60. An investigation into translations of ablative case markers in Turkish: The case of international students in a state university

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Abstract

Turkish is an agglutinative language in which agglutinations determine the meaning of sentences. For this reason, grammatical case suffixes play a significant role in constructing semantically proper sentences. In this regard, learners of Turkish as a foreign language are supposed to dwell on meanings of case markers rather than structures because case marking suffixes have lots of functions which cause the students to have problems regarding the proper use of suffixes. Studies indicate that proper use of case markers is one of the most problematic issues that learners of Turkish as a foreign language face. Therefore, learners of Turkish should be aware of the semantic richness of this language arising from case marking suffixes. The purpose of this study is to determine the errors in translations of ablative case markers of international students at Turkish Language Learning Research and Application Centre in a state university. As data collection tools, a background questionnaire and a translation task were used. In the background questionnaire, some personal information regarding students' native language, language choice in the translation task, and duration of learning Turkish was obtained. In the translation task, students were expected to translate the given sentences into one of the three languages: English, French or German, whichever they are good at, by taking ablative case markers into consideration. The study's findings revealed that students have considerable problems in figuring out the less frequently used functions of ablative case markers while translating the sentences from Turkish into the language that they chose.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language, international students, ablative case markers

Türkçede ismin ayrılma (−den) halinin çevirilerine yönelik bir araştırma: Bir devlet üniversitesindeki uluslararası öğrenciler örneği

Öz

Türkçe, eklerin cümlelerin anlamını belirlediği sondan eklemeli bir dildir. Bu nedenle, hal ekleri anlamsal olarak uygun cümlelerin oluşturulmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, yabancı dil olarak Türkçeyi öğrenenlerin yapılardan ziyade hal belirteçlerinin anlamları üzerinde durmaları beklenmektedir çünkü hal ekleri, öğrencilerin eklerin doğru kullanımı konusunda sorun yaşamalarına neden olan birçok işleve sahiptir. Araştırmalar, hal eklerinin doğru kullanımının, Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenlerin karşılaştığı en sorunlu konulardan biri olduğunu

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göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, Türkçe öğrenenler, bu dilin hal eklerinden kaynaklanan anlamsal zenginliğinin farkında olmalıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bir devlet üniversitesindeki Türkçe Öğretimi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi'ndeki uluslararası öğrencilerin ayrılma hali çevirilerindeki hatalarını belirlemektir. Veri toplama araçları olarak, bir özgeçmiş sormacası ve yazılı bir çeviri testi kullanılmıştır. Özgeçmiş sormacasında öğrencilerin anadiline, çeviri görevinde dil seçimine ve Türkçe öğrenme süresine ilişkin bazı kişisel bilgiler elde edilmiştir. Çeviri testinde, öğrencilerden verilen cümleleri ismin ayrılma halini dikkate alarak İngilizce, Fransızca veya Almanca olmak üzere üç dilden iyi oldukları herhangi birine çevirmeleri beklenmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, öğrencilerin cümleleri Türkçeden seçtikleri dile çevirirken ismin ayrılma halinin daha az kullanılan işlevlerini anlamada önemli sorunlar yaşadıklarını ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğretmek, uluslararası öğrenciler, ismin ayrılma hal ekleri

1. Introduction

Grammar is the undercarriage of language vehicles that enables people to arrive at the point that they want. There exists a great deal of studies on grammar to go deeper into the structure of the language. Grammar is defined by Özbay (1997) as a means for reasonable thinking, speaking, and writing by indicating the role of grammar in discovering the possibilities, restrictions, and hidden strength of a language. Öz (2001) also stated the importance of grammar emphasizing that grammar consists of rules that are required for appropriate and effective use of a language and it also sustains comprehension and expression. Therefore, grammar studies have a vital place in language teaching; therefore, teaching grammar is one of the prominent issues to dwell on for a better language education. Isıloğlu (2014) also indicated the necessity of studying grammar so that one can convey his/her ideas following the rules of a language and thus express its aesthetics values. It can be clearly seen that grammar is the backbone of the language and should not be ignored in language learning process.

Grammar consists of more than one component, and grammatical case-marking system of a language is one of these components which indicates and creates temporary denotative relations between nouns and verbs in sentences (Korkmaz, 2009). Therefore, within the scope of grammar studies, grammatical case markers play a significant role because case markers are used to make semantically proper sentences, and using case markers considering the meaning that it gives to the sentence is the basis of effective expressions.

Whatever the form is, a noun has six cases in Turkish. These cases are; the nominative case; which is the basic form of a noun, making it the subject or the object of a sentence, [no suffix], the accusative case; which is the subject or the object of the action carried out in the sentence [-i], the dative case; which is the indirect object of a verb, which typically indicates a recipient or beneficiary [-e], the locative case; which is commonly used in many languages to denote the location of something [-de], the ablative case; which generally indicates movement away from something [-den,-dan,-ten, tan] and the genitive case; which indicates ownership, measurement, or source [-in]. Each case has a different function in a sentence. Turkish has a rich case-marking system, so students should understand and appreciate opinions and feelings argued in a context rather than memorizing. This rich marking system of Turkish language causes the learners of this language to have some problems with case marking. Aksan (1989) stated that one of the difficulties that international students face when

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attempting to learn Turkish is the appropriate usage of case markers because of the case marking system of the Turkish language.

Ablative case marking is one of the complex components of the case marking system because ablative case gives more than one meaning to the sentences. Ablative case is commonly used to express getting away or coming from somewhere, something or somebody; to express coming from somewhere; to express reason or cause; to compare two or more notions; to indicate material of an object; to show price per unit; to indicate the agent in passive constructions; to show routes and in the meaning of genitive case in Turkish (Turgut, 2013). Therefore, the users of other languages have some difficulties in figuring out the concept of the ablative case in Turkish.

A null hypothesis is that students who learn Turkish as a foreign language have difficulties in distinguishing ablative cases regarding their semantic functions in a sentence and make errors in translating ablative case markers. In order to confirm the hypothesis, this study aims to analyze the common errors made by the learners of Turkish as a foreign language while translating ablative cases according to their comprehension of the language. In the light of the findings in this study, some suggestions will be made for teaching and learning ablative cases more effectively. Keeping all these in mind, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the errors made by learners of Turkish language while translating ablative cases from Turkish into one of the three languages; English, French or German, whichever they are good at?

2. What are the possible reasons for the errors made by learners of Turkish as a foreign language while translating ablative cases?

2. Literature review

2.1. Case markers

There are some studies focusing on case marker transference errors and suffixation problems of learners of Turkish as a foreign language in the literature. As Şengül and Türel (2017) asserted, studies mostly aimed to find out the most appropriate ways to teach Turkish language effectively to make students 'users' of the language rather than only 'learners'. Tunçel (2013) stated that the students learning Turkish as a foreign language are better to have a good command of Turkish language grammar for being good at expressing themselves successfully. After they encounter the agglutinative face of the Turkish language, if their mother tongue is not an agglutinative one, they face some difficulties until they catch the grammatical sense of Turkish language suffixation system. That is why the grammar rules of Turkish language are better to be elucidated as long as they are appropriately taught to international students.

Case marking problems do not only stem from the teaching methods that lecturers apply but also from the case marking features and richness in the semantic map of the case markers of languages which have a great effect on learning how and where to use the most appropriate case marker. Melanlıoğlu (2012) reported that students have case suffixation problems due to the richness of the case suffixes in Turkish language regarding the semantic values of the language.

It is an undeniable fact that case suffixes are indispensable part of agglutinative languages. Duman (2013) indicated that regarding all the language structures, international students suffer from

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numerous problems in learning Turkish suffixes. Not only students but also teachers have the same kind of problems while teaching case markers to international students because of the ambiguous nature of the markers. The study conducted by Yılmaz and Temiz (2015) also supported that grammar is the most challenging part to teach by putting stress on case suffix teaching which is one of the most common problematic parts in Turkish grammar teaching. There exist lists of reasons behind the errors made by the learners of Turkish considering case markers. One of the prominent reasons stems from the semantic wealth of Turkish language, which makes the learning of case markers harder. Şengül (2015) stated that the cases have plenty of functions, so the students have problems with the proper use of suffixes. Moreover, it is reported that students' errors on case marking suffixes spring from the notional structure of case markers of the Turkish language (Demirci & Dinçaslan, 2016).

L1 interference while learning another language is also a factor while comprehending the details of target language. Students' native language has either positive or negative effect on learning L2. In other words, the structure of students' mother tongue may be different from Turkish language structure as reported by Mavaşoğlu and Tüm (2010), who found out that the most frequent problem among international students is the proper use of case markers and asserted that this problem may arise from the difference between students' mother tongue and the language they learn. It is also suggested in the study on affixation errors made by foreign students that case marking errors have the second highest rate among six grammatical affixation criteria factors (Şahin, 2013), which indicates that case marking errors should not be underestimated in Turkish language learning process.

2.2. Ablative case markers

Ablative case markers are the markers that generally express the motion from somewhere, e.g. *'Onlar okuldan geldiler'* which can be translated into English as follows: 'They came from the school'. Along with this, there are some other functions as well; to express getting away from somewhere, something or somebody e.g. *'Ben kapıdan dışarı çıktım'* (I went out of the door); to express reason or cause e.g. *'Biz kardan gelemedik'* (We couldn't come because of the snow); to compare two or more notions e.g. *'Ankara İstanbul'dan büyüktür' (*Ankara is bigger than İstanbul); to indicate the basic material or qualities of something e.g. *'Bu uçak kağıttan yapılmıştır'* (This plane is made of paper); to indicate how something is produced e.g. *'Şarap üzümden yapılır'* (Vine is made from grapes); to show price per unit e.g. *'Bu çikolataları 50 kuruştan aldım'* (I bought these chocolates for 50 kurush each); to indicate the agent in passive constructions e.g. *'Kitapta Namık Kemal'den bir şiir vardı'* (There is a poem by Namık Kemal in the book); to show route e.g. *'Sen oraya denizden gidebilirsin'* (You can go there over the sea); to indicate passage from one end to another e.g. *'Tren uzun bir tünelden geçti'* (Train went through a long tunnel); to indicate ideas based on appearance of someone or something out e.g. *'Öğrenci olduğu giyiminden anlaşılıyor'* (It is understood that he is a student by his appearance); to move from one place to another e.g. *'Çocuk oradan oraya* koşuyordu' (The child was running from here to there).

As expressed by Mert (2003), the ablative case is one of the hardest case markers regarding the rich semantic background, and students are required to comprehend the case classes in Turkish and then table of cases to be depicted. Case classes are needed to be established to learn and teach case suffixes for each level because students have some difficulties while differentiating cases. Yılmaz and Yahşi (2015) stated that students have problems while differentiating ablative case and locative case in Turkish language due to the misconception of the cases. According to the study conducted by Emiroğlu (2014), it was reported that only 6,6% of the foreign students have difficulty while using especially

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ablative case in Turkish language. Petek and Dağıstan (2018) also found out that ablative case markers errors have the second higher percentage error 61.58 % made by foreign students following the dative case markers according to their studies on foreign students. There are also some controversial studies in the literature. The studies conducted on the students learning Turkish as a foreign language in Turkish and in Foreign Language Research and Application Centers about the case markers did not reveal that there is an error in the ablative case markers made by the beginner level of students; however, the number of case marking suffixation errors made by the students in the starter level was significantly low (Güven, 2007; Yıldırım, 2011; Arhan, 2015). Similarly, Güven (2007) reported that regarding the case markers, ablative case markers are the ones in which the least errors are made.

To sum up, grammatical cases are of great importance in grammar instructions because cases add syntactic and semantic value to a sentence. Especially for agglutinative languages like Turkish, learners are highly recommended to perceive the language, the case marking suffixes, and every single purport they attribute to the sentences without memorizing. Although there are some studies in the literature about case markers, there is a paucity of research in the literature including each function of the case markers, especially including ablative case, in a detailed way. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap regarding the use and translation of ablative case in the related literature.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research model

This study is a case study aiming at analyzing the errors in ablative case markers in the given translation task. The reason behind adopting the case study is to investigate the factors related to the reasons behind making errors in ablative case markers. A case study analyses the factors related to a case from a holistic point of view in the natural setting (Creswell, 2007; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study were chosen through convenience sampling, and it involves choosing the participant samples from the available ones who are easy to access. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The participants of the study consist of thirty *(f:30)* international students, who come to Turkey for their undergraduate or graduate studies, carrying out their education in the Turkish Language Learning Research and Application Center in a state university which provides one-year compulsory Turkish preparatory education for international students in an academic year. The participants were expected to translate Turkish sentences, each including a different function of ablative case markers, into the language they feel good at. Table 1 indicates the frequency of participants' language preferences.

Translation Language	f	%
English	24	80
German	5	16.67
French	1	3.33

Table 1. Frequency of participants' language preferences

As seen in Table 1, 80% of the students chose English as the language for translation, 16.67 % chose German, and only 3.33% selected French as the target language for the translation task. As for gender,

43.3% of the participants are male while 56.67% are female. The average age of the students is 22. In the background questionnaire, the duration of participants' language learning experiences in the language they prefer for the translation task was also asked. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the duration of the language learning experiences in the language they choose for the translation task.

Years of Experience	f	%
1-4 Years	7	23.33
5-8 Years	11	36.67
12+ Years	7	23.33
Native Language	5	16.67

Table 2. Duration of participants' language learning experiences in the language they prefer for the translation task

Table 2 indicates that there are seven students who have been learning the language they prefer for the translation task for 1-4 years, eleven students for 5-8 years, seven students for over 12+ years, and also five students who are native speakers of the language they prefer for the translation task. In addition, the duration of participants' experiences concerning Turkish language learning was asked in the questionnaire, and it was found that 93% of the students have been learning Turkish for 1-4 months and 6.67% for over four months, as presented in Table 3.

Years of Experience	f	%
1-4 months	28	93.33
4+ months	2	6.67

Table 3. Duration of participants' Turkish language learning experiences

3.3. Data collection and analysis

Prior to the data collection process, the researchers applied for the authorization of Social Sciences Ethics Committee to collect the required data from the students. The Ethics Committee accepted the application and gave permission on 26.08.2020 with 2020-476 document number. Later, the data were collected through a background questionnaire and a translation task. In the background questionnaire, students are expected to provide some personal information, and in the translation task, students are supposed to translate the given sentences into one of the three languages; English, French or German, whichever they are good at by taking ablative case markers into consideration. Out of 24 sentences, 12 sentences including different functions of the ablative case, considering the frequency of usages in daily life, were chosen with the contributions of two experts in the Turkish language education field, and the translation task was designed based on their suggestions and interpretations.

The students were asked to translate the sentences from Turkish into one of the three languages, whichever they are good at, because language proficiency level may mislead us on detecting errors. Each sentence contained only elementary words since this study aims to focus on comprehension of the ablative case markers. The sentences produced by the participants were also checked by more than

one expert of the language that the students choose for translation. Error frequency analysis was performed to find out which case markers were frequently misused by the learners of Turkish Language and what case markers are frequently preferred instead of the correct ones.

4. Findings

The study aims to determine the problems while translating the sentences including ablative case markers. To this end, the findings were given as a table for a better understanding of which usages of ablative case-marking errors are the most commonly encountered in the study. Table 4 presents the frequencies and percentages of the translation errors made by the learners of Turkish as a foreign language regarding the use of ablative case markers. While incorrect translation column represents the translations using case markers other than ablative case markers, irrelevant translation column presents the translations which have nothing to do with case markers.

No	Sentences	Translation		Correct Translation		Incorrect Translation		No Translation		Irrelevant Translation	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Onlar okuldan geldiler.	30	100	26	86.6	3	10	-	0	1	3.3
2	Ben kapıdan dışarı çıktım.	30	100	9	30	15	50	-	0	6	20
3	Biz kardan gelemedik.	29	96.6	14	46.6	10	3.3	1	3.3	5	16.6
4	Ankara İstanbul'dan büyüktür.	30	100	28	93.3	-	0	-	0	2	6.6
5	Bu uçak kağıttan yapılmıştır.	23	76.6	10	33.3	5	16.6	7	23.3	8	26.6
6	Şarap üzümden yapılır.	22	73.3	11	36.6	8	26.6	8	26.6	3	10
7	Bu çikolataları 50 kuruştan aldım.	26	86.6	9	30	7	23.3	4	13.3	10	33.3
8	Kitapta Namık Kemal'den bir şiir vardı.	23	76.6	5	16.6	8	26.6	7	23.3	10	33.3
9	Sen oraya denizden gidebilirsin.	28	93.3	0	0	23	76.6	2	6.6	5	16.6
10	Tren uzun bir tünelden geçti.	27	90	11	36.6	8	26.6	3	10	8	26.6
11	Öğrenci olduğu giyiminden anlaşılıyor.	18	60	0	0	7	23.3	12	40	11	36.6
12	Çocuk oradan oraya koşuyordu.	27	90	17	56.6	-	0	3	10	10	33.3

Table 4. The frequencies and percentages of the translated sentences

As it is indicated in Table 4, for the first sentence '*Onlar okuldan geldiler*' in which the ablative case marker was used to express coming from somewhere, participants were supposed to provide 'from' in their translations. Results showed that 26 (86.6%) of the participants gave the correct translation, 3 (10%) of the students gave the incorrect translations as ' to' instead of 'from' regarding ablative case as dative case while only 1 (3.3 %) of the students gave an irrelevant translation for the given sentence. Significant number of students provided the correct translation because the sentence included one of the most common usages of the ablative case markers. Considering the students who provided 'to' instead of 'from' in their translations, it can be argued that they have the same native language background; therefore, it may be safe to claim that language background may have an effect on the correct translation of the ablative case markers.

The second sentence designed for finding out the errors in translating ablative case form to express getting away from somewhere, something or somebody was analysed. Participants were expected to provide 'out of' in their translations. Findings showed that 9 (30%) of the students gave the correct translations, while 15 (50%) of the students gave the incorrect translations and the incorrect translations were found to be 'out through' by 3.3%, 'out from' by 30% and 'from' by 3.3% of the participants. Two of students who provided 'out through' have the same native language; 'Swahili' which is the lingua franca of East Africa and students who provided 'out from' shares different native languages, which is also the same for the ones who provided 'from' in their translations. It can be argued that the effect of students' native language is limited on the translations of this function of ablative case marker. The errors may stem from the habit of using 'from' while translating [-den], ablative case marker, in Turkish.

'*Biz kardan gelemedik*' was the third sentence given to the students to analyse the translations of ablative case form expressing reason or cause. Translations including 'because of' or 'due to' were expected from the students. Out of 29 translations, we encountered 14 (46.6%) correct and 15 incorrect translations. Out of 15 incorrect translations, translations including 'from' were preferred by 7 and 'to' by 3 students, which was analysed as the relevant incorrect translations that include case markers other than ablative case markers. Interestingly, the translations containing 'from' and 'to' were used with the verb 'come', which may result from the misunderstandings of students who regarded the word 'kar' as a place rather than the reason of the main event in the sentence.

The sentence '*Ankara İstanbul'dan büyüktür*' containing the ablative case function of comparing two or more notions was translated by the participants who were expected to provide 'than' for the given sentence. 28 (93.3%) out of 30 participants provided the correct translation. The reason behind this significant number of students who provided correct answer may be due to the positive transfer of students' native languages.

The ablative case in the fifth sentence had the function of indicating the basic material or qualities of something, for that reason, students were expected to use 'of' in their translations. The analysis of the translations indicated that 10 (33.3%) participants provided the correct translation while five (16.6%) gave incorrect translations. Seven of the participants provided no translation for this sentence. Seven (23.3%) of the incorrect translations contained 'from' instead of 'of' in their translations. It is not thought that students' native language misled them in translating the sentences since the students who spoke Arabic as a native language, for instance, provided both correct and incorrect translations.

The sixth sentence '*Şarap üzümden yapılır*' was included to indicate how something is produced which requires the word 'from' in the translations of the participants. 11 (36.6%) of the students provided correct translation while eight (26.6%) used incorrect words for the translation. Out of eight incorrect translations, six of them provided 'of' answer while the other two used 'with' in their translations. Eight (26.6%)of the total participants provided no translation, which indicates the possible hardship of this function of the ablative case for the students. Irrelevant and incorrect translations may be due to students' confusion over whether to use 'made of' or 'made from' and possible negative interference of their L1.

'*Bu çikolataları 50 kuruştan aldım*' is the seventh sentence included for the function of showing price per unit. The expected translation was 'for' from the students. Nine (30%) of the provided translations were correct while seven (23.3%) of the given translations were incorrect. The preferred words for translation of the function were 'in', 'by' and 'from' instead of 'for'. Ten students' (33.3%) translations were irrelevant while four (13.3%) students could not translate the sentence. The students who have been learning English for 1-4 months are the ones who provided the incorrect translations and the other students who have been learning Turkish more than 4 months provided the correct translations. This finding can indicate the importance of the duration of language education in terms of perceiving relatively difficult function of the ablative case marker in Turkish.

Another function of ablative case markers in Turkish is to indicate the agent in passive constructions. The sentence '*Kitapta Namık Kemal'den bir şiir vardı*' was included in the translation task to find out whether learners of Turkish as a foreign language were aware of this function of ablative case or not. The results revealed that only five (16.6%) students provided the correct translation 'by'. Seven (23.3%) preferred not to translate the sentence while 10 (33.3%) did not include any word corresponding the target ablative case marker. Eight (26.6%) students provided incorrect translation such as 'of' and 'from' instead of 'by' for the function of indicating the agent in the passive construction. The reason behind the relatively higher number of incorrect translations may be the complex structure and possible hardship of passive construction in students' native language and Turkish.

The ninth sentence '*Sen oraya denizden gidebilirsin*' was included in the translation task to determine whether the participants are aware of the function of 'over' for expressing and showing route. Findings indicated that none of the students could provide the correct translation while 23 (76.6%) used incorrect case marker. Two (6.6%) of the students did not attempt to translate the sentence and five (16.6%) used irrelevant case marker rather than 'over'. When the incorrect translations were analysed, it was found that nearly 60% of the students provided 'from' to express the target function whenever they encounter a place name. That may be because of overgeneralization of the case marker 'from' and L1 interference that may hinder their perception of the correct ablative case marker.

The aim of the tenth sentence '*Tren uzun bir tünelden geçti*' was to find out whether the participants were able to use 'through' preposition indicating passage from one end to another. 11 students (36.6%) provided the correct translation while eight (26.6%) made a mistake using 'from' or 'into'. Three (10%) of the participants preferred not to translate the sentence and eight (26.6%) did not include any prepositions serving as a case marker in Turkish. The incorrect translations may be due to the lack of students' perceptions as to this function of the ablative case marker.

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The sentence '*Öğrenci olduğu giyiminden anlaşılıyor*' was constructed to determine the participants' knowledge on using 'by' functioning to indicate ideas based on appearance of someone or something. Findings revealed that there were no correct translations for this function of the ablative case marker. Seven (23.3%) participants provided incorrect translation by using 'from' and 11 (36.6%) translated the sentence without including any prepositions corresponding an ablative case marker. 12 (40%) of the participants did not translate the sentence. This result is important in that students need more practice for the correct use of some functions of ablative case markers in Turkish and the findings show that students lacked the ability of differentiating different functions of ablative case markers.

In the last sentence, '*Çocuk oradan oraya koşuyordu*', ablative case marker was included to indicate the move from one place to another. The participants were expected to use 'from...to' in their translations. 17 (56.6%) of the participants provided the correct translation while 10 (33.3) preferred to translate the sentence without any ablative case markers. Only three (10%) did not translate the sentence. More than half of the students gave the correct translation by using the expected ablative case. This relatively good proportion of the correct translations can be attributed to the similarity among the ablative case markers in the target and translation languages.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of the study is to find out the errors in the translation of sentences including ablative case markers by the learners of Turkish as a foreign language. Turkish is an agglutinative language, so the place of suffixes has a significant importance in language learning. The problems international students face while learning Turkish is mostly about case suffixation, which stems from the semantic richness and abstract structure of Turkish language case suffixation system. There exists more than one reason behind the errors made by the learners such as crosslinguistic influence, linguistic transfers, duration of target language exposure, etc. Actually, some studies are available in the literature; however, the scope of the studies is too narrow for a deeper understanding of which case marker usage is problematic and what the reasons are behind these problems. For this study, the errors made by the learners of Turkish as a foreign language were taken into consideration regarding the most commonly used functions of the ablative case markers in daily life. Participants were given translation task which included the Turkish sentences with ablative case, and then they were asked to translate the sentences paying attention to the ablative case markers.

Analysing the results, it has been revealed that students have problems in ablative cases. Some possible reasons for the errors made by the learners of Turkish as a foreign language are presented as follows.

5.1. Crosslinguistic influence

The term 'Crosslinguistic influence' was introduced by Sharwood-Smith and Kellerman (1986), and it was defined as the interaction of all existing linguistic systems, not only L1 but also L2, during the process of third language (L3) acquisition. To this end, L1 is no more counted as the single potential source of linguistic transfers. In this study, it is quite possible to claim that students experience crosslinguistic influence on translation tasks because of the fact that students are from different background and most of them have their own local language like 'Swahili' which is an African local language, and they are asked to translate the sentences from their L2 (translation language) to L3. Consequently, the effects of all existing, acquired or learned languages during the process of learning a

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new one seems unavoidable to this end as far as we, as researchers, infer from the translations of the students.

5.2. Linguistic transfer

Considering the findings, linguistic transfer, defined by Odlin (1989) as the influence arising out of similarities and differences between acquired language and the target language, may have been one of the prominent factors linked with the errors encountered on the translation tasks. According to relevant literature, the notion of 'transfer' between languages gain prominence with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) which indicates the view that native language (L1) affects the target language (L2), and therefore, it may be the source of error in either production and/or reception (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Linguistic transfer is divided into two classes: positive transfer and negative trasfer.

5.2.1. Positive transfer

It is seen that our findings also bear the stamp of positive transfer, which happens when the native language and the target language are similar; consequently, the transfer from L1 results in appropriate L2 production. Gass and Selinker (2001) also define positive transfer as facilitation that comes out when linguistic elements are similar or the same in L1 and L2. Considering the first sentence, 'Ankara İstanbul'dan büyüktür', a significant number of students provided the correct translation, and this drove us to infer that it may be due to the positive transfer of students' native languages. In addition to this example, the number of correct translations for the last sentence 'Çocuk oradan oraya koşuyordu' may also be another evidence for the effect of the positive transfer. It seems possible that these translations are due to the similarity among the ablative case markers in the target and translation languages.

5.2.2. Negative transfer

Negative transfer (also known as interference), defined by Lado (1957) as the situation when the influence of L1 leads to error in L2 reception and/or production stemming from the different features in both L1 and L2, is one of the factors linked with the errors made by the learners in this study. Following the traces back to the source of incorrect translations, we see the shadow of negative transfer on consciously made incorrect translations as we can see in the first translation task 'Onlar okuldan geldiler', the students who provided 'to' rather than 'from' in their translations have the same native language background; therefore, it may be safe to claim that language background may have an effect on the incorrect translations of the ablative case markers. The sentence 'Kitapta Namık Kemal'den bir şiir vardı' may be counted as another example that shows us the effect of negative transfer. Considering incorrect translations and the number of sentences remained untranslated in the translation task, a likely explanation is that complex structure and possible hardship of passive construction in students' native language and Turkish may be a reason for learners of Turkish as a foreign language.

5.3. Lack of adequate exposure to target language

The duration of target language exposure comprises a weighty part in foreign language learning. Al Zoubi (2018) defines exposure to target language as the contact that the learners have with the target language that they are attempting to learn. Since our participants live in Turkey, the effects of target language exposure are expected to be seen in their translations. The second sentence 'Ben kapıdan

dışarı çıktım/ I went out of the door' mostly include 'from' rather than 'out of', and due to positive and negative transfer, the source of error may be related to the habit of using 'from' while translating [-den], ablative case marker, in Turkish. Another sentence 'Bu çikolataları 50 kuruştan aldım/ I bought these chocolates for 50 kurush each' shows us the importance of duration of exposure due to the fact that students who have been learning Turkish for more than 4 months provided the correct translations while the ones who have been learning Turkish less than four months are having difficulties in translating.

5.4. Lack of semantic language skills/knowledge

Semantic language skills hold a significant place in L2 learning considering their effects on establishing an understanding of the world around the learners. Semantic language skills refer to appropriate comprehension, recognition, and proper use of meanings in any semantic units such as words, phrases, sentences, and semantic ambiguities included in a figurative language besides having a good command of vocabulary concepts. Along with target language exposure and crosslinguistic influence, developing semantic language skills seems to have a significant role in target language learning. The translations of the sentence 'Bu uçak kağıttan yapılmıştır/ This plane is made of paper' help us to reveal that students' native language does not mislead them in translating the sentences since the students who speak the same native language, for instance, provided both correct and incorrect translations, and consequently, this makes it possible for us to conclude that the development of semantic language skills has a crucial role besides aforementioned factors. The ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh sentences also indicate the importance of perception especially differentiating the functions of the ablative case marker while attracting attention to the lack of semantic language skills of students either stemming from limited exposure to the target language or individual differences.

To sum up, it can be inferred from the findings that crosslinguistic influence, linguistic transfer and/ or interlanguage transfer, lack of exposure to the target language, and limited semantic skills may be the main sources of students' errors in ablative case markers. Additionally, there are significant points to touch upon considering the results of the study. It has been also revealed that students did not face difficulty in the most commonly known functions of the ablative case markers. These are the functions that indicate to express coming from somewhere and to compare two or more notions. These were closely related to the main function of the ablative case markers, so it can be understood that students were inclined to translate the sentences according to the frequency of the given instructions about case markers in and out of the classroom. Out of twelve sentences, two of them were not translated correctly in any way; however, a significant number of the incorrect translations included 'from'. This could be because of the fact that students were prone to create a close relationship between the Turkish ablative case markers [-den,-dan,-ten,-tan] and 'from'. They did not prefer other possible case markers other than 'from' by ignoring the possibility of other functions of the ablative case markers in those sentences. No significant difference regarding gender and age of the students was found; however, it was detected that there might be a relationship between the number of translations made by the students and the duration of learning Turkish. The longer they were exposed to Turkish, the more translations were seen on their translation task whether correct or incorrect.

The study also revealed that concreteness of a function of ablative case might have an effect on the selection of ablative case suffixes. It can be inferred from the findings of the study that the more concrete the sentence was, the more translations were provided in this sense. What has been revealed

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in this study so far have linked with the results in the relevant literature (Mert, 2013; Yılmaz-Atagül&Yahşi-Cevher, 2015; Petek& Dağıstan; 2018), which reported students who made significant errors in the ablative case markers although there are some other studies in the literature (Güven, 2007; Yıldırım, 2011; Arhan, 2015) which put forward that no error was found in ablative case markers in their studies on students learning Turkish as a foreign language.

As a concluding remark, it is worth noting that case markers are an indispensable part of grammar and thus language itself. It has been revealed that detailed studies on the functions of case markers have been neglected to a certain degree. Therefore, enough attention should be paid to teaching the proper use of case suffixes to the learners of Turkish as a foreign language with relating functions and usages to minimize the effects of error-related factors. All of the grammatical case markers are worthy of studying as ablative case markers in a detailed way because, as Yılmaz and Temiz (2015) pointed out, the most common difficulty faced by the learners of Turkish is the learning of case markers. Therefore, teachers should be meticulous about teaching all the meanings and functions of all the case markers as well as ablative case markers. For further studies, all the other functions of ablative cases, which are not included in this study, may be taken into consideration.

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