



# Turkish as a Foreign Language Learners' Language Learning Skills Related Problems<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Number of studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language (TFL) has increased along with the increasing number of foreign students in Turkey. Turkish is intended to be taught more effectively and efficiently through scientific studies and development of the materials that can be used in teaching process. The problems that are encountered in this process form a basis for scientific studies and material development. Detecting such problems enables production of researches on lessening and eliminating the problems, finding solutions, and providing recommendations. In this sense, it is important to detect the problems related to language learning skills in teaching TFL. Therefore, it is aimed to detect the problems of the TFL learners related to language learning skills in this study. For this purpose, the data were collected with a form consisting of open-ended questions and the form was filled in by B1-B2 level learners studying Turkish at Turkish Language Teaching Research and Application Center at Sakarya University. The data were analyzed through content analysis. Learners' reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills related problems as well as the ones related to learning grammar rules and new words are presented under themes and subthemes as the results of the study.

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Teaching Turkish as foreign language, language skills, learning grammar, learning words, learning anxiety

## 1. Introduction

Foreign language teaching comprises teaching vocabulary along with grammar and their effective use in listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Language teaching constitutes a whole with grammar rules, vocabulary and language skills. As Genç (2017) stated, knowing a foreign language is not solely expressing self and/or understanding others, but integrating these with listening, reading, and writing skills. Competence in a language is evaluated by the use of reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills (Güneş, 2013; Lüle Mert, 2014). Lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge prevents the full use of language skills. Grammar and vocabulary knowledge that is not put to use with language skills cannot be learned thoroughly.

Learners state that they mostly know the rules but fail to use them in language learning. This expression requires considering the concept of functional language knowledge that emphasizes the functional aspect of language, features semantic items and deals with linguistic competence (Oflaz, 2010; Peçenek, 2008). As Genç (2017) stated, functional language knowledge considers the functions of semantic, morphemic, and phonemic items in terms of their contributions to language. In order to achieve functionality, language items should be handled as a whole with their semantic, morphemic and use of language aspects (Larsen-Freeman,

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2011). Activities for language use should be included in teaching process particularly for preventing what is learned from being forgotten (Kara, 2010). It is also important to bring in “communicational competence” in activities to achieve language competency (Aktaş, 2005; Pilancı, 2009).

Learners of a foreign language go through a process different from the process of acquiring their native language. In this process, they learn new rules and new words, and experience listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills all over again.

Listening and reading are important receptive skills in terms of language exposure. Learners learn new language rules and words through these skills. Speaking and writing skills are important productive skills that help put what is learned into use. The grammar rules that are not used with speaking and writing skills remain as theoretical knowledge for learners.

Listening –an important skill for understanding a language while learning it– plays a key role in learning a foreign language and is considered as the core of foreign language learning (Rost, 2011; Vandergrif, 2007). Considering learners, they perceive the listening in a foreign language as a difficult skill and fail to fully achieve this skill effectively (Berne, 2004; Graham, 2006). Reading skills –defined as a process of vocalization of written or printed signs according to predetermined rules and establishing an interpretation process that requires interaction between the writer and the reader (Akyol, 2006)– are also important in understanding and learning a new language. Reading skills require mental and physical effort for learners of foreign language in order to understand and vocalize a text.

Speaking skill which is needed and utilized mostly for communication can be defined as conveying emotions, thoughts and information through a language consisting of voices (Aktaş & Gündüz, 2001; Demirel, 1999). In this respect, speaking can be considered as a physical and mental process (Erdem, 2013). Speaking a language apprehensibly by learners is probably one of the most important skills of foreign language teaching (Erdem, Şengül, Gün & Büyükaşan, 2015). For this reason, foreign language learners are expected to acquire effective speaking skills. According to Chenoweth and Hayes (2001), writing skills take a long time and are hard to acquire, so it may be an effortful experience. According to Çakır (2010), learners and teachers experience the biggest challenges in writing skills. According to Barkaoui (2007: 44), the process of writing in a foreign language is affected by several factors such as linguistic, affective, and sociocultural ones, and this fact is among the reasons why writing in a foreign language is a demanding and complicated process. It is stated that TFL learners also have problems and difficulties in writing skills too often for similar reasons (Ak Başoğul & Selcen Can, 2014; Genç, 2017). The purpose of teaching writing skills to the TFL learners is to enable them to write out their emotions and thoughts in compliance with the language properties of Turkish in a planned way (Tiryaki, 2013).

Grammar functions as a tool for correct and effective use of language skills in the process of learning a foreign language. The reason for teaching grammar is to have learners comprehend the language they are learning (Genç, 2017). In this sense, as Derman (2010) stated, teaching grammar is of vital importance. Grammar should not be handled as a separate field where rules are memorized, but as a whole together with other language skills where rules are implicitly presented (Göçen, 2019). In this process, it is important to carry out grammar teaching along with other language skills and activities (Eroğlu & Sarar Kuzu, 2014; Göçen & Okur, 2013; Sağır, 2002). For this, methods revealing the functional aspect of grammar should be employed (Dik, 1979; İşcan, 2007).

Words function as tools for conveying emotions, thoughts, wishes, and ideas while learning a foreign language. It is important for learners to have sufficient vocabulary knowledge for effective use of language skills because, as Genç (2017) stated, conveying thoughts starts at word level; words turn into sentences, and sentences turn into structures that constitute paragraphs. While the similarities among languages facilitate learning a foreign language and vocabulary, the weak relationship among languages generally leads to differentiation of vocabulary, and learners may need to obtain information on the meanings/uses of words all over again (Odlin, 1989; Türkoğlu, 2004).

Learners are expected to have problems related to learning and using the language while learning a new language. The fact that competence in foreign language teaching may vary significantly among individuals (Açık, 2008) makes us think that the problems that learners encounter in the language learning process may

also vary. It is important to detect these problems in order to ensure effectiveness in language teaching. As Açıık (2008) states, it is required to carry out assessment, identify the problems clearly, discuss them and offer solutions in order to achieve the purpose of language teaching. There are studies for identifying the problems related to teaching TFL and it is found in these studies that the problems related to the matters such as program, teacher, method, teaching equipment, material use in the related field are indicated and solutions are offered. Some of these studies are as follows: Açıık, 2008; Akkaya & Gün, 2016; Biçer, Çoban & Bakır, 2014; Bulut, Kanat Soysal & Gül Çiçek, 2018; Bülbül & Güven, 2017; Candaş Karababa, 2009; Chang & Kalenderoğlu, 2017; Derman, 2010; Durmuş, 2013; Er, Biçer & Bozkırlı, 2012; Kara, 2010; Maden & İşcan, 2011; Morali, 2018; Mutlu & Ayrancı, 2017; Özdemir & Arslan, 2018; Özyürek, 2009; Yılmaz, 2015. Besides these, there are also studies where problems are described by focusing on a single subject area or several of them for teaching TFL. Some of them are: Boylu, 2014; Kahraman, 2018; Kaldırım & Degeç, 2017; Nurlu & Kutlu, 2015; Tiryaki, 2017; Tüm, 2014. There are also studies employing error analysis in order to reveal the TFL learners' problems: Adalar Subaşı, 2010; Ak Başoğlu & Selcen Can, 2014; Bölükbaş, 2011; Büyükikiz & Hasırcı, 2013; Çerçi, Derman & Bardakçı, 2016; Çetinkaya, 2015; Fidan, 2019. When these studies are examined, it is found that generally a single subject area, study group of single nationality or a single language level was taken for examination. Among them, the number of studies conducted with Arab learners on writing skills is the highest. However, when it comes to teaching TFL, problems should also be identified for the language learners from different nations for reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills, and for grammar and vocabulary. There are no studies that handle all these skills all together. Also, it is found that there are limited number of studies on grammar learning problems related to teaching of TFL and there are not any studies specifically on vocabulary learning problems. Therefore, a study that comprise all language learning skills as reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary including different learner characteristics is needed. In this regard, it is aimed to answer the following subquestions based on the research question "What are the problems of the TFL learners in language learning skills?" within the scope of this study:

- What are TFL learners' problems in reading skill?
- What are TFL learners' problems in listening skill?
- What are TFL learners' problems in speaking skill?
- What are TFL learners' problems in writing skill?
- What are TFL learners' problems in grammar learning?
- What are TFL learners' problems in learning new words?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

Phenomenology —one of the qualitative research methods— is employed in this study to identify TFL learners' problems related to reading, speaking, writing skills, and grammar and vocabulary learning. As Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) stated, phenomenology focuses on the phenomena people are aware of, but unable to fully understand.

### 2.2. Study Group

251 learners in total learning TFL at B1 and B2 levels formed the study group. Distribution of learners by language levels is as follows:

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Study Group by Language Levels

Level	Frequency
B1	120
B2	131
Total	251

According to Table 1, it was found that language levels of the learners in the study group are close to one another. Distribution of learners by gender is as follows:

**Table 2.** Distribution of the Study Group by Gender

Gender	Frequency
Male	122
Female	129
Total	251

According to Table 2, it was found that the numbers of males and females in the study group are close. Distribution of learners by language level and gender is as follows:

**Table 3.** Distribution of the Study Group by Language Level and Gender

Gender	B1	B2	Total
Male	62	60	122
Female	58	71	129
Total	120	131	251

As seen in Table 3, there is a balance between the number of males and females under language levels. Distribution of learners by age is as follows:

**Table 4.** Distribution of the Study Group by Age

Age Range	Frequency
17-20	138
21-25	54
26-30	25
31-43	8
Not stated	26
Total	251

According to Table 4, majority of learners in the study group are between 17-20 years old. Distribution of learners by country is as follows:

**Table 5.** Distribution of Learners in the Study Group by Country

Country	Frequency
Afghanistan	16
Albania	3
Bangladesh	3
Benin	1
Burkina Faso	1
Burundi	2
Algeria	1
Chad	5
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2
Indonesia	60
Morocco	4
Ivory Coast	2
Palestine	9
The Gambia	1
Guinea	2
South Sudan	1
Georgia	1
India	1

Iraq	25
Iran	4
Italy	1
Cameroon	2
Montenegro	2
Kazakhstan	17
Kenya	1
Kyrgyzstan	3
Kosovo	1
Madagascar	1
North Macedonia	1
Malaysia	1
Mali	2
Egypt	1
Mongolia	1
Moldova	2
Myanmar	1
Niger	1
Nigeria	1
Central African Republic	1
Pakistan	3
Russia	1
Senegal	1
Sierra Leone	1
Somali	5
Sudan	6
Syria	8
Tajikistan	2
Tanzania	3
Thailand	4
Tunisia	2
Turkmenistan	1
Uganda	1
Jordan	5
Yemen	6
Not stated	18
Total	251

According to Table 5, it was found that most learners in the study group came from African and Asian countries.

### 2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

A form that consists of open-ended questions was used in order to identify TFL learners' problems related to reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills and grammar and vocabulary learning. The form asked learners to state the problems they have related to listening, reading, speaking, writing skills, and learning grammar rules and vocabulary (new words) under different themes. Sufficient time was given to the learners to answer all the questions and the completed forms were collected by the researchers. Only the forms that have been fully completed were included in the study. Learners' responses were transformed into digital format and analyzed under each research question by using Microsoft Office 365 Excel. Following the content analysis, the data were classified under themes and subthemes and presented in tables. To ensure

reliability, expert opinion was sought for the themes and subthemes. To ensure validity, extracts from the learners' responses have been included in the tables.

### 3. Findings

In this study, TFL learners expressed their problems related to reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills, and grammar and vocabulary learning. The following table states the number of problems expressed by the learners:

**Table 6.** Number of Problems Related to Language Learning Skills

Skills	Reading Skill	Listening Skill	Speaking Skill	Writing Skill	Grammar Learning	Vocabulary Learning
Problems	274	337	237	247	167	230

According to Table 6, the number of problems (from highest to lowest) related to the language learning skills expressed by TFL learners is: Listening skill, reading skill, writing skill, speaking skill, vocabulary learning, grammar learning. Accordingly, it was found that learners expressed more problems related to the listening and reading skills compared to other areas of comprehension skills. While learners mentioned listening skill as the most problematic, they regarded the grammar learning as the least problematic one.

#### 3.1. Findings and Comments on TFL learners' Problems in Reading Skills

Reading skills related problems of TFL learners were analyzed. Their problems related to the reading skills were classified under the following themes:

**Table 7.** Themes on Reading Skills Related Problems

Themes	Frequency
Problems Related to Comprehension	111
Linguistic Problems	12
Problems Related to Reading Text	81
Problems Related to the Action of Reading	49
Problems Originated in Learners	7
Problems Related to Teaching Process	14
Total	274

According to Table 7, learners expressed the highest number of reading skills related problems under the theme "Problems Related to Comprehension". In addition, learners frequently expressed problems under the themes "Problems Related to Reading Text" and "Problems Related to the Action of Reading".

The problems expressed by TFL learners related to the reading skills were classified under the following subthemes:

**Table 8.** Themes and Subthemes Related to the Reading Skills

Themes and Subthemes	Example	Frequency
<b>Problems Related to Comprehension</b>		<b>111</b>
Unknown rules	Reading a book is too difficult, because there are rules in it, and we haven't learned these rules. (S72/B2)	21
Words with figurative meaning	There are too many figurative meanings in Turkish. Therefore, I can only read but I cannot understand the subject/text. Many words are too far from their basic meanings. (S146/B1)	13
Long words	Sometimes, I cannot understand the long words. (S185/B2)	4
New suffixes	Some suffixes are unfamiliar. (S2/B2)	3
Unfamiliar words	There are too many words I don't know. I must translate them one by one. (S14/B2)	62
Difficult words	There are very difficult words in some reading texts. (S174/B1)	8
<b>Linguistic Problems</b>		<b>12</b>
Differences in language structures	My language and Turkish are quite different from each other. (S101)	2

Non-existence of some Turkish letters in L1	Some letters in Turkish don't exist in the Latin alphabet: ğ, ü, ı, ö. (S9)	7
Difference of logic in Turkish	I think the most important problem is the logic. For example, Turkish logic is quite different for Arabic learners. (S2/B2)	3
<b>Problems Related to Reading Text</b>		<b>81</b>
Failing to understand the relationship between the text and the question	I understand the text well, but the comprehension questions are different. There are too many synonymous words in the questions. (S135/B1)	3
Text length	I lose too much time, because the texts are too long. (S115)	22
Text difficulty	Sometimes, texts are too difficult and I have to read them a couple of times to understand. Sometimes, I cannot understand them at all. (S25)	30
Inappropriateness for the level	I don't have problem in reading very much while learning Turkish, but texts are difficult for the learners at B1 and B2 levels. (S3/B2)	9
Difficult Questions	Questions are confusing and difficult. (S95/B1)	4
Insufficient time	Time is too short. Sometimes, I am pinched for time in answering the comprehension questions. (S114/B2)	13
<b>Problems Related to the Action of Reading</b>		<b>49</b>
Suffixes	Too many suffixes are used in Turkish. Therefore, reading is a bit challenging. (S24)	1
Inability to read fast	"Reading" is a bit difficult for me while learning Turkish, because I read a bit slowly. If I read fast, I make mistakes. (S136)	10
Difficulties in Pronunciation	For me, pronunciation is difficult. (S101/B1)	24
Long words	I cannot read long words. (S19/B2)	12
Unfamiliar words	There are a lot of new words. I must use a dictionary all the time while reading. (S103/B1)	2
<b>Problems Originated in Learners</b>		<b>7</b>
Lack of attention	I am careless. (S100)	2
Reading Anxiety	I can read texts alone, but I feel a bit nervous when I read them in the class. (S170)	2
Lack of reading practice	I must read more texts and paragraphs, but I don't do it. (S14)	3
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Process</b>		<b>14</b>
Differences between the contents of lessons and exams	The words used in the exam are not taught by the teachers in the class. (S44)	14
Total		274

According to Table 8, the TFL learners have the highest number of reading text related problems under the subtheme "Existence of new words".

### 3.2. Findings and Comments on TFL learners' Problems in Listening Skills

The problems of TFL learners related to listening skills were analyzed. Learners' problems related to listening skills were classified under the following themes:

**Table 9.** Themes Related to the Problems in Listening Skills

Themes	Frequency
Problems Related to Comprehension	37
Linguistic Problems	14
Problems Related to Listening Text	165
Problems Related to Speaker	70
Problems Originated in Learners	15
Problems Related to Teaching Process	36
Total	337

According to Table 9, TFL learners expressed the highest number of listening skills related problems under the theme “Problems Related to Listening Text”. Additionally, learners frequently expressed problems under the themes “Problems Related to Speaker” and “Problems Related to Comprehension”.

TFL learners’ problems related to listening skills were classified under the following subthemes:

**Table 10.** Themes and Subthemes Related to the Problems in Listening Skill

Themes and Subthemes	Example	Frequency
<b>Problems Related to Comprehension</b>		<b>37</b>
Unknown rules	New rules are difficult. For example, we can use some grammar knowledge in writing, reading, and comprehension, but it is different when it comes to listening. It is hard to understand. (S2/B2)	4
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	Listening is difficult for me because I don’t know a lot of words. (S236/B2)	7
Long words	I don’t understand long words while listening. (S19/B2)	3
Unfamiliar words	There are many new and different sentences. Therefore, I can generally understand very few words. (S84/B1)	24
Difficult words	Listening is the most difficult skill for us because words are hard to understand when there are semi-figurative, synonymous or antonymous words. (S240/B2)	6
<b>Linguistic Problems</b>		<b>14</b>
Differences in daily language	I have a lot of problems in listening. For instance, I can understand very well when the teachers at school speak, but their speech is quite different from the Turkish spoken in daily life. (S3/B2) I can listen and understand the Turkish teacher, but I cannot understand Turkish people. (S93/B1)	8
Accent differences	There are differences among traditional accents in Turkish. (S86/B1)	5
Difference of logic in Turkish	The logic in our language is quite different. (S2/B2)	1
<b>Problems Related to Listening Text</b>		<b>165</b>
Pace of listening input	My Turkish friend talks too fast. (S123/B1) I can understand only a few words or sentences in exams. (S246/B2)	95
Complicated listening texts	It is generally complicated. (S189/B2)	3
Differences in subjects	For example, we can understand the texts about technology, health or family, but sometimes a text about GMO (for example) is given in the exam. (S82/B2)	6
Text length	Listening is too long. (S209/B1)	5
Texts inappropriate for the level	Listening texts are not appropriate for our level. Turkish is spoken in the countries of some students, but it is difficult for us as Africans. (S44/B2)	2
Text difficulty	Listening texts are difficult. (S111/B2)	18
Unclarity of questions	Questions. (S8/B2)	4
Incomprehensible questions	Answers of the listening questions were not provided. I didn’t understand the questions. (S43/B2)	6
Length of questions	I generally understand everything and listen well, but the listening questions in exams are too long. (S75/B1)	1
Difficulty of questions	Questions are difficult, and words with the same meaning are used. (S124/B1)	3
No revision	Sometimes, I need to listen more than once, but it isn’t possible. (S29/B2)	5
Lack of time	I need more time to understand the listening texts. (S119/B2)	17
<b>Problems Related to Speaker</b>		<b>70</b>
Pace of the speaker	Sometimes, I don’t understand the people who speak fast in a market or shopping center, and I say “Please, say it again.” (S25/B2)	44
Misarticulation	I think some teachers speak in a way that is hard to understand. (S26/B2)	10



Volume of speakers' voice	Because they speak like they are murmuring. I can't hear. (S123/B1)	6
Differences in pronunciation	While learning Turkish, I can't understand some words in "listening" due to the manner of pronunciation. (S23/B2)	10
<b>Problems Originated in Learners</b>		<b>15</b>
Failing to pay attention	I can't pay attention to words. (S178/B1)	5
Failing to remember what is listened	Some people can't remember a listening text well. I'm not good at remembering it, either. (S234/B2)	1
Failing to form an interaction	I don't speak with and listen to people regularly, so I have problems. (S200/B2)	2
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Process</b>		<b>36</b>
Differences between the contents of lessons and exams	Listening questions are quite simple in the class. But they are a bit harder in the exam. (S46/B2)	15
Lack of listening practice	We cannot make any progress; we only listen to texts from the book. We listen to them, but we cannot understand. We still don't know how to answer the questions easily. (S104/B2) It would be better if there is more listening practice in the courses. (S211/B1) Listening practice should be made once every day. (S240/B2)	21
Total		337

According to Table 10, TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems under the subthemes "Pace of listening input" and "Pace of the speaker".

### 3.3. Findings and Comments on TFL learners' Problems in Speaking Skills

TFL learners' speaking skills related problems were analyzed. The problems of learners related to the speaking skills were classified under the following themes:

**Table 11.** Themes Related to the Problems in Speaking Skills

Themes	Frequency
Problems Related to Expression	25
Linguistic Problems	10
Problems Related to Anxiety and Excitement	27
Problems Related to the Action of Speaking	19
Problems Related to Speaking Text	10
Problems Related to Language Use	45
Problems Originated in Learners	43
Problems Related to Teaching Process	46
Total	225

According to Table 11, learners expressed the highest number of speaking skills related problems under the theme "Problems Related to Teaching Process". Besides, learners frequently expressed problems under the themes "Problems Related to Language Use" and "Problems Originated in Learners".

TFL learners' problems related to speaking skills were classified under the following subthemes:

**Table 12.** Themes and Subthemes Related to the Problems in Speaking Skills

Themes and Subthemes	Example	Frequency
<b>Problems Related to Expression</b>		<b>31</b>
Failing to use academic language	I can speak only a little in academic matter. (S25/B2)	6
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	I still don't know many words for speaking well. (S102/B2)	15
Failure in self-expression	I still can't express myself. (S38/B2)	4
Not knowing the context of conversation	I know a lot of words, but when and in which context should I use them? (S29/B2)	5
Failing to speak like a native speaker	I can't speak like Turkish people. (S93/B1)	1
<b>Linguistic Problems</b>		<b>10</b>

Differences in language structures	Sentence structure is different from my native language. Therefore, I feel like I must think twice before speaking. (S24/B2)	8
Differences in daily language	The Turkish language I use in daily life and the one I learn in the lessons are a bit different, so I sometimes cannot understand easily. (S244/B2)	2
<b>Problems Related to Anxiety and Excitement</b>		<b>27</b>
Getting excited	I cannot speak due to anxiety. (S195/B2)	4
Getting into panic	I get into panic, because nothing comes to mind due to panic when I need to find an answer on a topic. (S205/B1)	2
Experiencing exam anxiety	I experience anxiety too much in speaking exams. They ask questions to all students. Everybody speaks, so I get excited. (S177/B1)	7
Getting stressed	Sometimes, I can't give an answer because of stress. (S109/B2)	5
Being afraid of making mistakes	Speaking is the biggest problem for me. I want to speak, but I don't want to make a mistake. I want to talk to my friends at the dormitory, but I only give short answers due to being afraid of making a mistake. (S211/B1)	9
<b>Problems Related to Action of Speaking</b>		<b>19</b>
Failing to speak fast	I still cannot speak fast. (S19/B2)	8
Failing to pronounce words	I pronounce front vowels as back vowels, back vowels as front ones. (S48/B2) My pronunciation is bad. (S178/B1)	6
Having difficulties in pronunciation	I cannot speak Turkish due to having difficulty in pronouncing the words. (S227/B2)	5
<b>Problems Related to Speaking Text</b>		<b>10</b>
Difficult topics	It is hard to speak on some topics. For instance, "Where can I travel in summer holiday? Can I give an advice?" I have just come to Turkey. I haven't travelled around Turkey yet. (S139/B1)	3
Difficult questions	Some questions are difficult. (S167/B1)	2
Lack of time	There are too many questions and not enough time to think. I must give answers instantly. (S190)	5
<b>Problems Related to Language Use</b>		<b>45</b>
Failing to use suffixes	I still make mistakes in case suffixes. (S1/B2) It is going better for now, but I still make mistakes, particularly on suffixes. (S9/B2)	6
Failing to use the letters	I pronounce some letters incorrectly while learning Turkish. (S126/B1)	3
Failing to use words	Sometimes, I can't remember words while speaking. (S37/B2)	11
Failing to apply the rules	Speaking is not difficult for me, but I make many mistakes because I still haven't learned most of the grammar rules. (S236/B2)	24
<b>Problems Originated in Learners</b>		<b>43</b>
Speaking in native language	All the students in A1 class were my friends. They are Indonesian. I barely spoke Turkish at A1 level. (S204/B1)	4
Thinking in native language	I think in Indonesian in my mind. (S69/B1)	2
Lack of speaking practice	I don't do practice much, so I cannot speak Turkish well. (S58/B2)	12
Being afraid of the teacher	Speaking is not difficult, but some teachers are tough (They don't talk to me or look at me at all...). So, we are afraid of them. (S210/B1)	2
Lack of self-confidence	I am not self-confident, especially while talking to the Turks. (S121/B2)	1
Failing to interact with natives	I barely talk to Turks, because I have few Turkish friends only in the dormitory. (S21/B2) I have a great difficulty in improving my speaking because I don't have any Turkish friends. (S217/B1)	10

Being embarrassed	I only have problems in speaking psychologically. In other words, I feel embarrassed a bit while speaking. (S204/B1)	8
Needing time	I still need to think before I speak. I need time and I cannot say anything directly. (S191/B2)	4
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Process</b>		<b>52</b>
Differences between the contents of lessons and exams	The speaking material in the book and the speaking exam are quite different. (S116/B2)	3
Insufficient speaking activities	Speaking activities should be done as in-class practice. (S52/B2) I think speaking courses are not sufficient, we should talk for at least half an hour a day. (S91/B1) We don't practice and there is no speaking club. (S92/B1) Some teachers don't talk to the students at all. They only teach grammar. (S231/B2)	49
Total		237

According to Table 12, the TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems under the theme "Insufficient speaking activities".

### 3.4. Findings and Comment on TFL learners' Problems in Writing Skills

TFL learners' writing skills related problems were analyzed. The problems of learners related to writing skill were classified under the following themes:

**Table 13.** Themes Related to Problems in Writing Skills

Themes	Frequency
Problems Related to Expression	16
Linguistic Problems	17
Problems Related to Language Use	74
Problems Originated in Learners	11
Problems Related to Teaching Process	30
Problems Related to the Action of Writing	25
Problems Related to Writing Text	74
Total	247

According to Table 13, learners expressed the highest number of writing skills related problems under the themes "Problems Related to Language Use" and "Problems Related to Writing Text". In addition, learners frequently expressed problems under the themes "Problems Related to Teaching Process" and "Problems Related to the Action of Writing".

TFL learners' problems related to writing skills were classified under the following subthemes:

**Table 14.** Themes and Subthemes Related to Problems in Writing Skills

Themes and Subthemes	Example	Frequency
<b>Problems Related to Expression</b>		<b>16</b>
Failing to write in academic language	I'm good at writing, but I have problems with writing in academic language. (S26/B2)	3
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	I don't know many words. (S172/B1)	8
Failure in self-expression	I can write but I cannot fully express myself. (S13/B1)	5
<b>Linguistic Problems</b>		<b>17</b>
Differences in alphabet	Indonesian alphabet is quite different from the Turkish one, this causes a problem. (S11/B1) I had a lot of problems in writing and I'm still having them because the alphabet I learned is Arabic. I have difficulty in learning new letters. (S75/B1)	10
Differences in language structures	Word order in my language is just the opposite. Verbs are at the end of a sentence in Turkish, so I still can't get used to Turkish. (S182/B1)	4

Difference of logic in Turkish	Logic of Turkish sentences is quite difficult for me. (S186/B2)	3
<b>Problems Related to Language Use</b>		<b>74</b>
Failing to use suffixes	I get confused while writing the words, because I know the words to be used, but I don't know the case suffixes well. (S179/B1)	15
Failing to use letters	I still get confused in using the demonstrative suffix. (S191/B2)	
Failing to use words	I sometimes confuse the letter "s" with "ş", "u" with "ü" and some other letters. (S93/B1)	6
Failing to apply the rules	I can't use new words in writing, I cannot use them even if I memorize them. (S19/B2)	17
Not knowing the writing strategy	I know the grammar rules, but I can't apply them in writing. (S33/B2)	28
Failing to use new words	I know the words, but sometimes I confuse the grammar rules and write incorrectly. (S132/B1)	
<b>Problems Originated in Learners</b>		<b>11</b>
Lack of attention	While writing on a topic, I don't know what word or sentence to begin with in the introduction section. (S3/B2)	7
Getting excited	We haven't learned the forms of writing. (S186/B2)	
Lack of writing practice	I can't write new words. (S99/B1)	1
Needing time		
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Process</b>		<b>30</b>
Differences between the contents of lessons and exams	I just need to be more careful in writing. (S230/B2)	4
Lack of feedback	I get excited while writing something. (S178/B1)	1
Lack of material	I need more practice. (S69/B1)	3
Lack of writing activities	It's okay when I'm home; I comfortably write whatever I want, but I need time to write a good and proper composition. (S9/B2)	3
<b>Problems Related to the Action of Writing</b>		<b>25</b>
Failing to form a sentence accurately	In the exam, passive voice and necessitative mood were given together in a text. We didn't learn them that way in the course; this is difficult. (S89/B1)	2
Failing to write fast	When I write something, I don't understand the reasons of my mistakes. There is no feedback. That is to say, how am I supposed to avoid these mistakes? (S29/B2)	4
Making spelling mistakes	Some teachers don't check our paragraphs. (S117/B2)	
<b>Problems Related to Writing Text</b>		<b>74</b>
High amount of words	Materials other than the book are needed for writing practice. The coursebook is not enough. (S61/B2)	1
Difficult topics	I think teachers should give more writing homework. (S77/B1)	23
Topics inappropriate for the level	That would be great if the teacher gives us one page of writing homework a day. (S81/B2)	
Incomprehensible questions	In fact, we don't write a lot in the course. (S170/B1)	
Lack of time		
Total		247

According to Table 14, TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems under the subthemes “Failing to apply the rules” and “Lack of writing activities”.

### 3.5. Findings and Comments on TFL learners’ Problems in Grammar Learning

TFL learners’ grammar learning related problems were analyzed. These problems were classified under the following themes:

**Table 15.** Themes Related to Problems in Grammar Learning

Themes and Subthemes	Frequency
Problems Related to Form	25
Problems Related to Course Material	14
Linguistic Problems	15
Problems Related to Language Use	30
Problems Originated in Learners	26
Problems Related to Teaching Process	57
Total	167

According to Table 15, learners expressed the highest number of grammar learning related problems under the theme “Problems Related to Teaching Process”. In addition, learners frequently expressed problems under the themes “Problems Related to Language Use” and “Problems Originated in Learners”.

TFL learners’ problems related to grammar learning were classified under the following subthemes:

**Table 16.** Themes and Subthemes Related to Problems in Grammar Learning

Themes and Subthemes	Example	Frequency
<b>Problems Related to Form</b>		<b>25</b>
Exceptions in rules	I learn new rules and there is an exception to every rule. (S244/B2)	3
High number of rules	Learning a language is not easy and it is important, but there are too many rules in Turkish grammar. (S132/B1)	10
Confusing rules	Grammar is particularly good for us, but I confuse the rules a bit. (S170/B1)	12
<b>Problems Related to Course Material</b>		<b>14</b>
Lack of grammar in course books	There is little grammar in the course book. (S133/B1)	5
Difficulty of course books	There are many Turkish books, but our book is difficult. (S145/B1)	2
Lack of supplementary materials	The book is not sufficient. I will learn the rules from the teachers or other books. Sometimes, I learn them from YouTube. (S102/B2)	7
<b>Linguistic Problems</b>		<b>15</b>
Differences in alphabet	There are new letters in Turkish. (S134/B1)	4
Differences in language structures	Sentence structure is exact opposite to that of Italian. Language structures are different. (S9/B2)	9
Difference of logic in Turkish	Grammar is taught from the viewpoint of Turks. (S49/B1)	2
<b>Problems Related to Language Use</b>		<b>30</b>
Failing to apply the rules in a sentence	It isn’t hard to understand the rules while learning Turkish, but it is difficult to apply them in sentences. (S101/B1)	7
Failing to apply the rules in daily life	Although I’m at B2, I still cannot understand the daily language outside when I hear it. I cannot use it. (S52/B2) I can’t use the rules well in my daily life. (S75/B1)	5
Failing to apply the rules	I don’t know how, where, and when to use some grammar rules. (S11/B1) I don’t know what grammar rules to use while speaking. (S93/B1) I know how to write, but I don’t know how to use the rules. (S180/B1)	18
<b>Problems Originated in Learners</b>		<b>26</b>
Not being careful	I’m not careful. (S172/B1)	4

Failing to memorize the rules	I have difficulty in memorizing. (S140/B1)	5
Lack of practice	I don't practice grammar. I don't use it. (S66/B1)	6
Forgetting	I easily forget the grammar rules I have learned. (S22/B2)	4
Needing time	I think grammar is easy, but I need more time to understand. (S126/B1)	7
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Process</b>		<b>57</b>
Lack of activities	We didn't use the grammar rules in speaking with my teacher. I don't know how to use the grammar. (S98/B1) We should use every grammar rule in writing, but we don't. (S133/B1) Writing practice was rarely made in the class for the exam. (S157/B1)	15
Failing to understand the rules	I have difficulty in understanding some grammar rules. (S156/B1)	8
Late presentation of the rules	Grammar is easy to understand, but the teachers explain them too late. If we learn grammar rules earlier, we can read texts more easily. It is hard to understand some texts without some rules. (S224/B2)	3
Fast presentation of the rules	Grammar rules are taught too quickly. (S239/B2)	6
Improper presentation of the rules	Some teachers are not good at teaching grammar. Their method is not good. (S8/B2) They don't focus on what I don't understand. (S55/B1)	8
Lack of revision	Revision is of vital importance for students. Or else, we forget easily. (S209/B1)	8
Inadequate number of examples	The necessary examples for the rules are not provided. (S86/B1)	9
Total		167

According to Table 16, the TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems under the subthemes "Failing to apply the rules" and "Lack of activities".

### 3.6. Findings and Comments on TFL Learners' Problems in Vocabulary Learning

TFL learners' vocabulary learning related problems were analyzed and classified under the following themes:

**Table 17.** Themes Related to Problems in Vocabulary Learning

Themes	Frequency
Problems Related to Meaning	33
Problems Related to Form	13
Linguistic Problems	12
Problems Related to Language Use	42
Problems Originated in Learners	60
Problems Related to Teaching Process	54
Problems Related to Teaching Method	16
Total	230

According to Table 17, the TFL learners expressed the highest number of vocabulary learning related problems under the theme "Problems Originated in Learners". Also, learners frequently expressed problems under the themes "Problems Related to Teaching Process" and "Problems Related to Language Use".

TFL learners' problems related to vocabulary learning were classified under the following subthemes:

**Table 18.** Themes and Subthemes Related to Problems in Vocabulary Learning

Themes and Subthemes	Example	Frequency
<b>Problems Related to Meaning</b>		<b>33</b>
Polysemy	Words have plenty of meanings, so I have some difficulties. (S38/B2)	14

Difficulty of words	New words are a bit difficult. (S112/B2)	9
Figurative meaning	It is sometimes hard to understand the figurative meanings of words. (S56/B2)	10
<b>Problems Related to Form</b>		<b>13</b>
Similarity	I generally confuse the words, especially the words with similar pronunciation. "Telafi etmek-teklif etmek", "mücadele-müdahale" they are very similar. (S9/B2)	5
Exceptional words	There are many exceptional words that don't conform to the rules. (S154/B1)	4
Length of words	Some words are like a sentence, too long. (S239/B2)	4
<b>Linguistic Problems</b>		<b>12</b>
Differences between languages	There are many words in Turkish borrowed from other foreign languages, but they don't have the same meaning. (S10/B2) ...because it is quite different from my native language. (S69/B1)	6
Archaic words	Turkish is a rich and vast language. There are age-old words. (S146/B1)	2
Differences in daily language	The Turks in the daily life don't use the new words found in the coursebook. They laugh at us when we use them. (S104/B2) Turks speak Turkish differently from that taught in the course. (S223/B1)	3
Difference of logic in Turkish	Sometimes, I don't get the logic of Turkish language. (S124/B1)	1
<b>Problems Related to Language Use</b>		<b>42</b>
Failing to use words in a sentence	It is a bit hard to use the words in a sentence. (S244/B2)	2
Failing to use word in daily life	I can't use the words outside. (S160/B1)	2
Failing to use words while speaking	I have memorized a lot, but I barely use them in speaking. (S121/B2)	9
Not knowing where to use	I don't know the right place of use for new words in sentences. (S172/B1)	4
Not knowing when to use	The most difficult matter is that we can learn words, but we don't know when to use them appropriately. (S2/B2)	4
Not knowing how to use	We don't know how to use some new words. So, we need to be provided with more examples. (S176/B1)	5
Failing to pronounce words	It is hard for foreigners to learn new words for the first time. I cannot pronounce them. (S83/B2)	6
Using wrong words	Sometimes, I use wrong words. (S26/B2)	5
Failing to use words in writing	For instance, when I learn a word, I can't write it properly. (S132/B1)	5
<b>Problems Originated in Learners</b>		<b>60</b>
Needing translation	I have to look up in the dictionary all the time. (S22/B2)	4
Failing to memorize	I don't know how to memorize new words. (S98/B1)	14
Confusing the words	Sometimes, I confuse new words a lot. (S114/B2)	2
Failing to learn	There are many new words, but I can't learn them. (S87/B1)	7
Failing to do practice	I need to practice speaking more. (S14/B2)	4
Forgetting	The biggest problem is, of course, forgetting. For example, I have learned and memorized ten new words today. Probably, I will forget some or all of them tomorrow. (S15/B2) I always forget. I memorize all the time, but they don't stick in my mind. (S64/B2)	23
Needing time	I need a long time to recall. (S235/B2)	6
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Process</b>		<b>54</b>
Pace of teaching	The teacher should teach more slowly. (S225/B1)	4
Lack of homework	I think we should be given homework every day. That homework should only be about new words. (S79/B2)	7

Lack of practice	We forget fast, because we don't use them in class a lot. (S39/B2) We should practice new words or use the words we memorize in the classroom every day. (S46/B2)	6
Differences between the contents of lessons and exams	There are new and difficult words in the exam. (S88/B1)	15
High number of words	There are many new words. There are words that I haven't heard of. (S87/B1)	12
Lack of guidance on dictionary	I think a good dictionary should be recommended to students by the course teacher. (S48/B2)	3
Lack of revision	We don't revise enough. (S52/B2)	7
<b>Problems Related to Teaching Method</b>		<b>16</b>
Avoiding different meanings	Every teacher must teach the synonyms together with new words. They are not taught much. (S216/B1)	2
No use of English	The teacher should know English a bit for expressing the correct meanings. (S205/B1)	2
Providing no vocabulary lists	We are not given anything for new words. It would be better if the list of new words at all levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1) were given. Sometimes, we can't find every word in the dictionary. (S81/B2)	3
Providing no examples	I think the best method to teach new words is to use them in sentences (examples). Examples should be given in different contexts. Few teachers do that since the level A1. (S29/B2) Some teachers only give the translation of words. I need examples to learn and memorize new words. (S45/B2)	6
Absence of a plan	There are many new words, but there isn't any instructional plan for them. It would be better if there were a plan. (S182/B1)	3
Total		230

According to Table 18, TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems under the subtheme "Forgetting".

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The problems expressed by learners related to the language skills indicate that language skills are interrelated, and this interrelation is important for learners' use of language.

It has been found that learners expressed more problems –compared to other areas– related to comprehension skills: listening and speaking, respectively. Akkaya and Gün (2016) stated that listening skills are the second most problematic skills for TFL learners.

It has also been found that learners expressed problems related to both the action of reading (reading aloud) and understanding what is read in terms of *reading skills*. In addition, learners expressed problems within the context of language, text, and teaching process. The problems that learners expressed related to the reading skills were classified under the following themes: Problems Related to Comprehension, Linguistic Problems, Problems Related to Reading Text, Problems Related to the Action of Reading, Problems Originated in Learners, and Problems Related to Teaching Process. In regard to *reading skills*, the subthemes under which the TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems are "Unfamiliar words", "Unknown rules", "Words with figurative meaning", "Non-existence of some Turkish letters in L1", "Text difficulty", "Text length" "Insufficient time", "Difficulties in pronunciation", "Long words", "Inability to read fast", "Lack of reading practice", "Differences between the contents of lessons and exams". In the study by Yelok and Büyükkiz (2010), it is stated that learners learning TFL have problems in pronouncing the vowels. Also, it is observed in a study by Chang and Kalenderoğlu (2017) that TFL learners have problems related to pronunciation while reading.

Regarding *listening skills*, the problems expressed by learners were classified under the following themes: "Problems Related to Comprehension", "Linguistic Problems", "Problems Related to Listening Text", "Problems Related to Speaker", "Problems Originated in Learners", "Problems Related to Teaching Process". In addition, the subthemes under which the TFL learners expressed the highest number of problems are



“Unfamiliar words”, “Lack of vocabulary knowledge”, “Differences in daily language”, “Pace of listening input”, “Text difficulty”, “Lack of time”, “Misarticulation”, “Differences in pronunciation”, “Failing to pay attention”, “Lack of listening practice”. It is stated in a study by Chang and Kalenderoğlu (2017) that TFL learners have problems in listening and speaking skills due to lack of vocabulary knowledge. Kaldırım and Degeç (2017) noted problems that are similar to those in this study such as accented speech, lack of using idioms and proverbs, lack of vocabulary knowledge, inaudible voice of the speaker, and pace of speaking which are expressed by learners of Turkish. In the study by Kahraman (2018), speaking fast and accented speech are among the problems that are the most frequently expressed by TFL learners.

As for *speaking skills*, the problems that are expressed by learners were classified under the following themes: “Problems Related to Expression”, “Linguistic Problems”, “Problems Related to Anxiety and Excitement”, “Problems Related to the Action of Speaking”, “Problems Related to Speaking Text”, “Problems Related to Language Use”, “Problems Originated in Learners”, “Problems Related to Teaching Process”. In regard to speaking skills, the subthemes that are the most frequently expressed by TFL learners are “Lack of vocabulary knowledge”, “Failing to use academic language”, “Not knowing the context of conversation”, “Differences in language structures”, “Being afraid of making mistakes”, “Experiencing exam anxiety”, “Getting stressed”, “Failing to speak fast”, “Failing to pronounce words”, “Lack of time”, “Failing to apply the rules”, “Failing to use words”, “Failing to use suffixes”, “Lack of speaking practice”, “Not interacting with natives”, “Being embarrassed”, “Insufficient speaking activities”. It is also found in the studies focused on TFL learners with different characteristics that they have problems in “articulation” and “pronunciation” (Biçer, Çoban & Bakır, 2014; Candaş Karababa, 2009; Derman, 2010; Kahraman, 2018; Morali, 2018). In addition, it is observed in a different study that “lack of vocabulary knowledge” is among the problems that TFL learners frequently have with respect to the speaking skills (Kahraman, 2018). The relevant results in different studies indicate that the problems experienced by learners in this study are also encountered by other learners.

In regard to *writing skills*, the problems that are expressed by learners were classified under the following themes: “Problems Related to Expression”, “Linguistic Problems”, “Problems Related to Language Use”, “Problems Originated in Learners”, “Problems Related to Teaching Process”, “Problems Related to the Action of Writing”, “Problems Related to Writing Text”. Azizoğlu, Demirtaş Tolaman and İdi Tulumcu (2019) also stated that “problems originated in learners” is among the writing skills related problems that the TFL learners have. The subthemes with the highest number of problems are: “Lack of vocabulary knowledge”, “Failure in self-expression”, “Failing to write in academic language”, “Differences in alphabet”, “Failing to apply the Rules”, “Failing to use words”, “Failing to use suffixes”, “Lack of attention”, “Lack of writing practice”, “Needing time”, “Lack of writing activities”, “Lack of feedback”, “Failing to form a sentence accurately”, “Making spelling mistakes”, “Failing to write fast”, “Lack of time”, and “High amount of words”. It is concluded in the study by Maden and İşcan (2011) that TFL learners have difficulty in expressing themselves. It is also observed in different studies that TFL learners have problems on such matters as “differences in alphabet” (Açık, 2008; Boylu, 2014; Bölükbaş, 2011; Kahraman, 2018; Nurlu & Kutlu, 2015), “vocabulary knowledge” (Açık, 2008). Ak Başoğlu and Selcen Can (2014), and Çerçi, Derman and Bardakçı (2016) also analyzed TFL learners’ mistakes in writing and concluded that learners frequently make mistakes in “using suffixes”. It is also stated in the studies by Azizoğlu, Demirtaş Tolaman and İdi Tulumcu (2019), and Chang and Kalenderoğlu (2017) that learners’ lack of practice in writing and not providing learners with opportunities to write are significant problems. The relevant results in different studies indicate that the problems that the learners in this study have are also encountered by other learners.

In regard to *the grammar learning*, the problems that are expressed by learners were classified under the following themes: “Problems Related to Form”, “Problems Related to Course Material”, “Linguistic Problems”, “Problems Related to Language Use”, “Problems Originated in Learners”, “Problems Related to Teaching Process”. TFL learners mentioned the highest number of problems under the following subthemes: “Confusing rules”, “High number of rules”, “Lack of supplementary materials”, “Differences in language structures”, “Failing to apply the rules”, “Failing to apply the rules in a sentence”, “Failing to apply the rules in daily life”, “Needing time”, “Lack of practice”, “Failing to memorize the rules”, “Lack of activities”, “Failing to understand the rules”, “Improper presentation of the rules”, “Lack of revision”. It is concluded in

the study by Büyükikiz and Hasırcı (2013) that learners frequently make grammar mistakes in written expressions. This indicates that learners have problems in learning and applying the rules.

In regard to the *vocabulary learning*, the problems that are expressed by learners were classified under the following themes: “Problems Related to Meaning”, “Problems Related to Form”, “Linguistic Problems”, “Problems Related to Language Use”, “Problems Originated in Learners”, “Problems Related to Teaching Process”, and “Problems Related to Teaching Method”. TFL learners express the highest number of problems with respect to vocabulary learning under these subthemes: “Polysemy”, “Figurative meaning”, “Similarity”, “Differences between languages”, “Failing to use words while speaking”, “Failing to pronounce words”, “Not knowing how to use”, “Using wrong words”, “Failing to use words in writing”, “Forgetting”, “Failing to memorize”, “Failing to learn”, “Differences between the contents of lessons and exams”, “High number of words”, “Lack of homework”, “Lack of revision”, “Failing to do practice”, “Providing no examples”, “Providing no vocabulary lists”, “Absence of a plan” It is observed in the study by Chang and Kalenderoğlu (2017) that TFL learners have problems related to lack of vocabulary knowledge and failing to memorize words.

It is understood that the problems TFL learners experience while learning the language are related to the characteristics of the language, and the methods, techniques and materials used for teaching. In addition, some problems are originated in learners. Some of these are lack of practice, lack of revision and some other psychological problems. The psychological problems that learners of Turkish face can be listed as follows: Lack of attention (while reading), reading anxiety, concentration problems (while listening), lack of focus, being afraid of the teacher (while speaking), lack of self-confidence, embarrassment, being careless (while writing), feeling nervous, being careless with grammar, and forgetting (words). Several studies have also found out similar problems regarding learning TFL: (Altunkaya & Erdem, 2017; Boylu & Çangal, 2015; İşcan, 2016; Sallabaş, 2012; Sevim, 2014). A deeper look into these studies revealed that learners experience psychological problems mostly while speaking. According to Şen and Boylu (2015), speaking is the most challenging of all skills since it may trigger speaking anxiety. A theme named “problems related to anxiety and excitement” has emerged and this is supported by the aforementioned study. Underneath this theme, learners expressed their problems that have gone under the subthemes of “getting excited”, “getting into panic”, “experiencing exam anxiety”, “getting stressed” and “being afraid of making mistakes”.

The problems that learners of Turkish have in language learning process generally constitute the problems of foreign language teaching, as well. It is clearly understood in the studies that learners of a foreign language also have problems in vocabulary knowledge, articulation, encountering different accents, encountering people that speak fast, and failing to understand the expressions with figurative meaning (Goh, 1997; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard, & Wu, 2006; Stæhr, 2009; Şenel, 2006). Additionally, it has been observed that anxiety, excitement, stress, and attention influence language learning process (Cheng, 2002; Horwitz, 2016; Sellers, 2000; Woodrow, 2006).

## 5. Recommendations

The problems that are expressed by learners regarding reading, listening, speaking, writing skills, and grammar and vocabulary learning indicate the close relation of the language skills. Lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge is among the reasons of learners for failing to use the language skills for comprehension and expression purposes. Therefore, it is possible to say that language should be taught ensuring the integrity of knowledge and skills.

“Linguistic Problems” have been stated in all the areas studied. More specifically, the fact that Turkish has letters that don’t exist in other languages and the differences in language structures cause problems for learners while learning the language. Besides, learners mentioned that the differences between the language taught in lessons and the one used in daily life are a problem. Learners stated that they cannot use the language in daily life with the rules and words they learn in the class. In this sense, including activities and applications promoting daily use of language in teaching would help learners.

Learners also expressed problems related to actions of reading, speaking, and writing. Learners mentioned that they fail to read fast and pronounce words properly, and make spelling mistakes. Inclusion of more practices by teachers will help lessen such problems.

It is found that learners have problems in all the areas that are handled in the study. These problems are generally focused on lack of language activities and practices, and differences between the contents of lessons and exams. Teachers should focus on the activities for language use in teaching process to provide learners with opportunities to learn outside the class and prepare for exams.

Learners mentioned fewer grammar related problems in listening, reading, writing, and vocabulary learning. This may be interpreted as that learners have more problems related to language use than form. Under the theme "grammar learning", learners mentioned more problems under "Problems Related to Language Use" than "Problems Related to Form". It is inferred from the problems expressed by learners under the subtheme "Problems Related to Language Use" that they are unable to apply the rules and use them in sentences as well as in daily life. An examination of the problems stated under other skills with respect to language use and form revealed that learners particularly expressed problems related to speaking, writing, and vocabulary knowledge in terms of Language Use. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to include activities on daily life rather than the form in order to eliminate these problems.

It is found in most of the areas that are examined in the study that there are also problems originated in learners. These problems are failing to do language practice, carelessness, being anxious, getting excited, and failing to communicate and interact. Teachers should guide learners on their personal problems and give them opportunities to use the language so such problems will be eliminated.

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