With the help of the “Turcology Project Cooperation Protocol,” signed by various universities and the Yunus Emre Institute, foreign students who want to study Turkish, and Turkish language and literature abroad are also being reached (Gürbüz & Güleç, 2016). There are also several language education centers established in universities. The first institutions that meet foreigners who come to carry out undergraduate studies in universities in Turkey are TÖMERs established to offer such students the Turkish education they need (Güleç & İnce, 2013).

A curriculum is the cornerstone of education. Curricula enable explicit expression of teaching, strategies, objectives and goals (Eryaman & Kana, 2012). The problem of training people to be qualified teachers is directly a problem related to the educational curricula of institutions that educate

teachers (Riedler & Eryaman, 2016; Şahin, 2005). A target language's being a usable language depends on addressing that language comprehensively and sufficiently. Because the teaching of Turkish to foreigners has not yet been addressed as a discipline in itself, experts and faculty members who would be required to teach Turkish as a foreign language have not been fully trained yet. Good quality materials with strong scientific background have not yet been developed in the strictest sense. Although this gap is tried to be filled with a course called Teaching Turkish to Foreigners (TTF) placed in the undergraduate curricula of Turkish education, it does not seem possible to achieve progress in a short time through a course offered 2 hours a week (although it has been increased to 3 hours a week in the new curriculum) which is heavily theoretical rather than practical. The TTF course aims, in general, to give theoretical information about subjects such as foreign language teaching methods, the history of TTF, the differences in teaching a native language and a foreign language, the materials used in foreign language teaching, and the motivation of foreign students. For example, students studying in the Turkish Education department are not able to get familiar with the methods of teaching foreign languages as these methods are not covered by the courses in the undergraduate curriculum. They take courses which treat Turkish as a native language and teach it that way. However, with the help of the TTF course, they learn about the methods of teaching foreign languages and learn about these theories of foreign language teaching (Şahin et al., 2013). In foreign language teaching, theoretical knowledge is highly important. The most important requirement for someone who teaches a foreign language is to be knowledgeable about theories in order to effectively teach students. This efficiency is enhanced by the competency of the person who teaches a foreign language and his or her having adequate methods and materials (Eryaman, 2008; Tarcan, 2004).

Educating preservice teachers — who study in the Turkish Education departments and who will be teaching Turkish to foreigners — to be well-equipped is closely related to how the TTF courses are thought in the relevant programs of faculties of education and what the faculty members teaching these courses do during these courses. Teachers' success during the teaching process depends on their ability to transform learning and teaching to practice (Erginer, 1994). It has been revealed that teachers' classroom activities and behaviors are largely effective on students' achievements and that students are influenced by what their teachers do rather than what their teachers say (Yıldıran, 1994; Gözütok, 1988).

The TTF course is an important course for preservice Turkish teachers to have academic knowledge about the methods and techniques of contemporary language teaching, to understand the similarities and differences between teaching native languages and foreign languages and for the internationalization of Turkish. Considering this significance of the course and in order to contribute to the academic studies on this course in the future, an attempt was made in this study to determine the opinions and suggestions of preservice teachers about the TTF course. It is believed that the results obtained from this research study will play a significant and effective role in transforming the TTF courses in faculties of education to be more effective and active, in evaluating the ways the courses are thought by faculty members, and in mediating new and different scientific studies for the TTF course. In all of these, the opinions and suggestions of the students, teachers and lecturers who are interested in teaching Turkish to foreigners have an important place, so do the studies conducted on this subject.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to determine the opinions and suggestions of preservice Turkish language teachers about the TTF course, and their competencies in teaching Turkish to foreigners. To that end, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the opinions of preservice Turkish teachers about the content and scope of the TTF course?
2. What are the opinions of preservice Turkish teachers about the implementation and functionality of the TTF course?

3. What are the opinions of preservice Turkish teachers about whether the TTF course has achieved its goal?
4. What are the course levels that preservice Turkish teachers think would be difficult when teaching Turkish to foreigners and why do they think so?
5. What are preservice Turkish teachers' opinions about their competency level in teaching Turkish to foreigners?
6. What are preservice Turkish teachers' general views about the TTF course offered in the undergraduate program?

As a result of a literature review, it was found that there were studies on preservice teachers' opinions and suggestions about various courses. However, there was no current and comprehensive study of preservice Turkish teachers' opinions and suggestions about teaching Turkish to foreigners. This was considered as a deficiency, and it was desired to fill the gap in the literature with this study. It was also aimed to be beneficial to all stakeholders regarding the problems experienced by preservice teachers, to determine the future approaches of those concerned, and to make courses more productive.

METHOD

Research Model

This study — in which it was aimed to determine the opinions and suggestions of preservice Turkish language teachers about the TTF course, and their competencies in TTF — was a case study carried out qualitatively. Qualitative research is a study in which qualitative data collection methods such as observations, interviews and document analyses are used, and a qualitative process is carried out to reveal perceptions and phenomena in a realistic and holistic manner in the natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). A case study, which is often used in research in social sciences to study an up-to-date phenomenon within its own real-life environment, such as a classroom, a neighborhood, or a political party, is a research method that is used in cases where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its surroundings are not clear and there are multiple evidence or data sources available (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011; Yin, 2003). Qualitative methods can be preferred in studies conducted to provide a detailed assessment by obtaining in-depth data in the studies aimed at revealing a specific situation (Cresswell, 2005; Woodside, 2010). Qualitative researchers do thorough and holistic research in the natural environment of the subject they are studying and try to understand and interpret the meanings that people attribute to the investigated phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In accordance with the aim of this study, the case study model as one of the qualitative research methods was adopted in this study. A case study is carried out when the researcher wants to examine the targeted situation in depth and in detail by focusing on why and how questions (Ekiz, 2003). In this study, the case study model of the qualitative research methods was used as a base, as it was aimed to examine preservice Turkish teachers' opinions and suggestions about the TTF course and their judgments about their competencies in teaching Turkish to foreigners. It can be said that a scientific research study conducted in accordance with its goal will bring effective and lasting solutions to events with more objective results (Küçüköğlü, Taşgın, & Çelik, 2013)

Sample

The sample consisted of a total of 79 junior students who took the TTF course in the spring semester of 2017–2018 academic year in the Turkish Education Department of a State University in eastern Turkey. In the study, the students were determined using the convenience sampling method.

Data Collection Instrument

This study — in which it was aimed to determine the opinions and suggestions of preservice Turkish language teachers about the TTF course — was a descriptive study. A semi-structured

interview form with 10 questions was initially prepared as a data collection instrument to collect data after the review of relevant literature. A subject matter expert was consulted about the form that was prepared. Taking into consideration the advice of the subject matter expert, two questions were removed because they were not related to the solution of the research problems. A question was not included in the analysis process because it was not clearly understood and answered. Moreover, two questions were combined in one question because they were similar about evaluating the same situation, and thus the form was given its final shape with a total of 6 questions. The questions included in the interview form were as follows:

1. Please share your opinions about the content and scope of the TTF course.
2. Please share your opinions about the implementation and functionality of the TTF course.
3. Please share your opinions about whether the TTF course has achieved its goal.
4. Please share your opinions about the course levels that would be difficult for you when teaching Turkish to foreigners and the underlying reasons.
5. Please share your opinion about your level of competency in teaching Turkish to foreigners.
6. Please share your overall opinions about the TTF course offered in the undergraduate program.

Data Analysis

During the interviews with the students, the importance of the study and its contribution to the field were emphasized. The students were asked to answer the questions on a voluntary basis. Instead of the name and surname of the students, pseudo names abbreviated from “student” and represented with consecutive numbers (such as S1, S2, and S3) were used for data coding. The data obtained from the interview form were first analyzed and coded openly. And then, the themes that were reached were presented in the results and discussion section with their frequencies. Two of the forms contained identical answers, and 3 of them were incomplete. So, these forms were excluded from the study. A descriptive analysis technique was used in analyzing the opinions and suggestions of the preservice Turkish teachers about the TTF course.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings on the preservice Turkish teachers’ opinions and suggestions regarding the TTF course are given. In this context, first, the frequencies about the 6 open-ended questions directed to the preservice teachers are presented. Moreover, direct quotations from the preservice teachers’ answers to each question are given.

Table 1 shows the opinions of the preservice Turkish teachers about the content and scope of the TTF course.

Table 1 The Opinions of the Preservice Teachers About the Content and Scope of the TTF Course

Opinion	f
It is sufficient in terms of its content and scope.	27
It is not sufficient in terms of content and scope.	16
The topics are very dense, and there are too many details.	5
Its scope is sufficient, but the time allotted for the course is insufficient.	13
It is sufficient in terms of its content and scope, but there is no opportunity for practice.	18
Total	79

Considering Table 1, 27 of the preservice Turkish teachers found that the TTF course was adequate in terms of content and scope; 16 did not find it adequate; 18 found it to be sufficient in terms of content and scope, but thought there were not sufficient opportunities for practice; 13 thought the scope was sufficient, but the duration was a problem; and 5 of them indicated that the topics were very dense and that there were too many details.

The following are some of the direct quotations about the preservice Turkish teachers' opinions regarding the content and scope of the TTF course:

I guess some of the topics were too much to me since we took this course for the first time. If more examples of activities are given, the persistence will be that much better. (S2)

The TTF course is a very broad and useful course in terms of content and scope. It is an area that has just begun to develop in Turkey with regard to content and scope. (S3)

The TTF is a very condensed course in terms of content. I think it's too dense for a semester. There were subjects I couldn't grasp because of the intensity of the content. (S4)

The TTF course is among the courses that have contributed to me the most during the process I have studied Turkish. The content and scope of the course are very useful in terms of the first step for individuals who want to take place in the process of teaching Turkish to foreigners. With the contribution of the teacher, the content and scope of the course were very efficient for me. (S9)

The content is insufficient. Practices are limited. (S12)

It is very detailed in terms of content and scope. I think two credit hours are insufficient. (S17)

The content of the TTF course is somewhat boring and difficult to understand. Especially the methods and approaches or other information about the field are very complicated to me. (S22)

It has a wide range of content. Its content is engaging, and it inspires a desire to learn. (S36)

The content and scope of the TTF course is very good and sensible. We have kind of sufficiently learned how to teach Turkish to a foreigner in the best way. (S47)

Table 2 shows the opinions of the preservice Turkish teachers about the implementation and functionality of the TTF course.

Table 2 The Opinions of the Preservice Teachers About the Implementation and Functionality of the TTF Course

Opinion	f
It is sufficient in terms of its implementation and functionality.	19
It is not sufficient in terms of its implementation and functionality.	9
It has a high degree of functionality, but it has to be more practical.	33
Its functionality should be enhanced, and there should be more opportunities to carry out tangible lessons with foreigners.	18
Total	79

Considering Table 2, 19 of the preservice Turkish teachers found the TTF course adequate in terms of its implementation and functionality; 9 did not find it adequate; 33 thought that it was highly functional, but there should be more opportunities for practice; 18 commented that functionality should be enhanced and that there should be more opportunities to carry out tangible lessons with foreigners.

The following are some of the direct quotations about the preservice Turkish teachers' opinions regarding the implementation and functionality of the TTF course:

The TTF course was very well implemented thanks to the various activities carried out using slides and presentations, and the function of the course was served. (S27)

The way we practiced the course and its usefulness were very flexible, and it has become a successful course. Our practices during the course have enhanced its persistence in the mind. We had a very enjoyable time, as well. (S1)

The presentations and practices carried out in the TTF course have been quite effective in the persistence of its functionality. This is because the presentation materials that were used have made the course meaningful. (S33)

In my opinion, going to various lessons and language centers and making observations within the scope of the course can be useful for my fellow students who are interested in the field. It is an area where we can develop ourselves through experience, not just in terms of theoretical knowledge. (S4)

I think the lessons should be practice-based in order for the TTF course to be functional. We should work with foreign students. We should practice the techniques and methods implemented in the TTF course in application centers in detail. (S45)

The TTF course shows positive features for people who want to work in this area in the future. I think that there should be more practice to be done due to the fact that the TTF course is a difficult area and requires effort. (S10)

Table 3 shows the opinions of the preservice Turkish teachers about whether the TTF course achieved its goal.

Table 3 The Opinions of the Preservice Teachers About Whether the TTF Course Achieved Its Goal

Opinion	f
It has achieved its goal.	42
It has not achieved its goal.	14
If there are more credit hours and more opportunities for practice, it will achieve its goal better.	10
It has achieved the goal theoretically but not in terms of doing practice.	13
Total	79

Considering Table 3, 42 of the preservice Turkish teachers indicated that the TTF course achieved its goal; 14 of them indicated that it did not; 13 of them indicated that it achieved theoretically, but not in terms of doing practice; and 10 of them indicated that if there were more credit hours and more opportunities for doing practice, it would achieve its goal better.

The following are some of the direct quotations about the preservice Turkish teachers' opinions regarding whether the TTF course achieved its goal:

It certainly has achieved its goal. We have had a lot of information about TTF. We have had knowledge of concepts and methods that I have never heard before. (S26)

We can say that it has achieved. The presentation of the content was good, but the practice was not sufficient. This was due to the duration of the course. (S38)

The course has achieved its goal thanks to the activities and presentations carried out throughout the course. (S23)

I think the TTF course is positive in terms of teaching the issues related to both the European Union language policies and how the basic skills are given. (S19)

Thanks to this course, I've even decided to become a TTF teacher. This course has been useful and fun. (S42)

The TTF course has not been able fully achieve its goal because the credit hours were very limited. (S59)

We've reached our goal. But we were a little behind in terms of practice. This is because there was a shortage of time. Two hours of theory and two hours of practice are insufficient for this course. (S14)

Because the TTF course is limited to an academic year, we cannot literally say that it has achieved its goal. If the duration is increased and the number of practices is also increased, it would fully achieve its goal. (S56)

We can say that it has partially achieved. The lack of time and the fact that the classroom environment did not reflect the real settings are the main reasons. (S75)

Table 4 shows the opinions about the course levels that would be difficult for the preservice Turkish teachers when teaching Turkish to foreigners.

Table 4 Opinions of the Preservice Teachers About the Course Levels They Thought Would Be Difficult When Teaching Turkish to Foreigners

Opinion	f
I think I might have difficulty at the beginner level (A1-A2).	54
I think I might have difficulty at the intermediate level (B1-B2).	11
I think I might have difficulty at the advanced level (C1-C2).	14
Total	79

Considering Table 4, 54 of the preservice Turkish teachers stated that they thought they might have difficulty in teaching Turkish to foreigners at the A1-A2 (beginner) level, 14 at the C1-C2 (advanced) level, and 11 thought that they might have difficulty at the B1-B2 (intermediate) level.

The following are some of the direct quotations about the preservice Turkish teachers' opinions regarding the course levels that would be difficult when teaching Turkish to foreigners:

Because I have a personality with a tendency for deeper and more abstract thinking, I had difficulty mostly at the A1-A2 level frankly. (S1)

I think most people might call it the C1/C2 level, but I'll say the A1 level. This is because it is always difficult to teach the first stage and requires attention. (S12)

I have difficulty teaching the A1/A2 levels. This is because it will be difficult to teach Turkish to someone who does not speak the language. (S25)

The B1/B2 levels are more difficult because it is difficult to teach students who have learned something but have not been able learn many things yet. (S30)

I would mostly have difficulty in the A1 and A2 levels. This is because it is the first level in language learning; so, it will be difficult to teach basic skills. (S38)

I think I'm going to be struggling with the C1 and C2 levels. This is because the C1 and C2 levels aim to use the language academically. (S42)

I think I'll be struggling at the C level. This is because the concepts that are difficult to describe are concentrated at this level. (S55)

I think the levels I would have difficulty would be the first levels (A1-A2). This is because the student has entered a new environment and does not know how to learn. He or she is a stranger to the culture and society. (S57)

I think I'll have difficulty at the basic level. This is because this process, in which the student should be learned, also requires to identify the teaching methods through which the student learns. (S62)

Table 5 shows the opinions of the preservice Turkish teachers about their competencies in teaching Turkish to foreigners.

Table 5 The Opinions of the Preservice Teachers About Their Competencies in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners

Opinion	f
I think I have the competence to be an educator in this subject.	40
I do not find myself competent yet.	19
I think I need to do a little more practice.	15
I think I should learn a foreign language.	5
Total	79

Considering Table 5, 19 of the preservice Turkish teachers found themselves competent about teaching Turkish to foreigners; 19 of them did not think they were competent; 15 of them thought they needed to do a little more practice; and 5 of them thought they needed to learn a foreign language.

The following are some of the direct quotations about the preservice Turkish teachers' opinions regarding their competencies in teaching Turkish to foreigners:

I can now carry out Turkish activities for a foreign student. I know how to teach what subjects and stages in which levels. (S38)

If my English level was good, I think I'd be successful in TTF. I think I will convey the culture well in TTF. (S5)

I'm confident about TTF. But the problems I have in transferring my knowledge restrict me. I'm sure I can have better education in the future. (S6)

At the moment, I think I have enough knowledge in terms of preliminary knowledge in TTF, but I do not have a full qualification. (S9)

Although I don't think I'm very good at this, I would like to say that after taking this course, I have created a foundation, at least a draft in my head. (S21)

In this course, we've become conscious about the subject, but I do not think I am ready in terms of self-efficacy. We couldn't see the course exactly in its environment. We didn't see how it was handled in the field. That's why I don't think I'm competent. (S24)

I don't think I'm much competent. The lack of practices caused the information I learned to fail to settle down. (S28)

I don't think I'm fully competent, but the things we saw and learned in the course encouraged me in this respect. I can understand if I'm competent through practice. I can't measure my competency level with just knowledge. (S36)

I am aware of many of my mistakes and deficiencies in teaching Turkish as a mother tongue. Besides, I don't speak any foreign languages. And I haven't met any foreign students, either. Although all these show that I lack competence in this subject, I think I can enhance my knowledge and skills. (S51)

Table 6 shows the overall opinions of the preservice Turkish teachers about the TTF course.

Table 6 The Preservice Turkish Teachers' Overall Opinions About the TTF Course Offered in the Undergraduate Program

Opinion	f
I think it's an efficient and entertaining course.	18
I don't think it was productive and adequate.	8
I think it's a theory-based and superficially-taught course.	13
More room should be given to practices and activities.	14
The number of credit hours and semesters should be increased.	19
An opportunity to do internships should be provided.	18
It should be addressed in comparison with other languages.	9
Materials should be emphasized, and materials should be developed.	8
I think it should be supported by tools such as the Internet and social media.	5
Total	79

Considering Table 6, 18 of the preservice Turkish teachers thought that the TTF course was an efficient and entertaining course, and 8 of them did not think that the course was efficient and adequate. However, 13 of them stated that the course was a theory-based and superficially-taught course; and 14 of them stated, in addition to their other thoughts, that more practices and activities should be provided. Once again, when the opinions of the preservice teachers were evaluated, it was understood that 19 of them thought that this course should have more credit hours and be offered in more semesters. Of them, 18 indicated that there should be internship opportunities; 8 indicated that it should be taught comparatively with other languages; 8 indicated that the subject of materials should also be emphasized; and 5 indicated that the course should also be addressed in light of current developments such as the Internet and social media.

The following are some of the direct quotes from the statements of the preservice Turkish teachers' overall views about the TTF course:

Materials and activities will be more effective than presenting the subject. (S2)

The TTF lessons are very entertaining. It is a course that helps us improve ourselves. (S4)

I think it's a pretty heavy lesson for a semester. It should be offered for at least two semesters. I think the number of credit hours should also be increased. (S5)

I think it should be mandatory to have the TTF course in undergraduate programs. However, I think that this course will be more beneficial in terms of teacher candidates if taught in collaboration with foreign students. If necessary, successful students should be sent abroad, and it would be more suitable for them to learn in real settings. (S6)

The number of credit hours is insufficient. At least, it should be supported with practices. It should be spread over a year or two. (S8)

The TTF course has been a very productive and enjoyable course from our perspective. In this respect, the number of credit hours should be increased, and it should be included in internship programs. (S19)

Course duration is limited. TTF can be carried out with practice. We can learn lessons with students who are trying to learn foreign languages. An environment can be created to teach students from the A1 level to the C2 level. (S12)

This course is taught for two hours and is useful. In my opinion, it should be given as four hours a week to the students of Departments of Turkish and Literature in Teacher Education. There should be two hours of theory and two hours of practice so that the acquired information can come to light and be grasped in the real sense. (S22)

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The TTF course has an important place in the Turkish education program in order for teachers, lecturers and faculty members — who are interested in teaching Turkish to foreigners — to become more qualified, to master the content knowledge and to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Therefore, studies that are carried out on the subject in question will facilitate offering these courses more effectively and facilitate concerned parties to have the necessary knowledge.

When the findings obtained from this study carried out to identify the preservice Turkish teachers' opinions and suggestions about the TTF course are examined, the following are seen:

1. This course offers those who are interested in teaching Turkish as a native language an accumulation of knowledge in the field of “teaching Turkish to foreigners,” as well as creating an awareness about this field, offering a new study area and a new job opportunity.
2. The preservice teachers not only thought that such a course — which helped them learn how to teach Turkish as a foreign language with methods and techniques that they had seen for the first time — was a necessity for them and would contribute to their development in this field, but also thought that overall it became a course that they enjoyed and in which they became interested.
3. A significant portion of the preservice teachers stated that the course was sufficient in terms of content and scope, but the time allotted for the course and the opportunity to practice were low.
4. They thought that it was an undesirable situation that the course was offered as a 2-hour course in the 6th semester at that time. They thought not only that they should be taking the course earlier and in multiple semesters, but also that the number of credit hours had to be increased.
5. Although they found the course sufficient in terms of its implementation and functionality, they emphasized that its functionality should be enhanced and that opportunities should be provided to put theoretical knowledge into practice in the field.
6. A significant part of the preservice teachers indicated that the course achieved its goal. They indicated, however, that it would fully achieve its goal if the credit hours were increased, if internship opportunities were provided in institutions and organizations

serving on this subject, and if an opportunity was provided to work and practice abroad through projects such as Erasmus and Farabi.

7. The majority of the preservice teachers thought that when teaching Turkish to foreigners they would have difficulties mostly at the beginner level (A1-A2), followed by the advanced level (C1-C2) and the intermediate level (B1-B2).
8. A significant portion of the preservice teachers thought that they were competent enough to teach this subject. There were also those who did not see themselves competent enough, but they believed that if they did a little more practice and could speak a foreign language, their competency levels would increase.
9. The preservice teachers stated that it would be beneficial to carry out the TTF course at a special class enriched with various materials such as Turkish special classes, language classes and science classes, and, if possible, to carry it out with the participation of foreign guests at times.
10. The preservice teachers stated that they were highly interested in and satisfied with the TTF course. However, they stated that they would like modifications about the issues they pointed out, and thus, a more efficient process and a more competent result could be achieved.

Based on the results presented above, the TTF course contributed to the enhancement of communication language and various skills of the preservice teachers, and it motivated them to learn. In this respect, it shows similarities to the studies in the relevant literature (Biçer, 2012; Doll, 1993; Şahin et al., 2013). Moreover, taking into consideration students' opinions and suggestions will also ensure that the lessons are more active, efficient and permanent. This is because there are learners at every stage of Turkish teaching as the target audience, and everything is aimed at the objectives and requirements of the learners. The teacher should facilitate learners to love the language, which provides communication and helps transfer national and universal values (Alyılmaz, 2018; Mert, Alyılmaz, Bay, & Akbaba, 2009). Otherwise, issues such as the lack of credit hours and materials and limitations of practice opportunities will increasingly cause preservice teachers to think that the issue is not given due importance and that these deficiencies cause the teaching of Turkish to foreigners to fall behind the teaching of languages such as English and French (Demirel, 2011). The preservice teachers stated that the TTF course achieved its goal. However, they thought that it was a weakness that the course was taught in a theory-based manner, its practice part remained weak, and the lessons were framed with an academic orientation. The fact that the students of the same program have similar ideas about different courses support this idea here (Sevim & Şeref, 2015). When the relevant literature is examined, it is found to support the concerns of the preservice Turkish teachers about whether the course achieves its goal, about its functionality and about their competency levels. "Turkish" and "Turkish Language and Literature" graduates have stated that teaching only theoretical information on this subject is not sufficient, that they encounter very serious problems when they are stationed abroad, and that they do not know what to do in the face of students who do not speak Turkish at all (Çiçek, 2010). It is an extremely wrong attitude to appoint elementary school teachers and teachers from other disciplines in addition to the "Turkish" and "Turkish Language and Literature" teachers to teach Turkish to foreigners and to teach Turkish language and Turkish culture to people of Turkish origin. This is because although the aforementioned departments may appear to be the most suitable or closest fields for this task — and even the contents of the undergraduate and graduate programs of such departments are not fully qualified to meet the requirements of Turkish teaching to foreigners (Karababa, 2010) — other branch teachers are not academically suitable to work on this issue. On the other hand, the students considered that it would be useful to carry out practices such as internships and projects in institutions and organizations serving domestically and abroad to teach Turkish to foreigners, and this is important. In order to expand the widespread use of Turkish and in order for it to be accepted as a universal language, there may be opportunities for internships in the country, as well as joint studies with the cognate or foreign countries where our language (Turkish)

is taught (Ungan, 2006). Although there are many issues in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, three main issues can be mentioned: the lack of institutional ownership in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, the inability to produce adequate instructional materials, and the lack of rigor in educating faculty to teach Turkish as a foreign language (Akış, 2009). The steps to be taken to resolve these problems and the modifications to be made will enable Turkish to become a professional research and practice field carried out by professional experts, as in English, German and Spanish, and thus to obtain faster and more robust results in the process of opening up to the world.

Recommendations

- The TTF course offered in the Turkish Education departments fills a significant gap in this field. Studies should be carried out to examine the effects of the opportunity to do practice and the location, method and type of practices. Studies should also be carried out to test the presence of this course in the undergraduate programs beginning with the first year and/or increasing its credit hours.
- It should be determined to what extent the content, scope and implementation of the course meets the goals and objectives specified in the curriculum. Moreover, attention should be paid not only to the fact that the target audience of the TTF course is not just foreigners, but also to the need that the course should have the capability to teach Turkish to bilingual and multilingual people and people of Turkish origin.

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