

## **Experiences of Primary School Teachers Regarding to Teaching Turkish to Students who are not Native Turkish Speakers: A Phenomenology \***

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### **Abstract**

The study aims is to determine the experiences of primary school teachers in terms of teaching Turkish to the students who are not native Turkish speakers. In the study, phenomenology pattern, one of the qualitative research patterns, was used. Participants were determined by the criterion-based sampling method. The participants of the research consisted of 36 primary school teachers who had Syrian and Afghan refugees in their class. The research data were collected through a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. Content analysis technique was used in the analysis of the data. It was observed that most of the participants felt insufficient in teaching Turkish to students who had different native languages, had problems in applying, measuring and evaluating teaching methods and course activities, and had language problems with them. In the study, the difficulties experienced in teaching Turkish to Syrian and Afghan refugee students who were not native Turkish speakers were presented and the suggestions about what to do in the education process related to these difficulties were provided. It was concluded that in the education process of the teachers, students and families should take Turkish language courses. Moreover, in addition to the Turkish courses in teaching Turkish, it was reported that the primary school teachers stated that it would be helpful to do social activities with students who have language problems, to provide counseling services for them, and to prearrange distribution of the students to each classroom. It was concluded that special activities should be carried out in the verbal communication learning area.

**Keywords:** Teaching Turkish, Students Who are Not Native Turkish Speakers, Primary School Teachers

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## INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, people have been migrating due to many problems such as wars, famines, security problems, economic insufficiencies and unemployment. Migration has many social and cultural problems. The responsibility to live with people in harmony in the new place and in the different culture also bring new obstacles. According to Bozkurt (2018), children of school age experience problems at most among immigrants.

Undoubtedly, refugees have many economic, social and cultural problems. Among these problems, education and language problems take an important place. In language skills, it is important to learn not only how to speak, but also to make sense of words and the structure of the sentences and to make proper pronunciation. Individuals should be able to use the language in order to express themselves and meet their needs. Although language development begins in family, it is systematically taught in school. The education provided at schools help child to learn by practicing and using the language which also affects the initial literacy process positively.

According to Yılar (2015), one of the most important factors that lead to success in literacy is the use of language. The primary school period, which affects all educational levels, has a very important role and function in the education system. Reading and writing are the first activities done at the beginning of the learning and teaching process in the primary school education. The aim of primary school is to provide a fluent, accurate, critical and smooth reading, and legible and aesthetic writing skills.

Today's language education approach adopts student-centered education and attaches importance to individual differences and is based on the constructivist approach, which aims to ensure the active participation of the student under the guidance of the teacher during education and training process. In the Turkish curriculum, language skills consist of three learning areas: reading, writing and verbal communication (MEB, 2009).

Learning areas were formed in an integrity by considering the cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social developments of students. Learning areas should be handled together to make it easier for students to use the language effectively and structure their knowledge reasonable. The individual, who get literacy skills and verbal communication skills effectively, will be able to sustain not only her academic career, but also her social life. If a student has a language problem, it will complicate her primary school literacy education and will create problems in her academic and social life. Issues related to language seem to be the main problem that refugees face in terms of adaptation to society (Tunç, 2015; Bölükbaş, 2016; Dorman, 2014; Oytun & Gündoğar, 2015).

It can be stated that increasing number of people coming from abroad to Turkey by migration, will increase the problems as well. As the number of Syrian and Afghan refugee students increases day by day, the problems rooted in language obstacles will be encountered more frequently. According to Şeker and Aslan (2015), in order to find solutions to the problems encountered in the education process of refugee children in Turkey, studies should be done following issues: psycho-social cohesion of the students in social life, language proficiency, problems encountered at school, school adjustment, relationships with people around them and their academic qualifications. According to 2018 statistics of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR, 2017); 70.8 million people around the world unwillingly displaced, 25.9 million people were refugees, 41.3 million people were internally displaced, and 3.5 million people were asylum seekers. According to the data provided by Turkish Immigration Administration General Directorate (GIGM, 2019), the number of registered Syrians in Turkey was determined to be 3 million 613 thousand 644 people. 46.23% of Syrians in Turkey was in the range of 0-18 years old, there were 1 million 670 thousand 700 in the rage of 0-18 years old range while the number of Syrians under the age of 10 increased to 1 million 14 thousand 795 people by June. In other words, 28.08% of Syrians were under the age of 10. These data also refer to the ratio of Syrians in school age in Turkey. According to the Turkey Statistical Institute reports (TÜİK, 2019), 25,08% of the Syrian refugees were under the age of 10 and were in primary school age. Therefore, it

can be stated that studies must be done in order to overcome language problems in the face of the magnitude of difficulties that may be encountered in the initial step of literacy.

Non-native speaking individuals must learn Turkish in order to express themselves easily in our country, to convey their problems, to adapt to our country in school and social life, and to maintain their lives without any problems. This fact shows the importance of primary school teachers in teaching Turkish to refugee students in our country. In this context, the current study investigates the language problems experienced by foreign students, who are now a part of our country, within the scope of the primary school education. Within the framework of this study, it is considered that articulating experiences of primary school teachers, who have a chief role in language education, is important in teaching Turkish to the students who are not native Turkish speakers, that will shed light on the academic studies to be carried out in this field and will help remarking students within standpoints of primary school teachers.

## METHOD

In this section, explanations about the model of the research, the problem of the research, the participants of the research, data collection tools, analysis of the data, validity and reliability of the research are provided.

### Model of the Research

This study is a phenomenology research, which is one of the qualitative research methods aimed at revealing experiences of primary school teachers about teaching Turkish to Syrian and Afghan refugee students who are not native Turkish students. In qualitative research, researchers gather information closely by contacting people first-hand and by examining their behaviors and actions in their specific environment (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenon is an object, condition or event that can be directly or indirectly observed in the universe. The factual (phenomenological) approach states that in order to understand the behavior of the person, we need to know her unique perceptions and life. It focuses on the facts that we are aware of, but we do not know in detail what it contains (Yıldırım, & Şimşek; 2016).

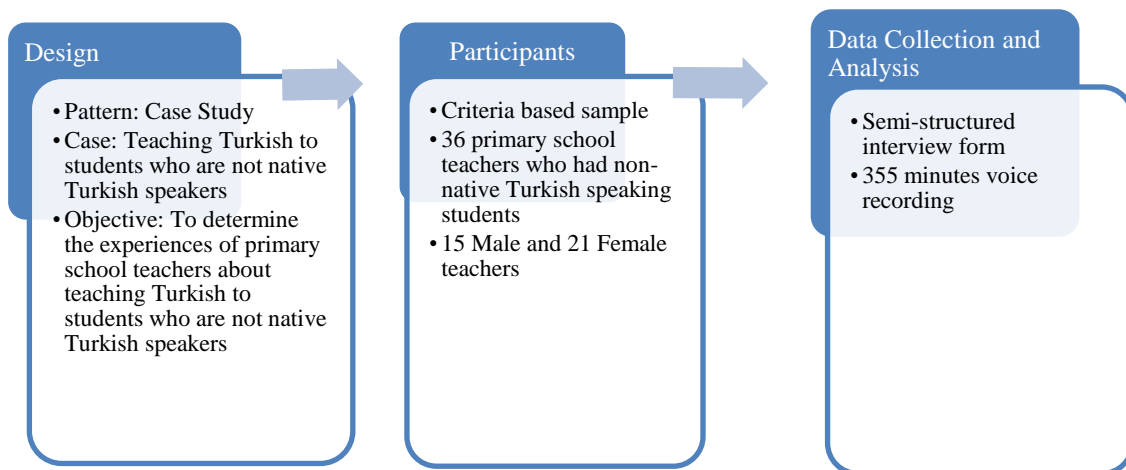


Figure 1. Research Process

### Participants

The participants were determined by criteria-based sampling technique, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. In criterion sampling, it is possible to study situations created by the researcher or situations which meet a set of predetermined criteria (Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2016). Teachers who had refugee students in their class were selected as participants. In other words, the criterion of this study in determination of the participants is that primary school teachers who are experienced in teaching Turkish to students who are not native Turkish speakers.

The participants of the research consisted of the primary school teachers working in 10 primary schools with Syrian and Afghan refugee students in Yakutiye and Palandöken districts of Erzurum province, in the academic year of 2018-2019. The data regarding number of refugee students in primary schools and the number of teachers who were teaching these students were obtained from National Education Directorate. The research was carried out with 36 classroom teachers after 4 of the teachers stated that they did not want to participate.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Interview method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. The research data were collected through a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher and applied individually face-to-face with primary school teachers. Semi-structured interviews consist of open-ended questions and enable participants to express their thoughts from their standpoints (Merriam, 2013).

In the research, a conceptual framework was obtained by scanning the relevant literature in order to ensure internal validity, and then a semi-structured interview form was developed. The form consists of two parts of demographic information and interview questions. The created research form consists of 6 questions. While preparing the interview forms, attention was paid to ensure that the questions were open-ended, not versatile, not influencing the participants and easy to understand by the participants. The forms prepared were presented to the opinions of the faculty members who had the relevant expertise and experience, and the validity of the scope, structure and appearance were examined. The final form of the interview form was prepared with the review made by three academics who are experts in the field of classroom education, two academics who are experts in the field of teaching Turkish, and two primary school teachers who had refugee students in their class. In addition, apart from the study group, a pilot application was implemented with three primary school teachers who had refugee students in their class. In accordance with all of the opinions received, the interview form consisting of 4 questions was reviewed again and confirmed before the application. In order to increase the reliability of the research, direct quotes were included.

### **Collection of Data**

The researcher introduced herself to the school principals and the teachers to be interviewed before starting the interview with the participants. The participants were informed about the purpose and importance of the research. It was stated that the responses of the participants to the research would not be used for any other purposes, and that a voice recorder would be used during the interview. The interviews were held with the school principals and the teachers during the school hours when the teachers were suitable. The interview durations vary from 4 minutes to 25 minutes. Interviews were made with 36 participants for in total of 355 minutes, and the interviews were conducted in several different places; these places were principal's room, assistant principal's room, classrooms, school counselor's room and teachers' room.

### **Data Analysis**

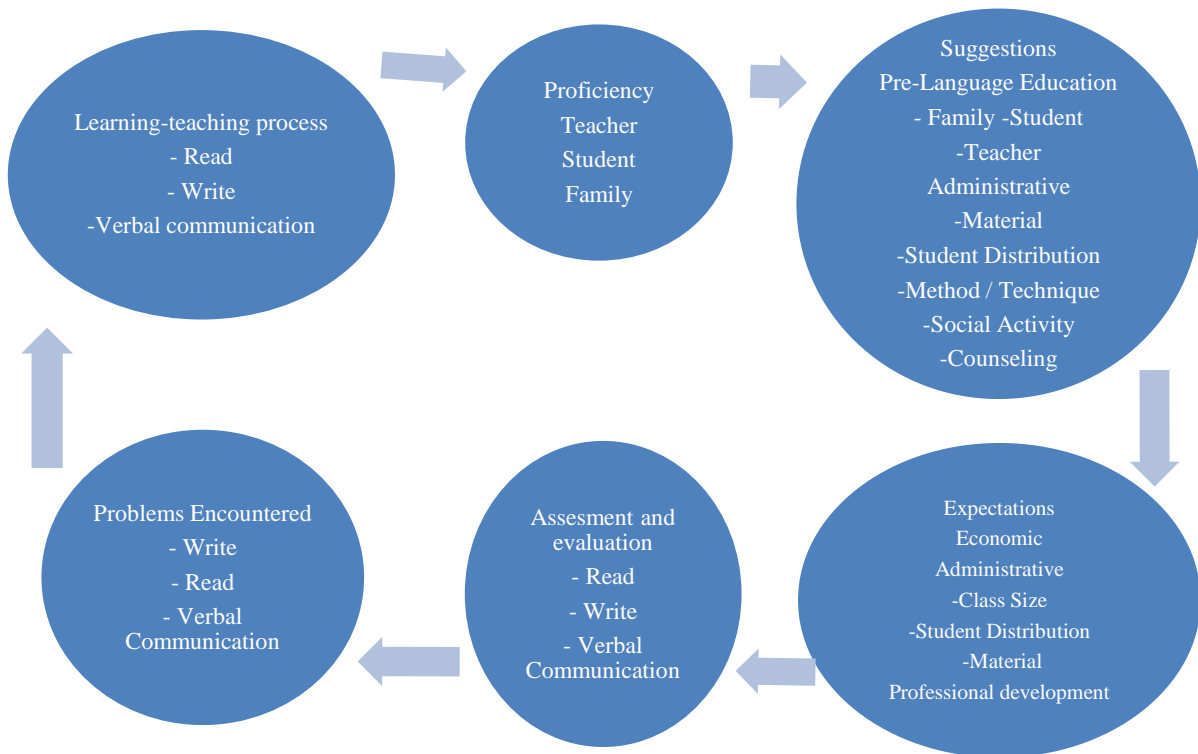
The data was obtained by using a voice recorder during the interview and then was moved to the computer. The teachers who participated in the study were coded according to their gender such as "Mrs. Selin, Mr. Yılmaz, Mr. Mustafa...". After all of the interviews were transcribed and the sections that were not related to the study were removed and sections related to the case studied were remained. Then the opinions of the participants were examined one by one under each question title. It was aimed to make it easier to gather participants' views on the same question and make inferences.

Similar sides of the answers given by the participants to the questions in the semi-structured interview form were separated and common statements were reached. In the first stage of the content analysis, codes, categories, sub-themes and main themes were determined in line with common statements. In this context, the general framework of the research was established. After the obtained

data was scanned in detail, the researcher and field specialist read/reviewed the data in different locations. The answers given by the participants to the questions in the interview form were read and examined by the researcher and the academic specialized in classroom education. Then the codes which were created based on the information in the data were compared and consensus was reached after a detailed discussion made on the codes that they had different opinions. The coding reliability, which let different coders to code the same text in harmony, was used in the research. The coefficient of reliability, which is used between coders, is calculated with the formula "Reliability=number of compromises / (number of compromises + number of no compromise)" and a higher than 70% compliance is expected for reliability (Miles, & Huberman, 1994). In the current study this rate was found to be 90%.

## Results

While exposing the findings regarding the experiences of primary school teachers about teaching Turkish to students who are not native Turkish speakers, coding was made in line with the data obtained and categories, sub-themes and themes were specified. In order to ensure validity and reliability in the research, direct quotations were included in the presentation of the findings regarding the themes reached are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Themes regarding primary school teachers' experiences of teaching Turkish to students who are not native Turkish speakers.**

According to figure 2, the participants' experiences regarding teaching of Turkish to their students who are not native Turkish speakers are gathered around following 6 (six) main themes: "Proficiency", "Learning-Teaching Process", "Problems Encountered", "Evaluation and Assessment", "Expectations", and "Suggestions".

### **Theme 1: Proficiency Status**

Three sub-themes, namely “Teacher, Family, and Student Proficiencies,” which are related to the theme of *Proficiency Status* of Teaching Turkish to the students who are not native Turkish speakers were determined. Some of the participants’ views on the sub-themes are as follows:

*“I don't feel sufficient, first of all, because our languages are different. I do not feel sufficient because we do not have any special education on this subject, that is, we do not have any knowledge (Mr. Mustafa).”*

*“Because she did not take a special language class before, there are some words she learned from around. Of course, she is insufficient in the class. We have trouble getting along, and my student joined us (to the class) too late. She is in my class for two months; we had a hard time (Mrs. Şeyma).”*

*“Her parents cannot speak Turkish, so we don't have much communication with her mother and father, I think she has difficulties also (Mrs. Esra).”*

*“In her family, only her father knows a little bit Turkish (Mrs. Selin).”*

Most of the teachers stated that they felt insufficient due to the lack of experience in language teaching and that they did not get any education on this subject before. It was stated that the students were insufficient to express themselves because they did not speak Turkish, even the eager students could not express themselves and could not express their feelings. It was stated that the students were very insufficient to communicate with their teachers due to the language problem. It was observed that the students who received Turkish language education during kindergarten years or moved to Turkey a few years ago and had chance to learn a little bit Turkish did not encounter so much problems. The participants stated that the families continue to speak to the native language at home, which negatively affects the child’s learning Turkish. Therefore, they stated that the families also should receive Turkish language education.

### **Theme 2: Learning-Teaching Process**

The second theme reached in the language teaching process of teaching Turkish by primary school teachers to their students who are not native Turkish speakers is the Learning-Teaching Process theme. Within the scope of the theme of “Learning-Teacher Process”<sup>3</sup> sub-themes, namely “Reading, Writing and Verbal Communication”, were determined. Some of the participants’ views on the sub-themes are as follows:

*“... Again, in the process of voices, we try to teach by using things like Eba, Okulistik, Morpa ... we repeated over and over again with the help of other children, with loud and vibrant videos and we passed the topic (Mrs. Nalan).”*

*“ In terms of their writing skills, since I know their alphabet letters, I matched with their letters [with Turkish letters]. And at the voicing of the letters or in the writing of the sounds, I showed a sound similar to their native language, which corresponds to the letter in our alphabet, every week. I matched Turkish “T” with Arabic “ط” and I drew the letter or showed its images (Mrs. Sevim).”*

*“For example, we try to support it with images. Let's say this is the picture of apple in letter “-e,” here is the picture of donkey, like that. However, at some cases, the child does not know what the image is about. It is because the equivalent of apple in their own language is different, the equivalent of the donkey is different. So, this process requires such patience. You will slowly go through such objects. First you will comprehend them, and then you will combine syllables with letters (Mr. Mustafa).”*

It can be stated that the participants perform different practices in the learning-teaching process, performed activities for voice awareness, performed continuous vocalization for correct pronunciation, used educational sites where audiovisual elements are predominant, and practiced various applications such as peer support, teaching with play, drama. The selected applications vary according to the individual differences of the students, the area and the situation they had problems with. In addition to the reading and writing activities, all of the participants practiced several applications such as supporting with visual materials, making use of media products to improve the language, reading different types of texts (song/poem, fairy tale, story, rhyme), asking questions about the text in improving reading comprehension, using idiom/proverbs to improve word reservoir. It can be stated that they carried out activities to facilitate students' understanding of what they read, such as individual care, games/peer teaching and drama.

The participants stated that they started teaching language by explaining the mechanical aspect of writing to students who are not native Turkish students. It was determined that while teaching Turkish, the teachers were using the letters of the students' native language and referring sound-letter relationship and working on short texts. Most of the teachers stated that they wanted to do dictation works more, but students had difficulties in dictation and so they included copy studies frequently. The participants also stated that they used peer support in teaching how to write and followed feedback process. The teachers stated that they tried to correct the writing mistakes of the students by checking them repeatedly and giving feedback until they wrote acceptable for legible and non-aesthetic writings.

It was determined that the teachers talked with the students whenever possible to improve their verbal communication skills, and they tried to facilitate students' language learning by recommending and promoting various media products. It was observed that the participants directed students to spend time with other students outside school in order to empower their verbal communication.

### **Theme 3. Problems Encountered**

Within the scope of the theme of *Problems Encountered* 3 sub-themes, namely "Reading, Writing and Verbal Communication", were determined. Some of the participants' views on the sub-themes are as follows:

"Comprehension problems also arise in the children who gained reading and writing skills. In other words, there are problems not only in reading letters, reading words or reading sentences, but also in comprehension. Unfortunately, we cannot overcome that problem (Mr. Kağan).

"He had a little bit problem with writing since he knew Persian and Arabic before. He was writing in the opposite direction to Turkish. For example, he had difficulties in leaving a gap between words, and he could not write exactly what I said (Mr. Vedat)"

"When he doesn't understand what I'm talking, he cannot necessarily focus on it. So, he's bored. I notice. In terms of speaking, he sometimes cannot pronounce the words properly. And when he cannot establish an appropriate sentence, he speaks the words separately, I understand what he means. (Mrs. Selin)."

Participants stated that their students had problems in the vocalization and pronunciation of words and the students made reading mistakes such as mixing letters, skipping letters/syllables, and reading without paying attention to accent and intonation. Most of the teachers stated that even though the students get read skill despite their deficiencies in reading have serious problems in understanding what they read. The teachers stated that even if the students can read fluently there is still need for a training process to understand the text. Some teachers stated that their students were reading fluently but had problems in understanding what they read. However, a fluent reading skill requires reading and reading comprehension to take place at the same time. Therefore, it was observed that the teachers

were considering reading separately from reading comprehension. It was revealed that teachers were referring to reading skill as only sounding the words.

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The participants stated that they had problems in teaching writing skills to the students who were not native Turkish speakers. Dictation and copy studies were carried out especially for the development of writing skills. However, most of the teachers stated that the students had difficulties in dictation. Dictation refers to transferring of the voiced words into the text according to the spelling rules. Dictation exercises are an important application used in the development of writing which is one of the basic language skills. It can be stated that the students who were not native Turkish speakers did not have much problems in copying and writing. It can be stated that since the spelling of the letters is different in Arabic and Latin alphabets, students who knew the Arabic alphabet had problems such as doing direction of the letters wrong, not leaving spaces between words, and reversing the tails of the letters. It can be stated that students missed the vowels especially in writing, and this problem is encountered even if they write by looking a sample text. This situation is considered to be due to the alphabet differences.

Because the students did not understand what is being said and could not express themselves sufficiently, it can be stated that they did not join their classmates during classes, but were only satisfied with looking at them. Therefore, the students who are not native Turkish speakers were bored during the classes and thus they lost their interests in participating the lessons over time. Due to problems in verbal communication with Syrian and Afghan refugee students who are not native Turkish speakers, the learning-teaching process of both the teacher and the student was negatively affected.

#### **Theme 4. Measurement and Evaluation**

*Evaluation and Assessment* is the fourth theme that reveals participants' experiences regarding teaching Turkish to the students who are not native Turkish speakers. Within the scope of this theme, 3 sub-themes, namely "Reading, Writing and Verbal Communication", were determined. Some of the participants' views on the sub-themes are as follows:

"My evaluation is different in the classroom. For example, there is inclusive education, so, we have many students who have learning difficulties. I need to evaluate them by integrating them to the classroom and evaluate their grades accordingly. But I consider their grade separately and individually in my mind (Mr. Yılmaz)."

"... Since it is now sound-based and inductive, it is easier. If the criterion is to be able to write what is said or writing aesthetically or if it is legible, it is completed, he learned ... I did not make a different assessment from other children (Mrs. Selin)."

"So, we evaluate them in their specific category. Since they do not comprehend what they listened, listening skill is incomplete. And because the child missed this skill, it is not possible for the child to concentrate on the class (Mr. Kağan)."



Most of the teachers evaluated according to their observations, impressions, students' participation in the class, the students' situations during the activities and their level of development. The participants stated they considered Syrian and Afghan Refugee students according to their specific development while did not evaluate and grade them based on the same criterion as Turkish students. It can be stated that the participants did not use special evaluation tools although they knew the students' shortcomings. It can be stated that this makes it difficult to monitor the development of the students and makes it difficult to make systematic evaluations to determine the success and level of students in language learning and other courses.

It can be stated that some of the participants evaluated the students individually by looking at the student's ability to write without looking at the sample, to write the letters correctly, to have a good writing, to arrange the notebook in order, to divide the syllables from the right place, and some teachers examined and evaluated students collectively. It can be stated that the students who were evaluated by exams could not express themselves due to the lack of their word reservoir, therefore they were more unsuccessful in the exams. In terms of individual evaluation, it can be stated that the participants' criteria were sufficient to write without looking at the sample text and to write legible.

It can be stated that the participants evaluated the verbal communication skills of the students by observing the lesson processes, the participation in the lessons and the self-expression skills individually, but they did not use any rubric or special assessment tool for these students during the evaluations.

### **Theme 5. Expectations**

Within the scope of this theme, 3 sub-themes, namely "Economic, Professional and Administrative Development", were determined. Some of the participants' views on the sub-themes are as follows:

"I do something extra for them, and I try to tell them something. The psychology of not being able to tell them anything is a very different psychology, both in terms of financial and morality. At least there should be something that encourages teachers. The salary of a teacher with a very good level of Turkish students, all of whom are Turkish, and my salary is the same, but I teach five foreign students and we receive the same salary with the other teacher, we give the same duration, we process the same curriculum (Mrs. Özlem)."

"It should be clear which school they will attend during the semester or at the beginning of the year. There should be no uncertainty. They should be prevented from being in constant migration (Mrs. Özlem)." "If we get resource books, dictionary-bank-like, illustrated, visual works, and fascicles can help those children (Mrs. Sevim)."

"In my opinion, as a professional development, trainings for teachers should be given as well as trainings for children should be supported, not only should be provided in the classroom (Mrs. Kader)."

Most of the participants stated that the teachers could be more willing if their tuition fee were increased since they give additional efforts (during lunch breaks, breaks, empty lessons, etc.) for the Syrian and Afghan refugee students who are not native Turkish speakers in their classroom. Most of the participants stated that a separate class should be created for students who are not native Turkish speakers. In addition, the participants stated that the curriculum applied was very tough for not native Turkish students, so that separate classes should be opened for students who are not native Turkish speaker and it would be more successful if the course is taught according to the separate curriculum.

Some participants expressed that it is more beneficial for the students who are not native Turkish speakers and Turkish students to get education in the same class and to socialize. It can be stated that students can learn a language more quickly by learning, sharing and supporting each other in the same class with their peers. And they can learn Turkish more permanently if they socialize with

their peers. Participants stated that preparing a separate curriculum for Syrian and Afghan refugee students would be beneficial more during the education process. It can be stated that most of the participants, who had foreign students, believe that language teaching would be made more effective if they have guiding booklets for the classes, diversify education and teaching materials, prepare visual-weighted fascicles, which will provide a wealth of materials in education and training.

### **Theme 6. Suggestions**

*Suggestions* theme, which reveals participants' experiences regarding teaching Turkish to the students who were not native Turkish speakers, has two subthemes: "Pre-Language Education" and "Administrative". Pre-language education has three categories of "Family, Teacher and Student" while *Administrative* has five categories of "Material, Student Distributions, Method/Technique, Social Activities, and Counseling." Some of the participants' views on the sub-themes are as follows:

"It would be more beneficial if mothers and fathers of these children, namely their families, learn Turkish. If the courses are provided and if they learn Turkish, it will be more beneficial, more successful, and our job will be easier (Mr. Mustafa)."

"I do my best, but if there were picture books about it, it would be much more useful if there were more texts, short and concise texts resources. There are cartoons for these children, they are very simple in TRT Kids, but it would be more useful if they are made in a little more simplified Turkish (Mrs. Selin)".

"They should do a lot of drama play, drama is very useful, these are my recommendations (Mr. Hakan)".

"The state should choose better neighborhoods where these students live (it must). Since they cannot socialize, they constantly reinforce to use their own language in the family. For this reason, we need to place them in more beautiful environments, more beautiful districts, introduce them to other families, make them peers, friends, neighbors, and then spread their language education to do on the streets and a little more to their own environment. It is because the language taught in the school and the language spoken on the street are different from each other (Mr. Ahmet)".

It can be stated that the students should use Turkish at home in order not to forget the language they learned at school, and they have suggestions that the school counseling services to raise the awareness of the families about this issue. It can be stated that the language education is important in terms of the students to express themselves in social environment, hospitals and in the governmental offices. It can be stated that the Ministry of National Education, Public Training Centers, non-governmental organizations can provide language training courses and can open language courses to the families of Syrian and Afghan refugee students with a specific plan, which will be effective in solving the problems.

Most of the participants stated that it will make language education easier if the foreign students get language education before the school semester. It can be stated that the assignment of teachers who know native languages of Syrian and Afghan refugee students and who have been trained on this subject within the framework of the plan-program of the National Education Directorates will contribute greatly to overcome the problems encountered in the teaching of Turkish.

Since almost all of the teachers do not speak the language of foreign students, it can be stated that the participants think that it would be more beneficial to give this task by the teachers who are experts in the work, who were in the refugee camps before or who know the language of the refugees and Turkish. It can be stated that adding courses about language teaching for foreign students to the Primary School Teaching programs in universities can provide more qualified teachers in this regard.

It can be stated that teachers offer different suggestions for the category of materials. It can be stated that it will be beneficial for students to use media-based source books (cartoon) and visual-

based books. It is also important to create a Turkish laboratory, Turkish education set and to teach Turkish with game. Taking into consideration the students' levels, the use of remarkable and enjoyable resource books can increase students' interest in the class and facilitate the work of teacher in education and training process. Some of the participants made suggestions for teachers to use different methods and techniques such as drama, gamification, question-answer.

All of the teachers stated that they can accelerate language development of Syrian and Afghan refugee students and their families by including them in social and cultural activities. It can be stated that foreign students/parents can improve themselves and become more active in social life with teachers' visit to them, attending picnics, going to cinema and theater, and creating neighborhood relations. So, they can learn Turkish language more easily and they can adapt to society by expressing themselves comfortably.

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Results Regarding Qualification Status**

It was seen that the biggest problem that the participants experienced regarding Syrian and Afghan refugee students who were not native Turkish speakers is the communication problem. Teachers have difficulties in teaching Turkish due to the lack of communication. It was observed that the students had difficulties in understanding each other because their native language was different and the desired developments in education and training could not be achieved. It was not possible to communicate with families due to language problems, and it was seen that children who knew the language from the upper classes were used as translator students, and thus conveyed their problems. As a result of the research, it was concluded that it would be beneficial to train teachers about teaching Turkish and educate students and parents about Turkish language. Çakmak (2018), Tosun et al. (2018), Cin (2018), Bulut, Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018), Due, Riggs and Augoustinos (2016), Alyılmaz (2018), Kanbur (2017) and Bozkurt (2018) also reached similar results in their studies. According to the study, it was concluded that students who were not native Turkish speakers were considered as inclusion students and they fell behind their peers in terms of academic success. Yüce (2018), Şimşir and Dilmaç (2018), Gözüküçük and Kıran (2018), Güngör and Şenel (2018) and Barın (2004) achieved similar results.

In parent-teacher communication, it was observed that especially female parents could not agree with teachers due to language problem, and it was concluded that teachers and parents who did not understand each other even in mobile communication and tried to communicate with each other with the help of translator students. It was determined that the students had great problems in their homework due to the language problem, they could not do their homework as desired, parents could not help their children because they did not know the language, and the materials and tools requested from the students could not be brought to school because of the language problem and most of the students could not participate in the activities due to the language problem. Susar Kırmızı, Özcan and Şencan (2016), Çakmak (2018), Moralı (2018), and Aykırı (2017) achieved similar results.

### **Results Regarding Learning-Teaching Process**

It was observed that the participants spent time individually with Syrian and Afghan refugee students in order to solve their reading problems, and they tried to eliminate the students' deficiencies by spending time in free activity classes, noon breaks, and during school breaks. It can be stated that the students overcame the problems in the sounds of "ü, ö, a, e, ı, i, g, h" by focusing, repeating, using the online education websites and receiving peer support. In addition to reading studies, it was observed that the participants applied supporting activities with visual materials and activities that aim to improve Turkish language skills (watching cartoons, singing, reading fairy tales, asking questions about the story, asking them to create paragraphs with idioms, etc.). It was concluded that taking care of students individually, nursing rhymes, listening and singing Turkish songs, creating student play groups and giving more place to students who are not native Turkish speakers, giving importance to

peer teaching, getting help from students who speak Turkish, giving responsibilities, cooperating with parents and reviving stories they read, drama activities have positive effects on to understand what they read. Bulut, Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018), Çakmak (2012) and Beyhan (2018) achieved similar results in their studies.

It was observed that the participants used different methods and techniques to solve students' writing problems. It was observed that copy practices were very comfortable in particular for the students, while they experienced difficulties in dictation studies. The sounds were emphasized and then students were asked to write them down. The students used short texts in writings, they memorized poems and wrote them down. It can be stated that the process continued until the teachers re-teach the aspects of the letters to the students whose writing is illegible and write them correctly. It can be stated that the teachers continued the process until the students understood the directions of the letters and write them correctly. According to the findings of the current study, peer support was mostly used during the writing activities. Beyhan (2018) and Çakmak (2018) achieved similar results.

It was concluded that encouraging the students talk continuously to improve their verbal communication skills, asking questions and letting students to answer them, listening to music, watching videos and movies, making students active in the class by drama method, watching various TV channels have positive effects on communication. Benhur (2006), Barın (2004), Beyhan (2018), Biçer and Kılıç (2017), Alyılmaz (2018), Goukukuk and Kiran (2018) achieved similar results.

### **Conclusions on the Problems Encountered**

It was concluded that the participants encountered problems such as skipping letters, mixing sounds, and pronouncing the works similar to the native language. In addition, it was observed that all of the participants in this study evaluated the reading and reading comprehension separately. Although the student does not understand the text, it is accepted as he or she has reading skills. In this context, it can be stated that the teachers, who reported that the students learned how to read but did not know what they were reading, were considering reading skill as only recognition of the word and voicing it and were believing that reading and reading comprehension are two different skills. This is still away from the level intended to be achieved in terms of the students' reading skills. In reading, vocalization and reading comprehension are actions that take place together. Similar results were reached in the studies conducted by Hadidi (2015), Beyhan (2018), Bulut, Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018), Gözüküçük and Kiran (2018), Ergün (2018), Moralı (2018) and Belet (2009).

It was observed that Syrian and Afghan refugee students did not have much problems in copy writing studies. It was observed that teachers frequently asked students to do writing exercises to solve the problems of students in dictation works. It was determined that in writing exercises the students were skipping the vowels and mixing the dotted letters particularly. As the language structure of the Arabic and Latin alphabets are different, it was concluded that students who knew the Arabic alphabet had problems such as misdirection of letters when writing, and reversing tails of letters. It was concluded that the problems in voicing and words in these subjects were reduced by writing exercises and constantly correcting the mistakes. Kiran and Gözük Küçük (2016) and Beyhan (2018) reached similar results.

In the research, it was observed that almost all of the participants had problems with verbal communication (listening and speaking) with the students. It was observed that the teachers and Syrian and Afghan refugee students could not communicate with each other in the school and expressed what they wanted to say in body language. It was concluded that this situation may affect students' education and academic life negatively. Aykırı (2017), Erdem (2017), Bulut et al. (2018), Güngör and Şenel (2018), Güven and İşleyen (2018), Yüce (2018), Kardeş and Akman (2018), Tosun et al. (2018) found similar results in their studies.

### **Results on the Theme of Measurement and Evaluation**

In the study, the participants stated that they did individual assessments for the Syrian and Afghan refugee students, even though they did not determine a specific criterion for evaluating students in the assessment process of teaching Turkish. It was concluded that the students were less successful in writing skills compare to their classmates. It was concluded that the teachers were trying to overcome language problems through constant repetitions and corrections of students whose pronunciation were not correct. It was also concluded that the feedback was very effective in correcting the pronunciation mistakes of the students. Benhur (2006), Erdem (2017), Baldık (2018), Çakmak (2018), Bulut et al. (2018), Güngör and Şenel (2018) obtained similar results.

### **Conclusions on the Theme of Expectations**

According to the research findings, it was concluded that the fact that there were Syrian and Afghan refugee students who had different native languages in the classrooms with crowded class sizes has complicated the activities of the lesson, also increased the workload of the teacher and the education was disrupted from time to time. It was also revealed that the teachers needed to spend more time for teaching Turkish to the students with language problems, so there was a time problem in application of the regular curriculum. It was concluded that the Ministry of National Education should work on the issue that the teachers, who are specialized in the specific field of teaching Turkish to refugee students, should be assigned with a different payment rate. It was concluded that at the beginning of the semester the administration should determine the students who are not native Turkish speakers, and which classroom they should be enrolled, how many students will be in each classroom, and which teacher will teach them. It was concluded that providing a variety of materials for refugee students will contribute positively to the teaching process. According to the findings of the research, it was also determined that teachers who have Syrian and Afghan refugee students who are not native Turkish speakers in their class should be given a priority in a long period, and that they should receive trainings within a certain period of time. It was stated that the seminar trainings should be given by teachers who are experts in their fields and prepared in a way that suggestions about the application can be created. Similar results were reached by Ferris and Winthrop (2010), Gözüküçük and Kıran (2016), Tanrikulu (2017), Yaylacı, Serpil and Yaylacı (2017), Kardeş and Akman (2018), Bulut, Soysal, Gülçiçek (2018), Güngör and Şenel (2018).

### **Conclusions on the Theme of Suggestions**

It was observed that there was a serious communication problem between the teachers and the parents because the families of Syrian and Afghan refugee students who are not native Turkish speakers could not speak Turkish. It was concluded that it would be more beneficial if these students can attend language education classes before starting to school and if they begin to go to primary school after getting the language class. Peterson, Meehan and Durrant (2016), Susar Kırmızı et al. (2016), Kanbur (2017), Güngör and Şenel (2018), Kardeş and Akman (2018), Benli Özdemir (2018), Şimşir and Dilmaç (2018), Baldık (2018), Tosun et al. (2018) and Demirtaş (2019) achieved similar results in their studies.

In line with the information obtained as a result of the research, special in-service training, courses and seminars related to application-oriented language teaching can be given to primary school teachers, firstly to volunteered teachers, in order to increase their proficiency levels in teaching Turkish to refugee students who are not native Turkish speakers. Moreover, teachers can use special measurement tools, rubrics, etc. in assessing students who are not native Turkish speakers. In addition, a separate curriculum can be created for Syrian and Afghan refugee students who are not native Turkish speakers and order to solve the language problems and make effective decisions in applications. And a private unit can be established in the National Education Directorates that will support the students who are not native Turkish speakers. Particularly, considering the education problem for refugees who have become a part of our country, courses related to language teaching can

be added to primary school teacher education programs in universities for students who are not native Turkish speakers.

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