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Research Article

An analysis of the studies on the effect of language transfer on teaching Turkish as a foreign language

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Abstract

The present research, meticulously constructed to scrutinize the studies related to language transfer in teaching Turkish as a foreign language from various perspectives, employed a qualitative research methodology. Data were gathered utilizing a document analysis technique, and the interpretation of the gathered data was conducted employing a descriptive analytical approach. The studies conducted on the effect of language transfer on teaching Turkish as a foreign language (TTAFL) were examined in terms of type, year, learning fields, language level, distribution by country, and how the transfer is discussed. It was found that 61.8% (f=81) of the scientific studies on the transfer in TTAFL are articles, 30.5% (f=40) are master's theses, 6.1% (f=8) are doctoral theses, and 1.5% (f=2) are academic papers. The first study on this subject was observed to have been conducted in 1998, the maximum number of studies (f=25) was carried out in 2019, and there has been a significant increase in interest in the subject since 2007. The maximum number of studies by nationality (f=29) was carried out on Syrians, followed by Afghani, Palestinian, Kazakh, Iraqi, and Bosnian students. 95 studies focused on the learning of writing, 35 on speaking, 18 on reading, 11 on listening, and seven on grammar. Six articles, two master's theses and a doctoral thesis, a total of nine studies, in which the language transfer was presented under different headings, were identified; and there was no classification in 122 studies.

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Introduction

Language is a social interaction tool that permanently affects people in many ways, and the effectiveness of the acquisition and learning process of language depends on many variables. Language provides one of the strongest ties among societies and their environments, while also allowing specific collaboration and effectively-developed social establishments. The development of these organizations, which form the basis of an enduring culture, as well as transfer of this culture to the next generation, can only be achieved through language. Language can, therefore, be considered to be a fundamental aspect of all forms of human development.

The complexity and sophistication of language have increased in parallel with the development and growing prosperity of cultures and civilizations. This means that traces of geography, society and culture accumulated over thousands of years can be seen in a local language and its products. Individuals naturally adopt all kinds of cultural norms and value systems that have been formed over a long period of history, and then distinguish themselves from other societies by improving their native language (Melanlıoğlu, 2010). Thus, language provides a sense of belonging to a society and enables human communities with different languages to create a diversity of cultures and civilizations (Göçer, 2012; Kaplan, 2001).

In their interactions and conflicts with each other, human communities have developed a variety of different methods for communication (Crowley & Heyer, 2015; Erdoğan, 1999; Gönenç, 1993). As the most efficient and simplest means of communication, language has enabled societies speaking different languages to communicate through a common foreign language (Richards & Schimdt, 2014). In addition, the means of communication, which have diversified through technological improvements, have allowed human communities to come closer to each other on a level that was previously unattainable. This cooperation and rivalry can be seen in many areas, from education to trade, health care, and tourism. Moreover, immigrants and refugees have found themselves in communities that often speak a completely different language than they do, and this has created the need to learn a foreign language (Kaya, 2022). Thus, for many, learning one or more foreign languages has become a necessity rather than a choice.

Language, shaped over millennia by factors such as human reproduction, imagination, geographic and cultural influences, is acquired by native speakers through a natural process. For many foreigners, however, a new language can only be learned over a long period of time, often involving intensive study. This is partly because a person who has grown up in a completely different society may know the rules of a foreign language and the meaning of words, but proximity and distance to the culture of the target language is often an important factor in learning success (Rogers, 1994). Moreover, since one cannot be completely alienated and isolated from one's own culture and native language, it is difficult for the acquisition of the target language not to be influenced by the native language. This means that the foreign language speaker usually approaches the target language with the rules and logic of the native language (Biçer, 2017; Brogan & Son, 2015).

The effects of one's culture and native language on foreign language learning vary from person to person and from society to society (Bai & Qin, 2018; Çiftçi & Demirci, 2019). In some cases, foreign language learners, even if they speak a different language, may learn the target language more quickly due to geographical and cultural affinities, communicate more easily

with society, and make the required linguistic and cultural transfer to the learned language without undue difficulty. Usually, however, the multiplicity of language structures and the cultural differences between the target language and the culture of origin cause difficulties for foreign language learners (Swan, 1997). The term 'transfer' can be used to refer to the influences of culture and native language on target language learning, and this term can be applied to both positive and negative influences. Positive transfer facilitates foreign language learning, while negative transfer complicates this process and causes the learner to expend excessive time and effort (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse, 2018; Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015; Towell & Hawkins, 1994). While the differences in alphabet, syntax, and language structures between the learner's native language and Turkish can lead to negative transfer and learning difficulties, similarities between Turkish words, alphabet, and syntax may well facilitate the process of learning Turkish.

The idea that language transfer has a psychological basis that causes quantitative and qualitative increases was proposed in the 18th century (Chen, 2020), and there are many studies on this topic, especially on the acquisition of English (Ahmed, 2007; Camilleri, 2004; Hashemian, 2012; Hui, Ariffin & Ma'rof, 2018; Lakkis & Malak, 2000; Sabbah, 2015; Wang, 2009; Winer, 1989; Van Vu, 2017; Zhao, 2019; Zheng, 2018). The fact that English is an official language in many countries outside of England and is one of the most widely learned languages worldwide has led to a quantitative and qualitative increase in studies and a comprehensive treatment of the language transfer of different nations and communities from their cultures and languages to English language learning.

It can be seen that with the spread of teaching Turkish as a foreign language (TTAFL) in many countries, the number of studies on this topic has also increased (Çiftçi & Demirci, 2018; Göçer, Tabak & Coşkun, 2012). Unfortunately, however, there is a lack of adequate discussion on the topic of language transfer in TTAFL. It is extremely difficult to distinguish the concept of transfer from the concept of culture in TTAFL, as can be seen from the large number and variety of studies conducted on this topic (Bölükbaş & Keskin, 2010; Demir & Açıık, 2011; Caner, Direkçi & Kurt, 2019; İşcan, 2017; Polat & Dilidüzgün, 2015), although some of these studies discuss the impact of culture on the success of TTAFL (Boylu, 2014; Yiğit & Arslan, 2014). Although it is obvious that this kind of studies is necessary when it comes to the link between language and culture, such studies are few. Usually, the studies are limited to the culture and native languages of Turkish language learners, the foreign languages they know, and how cultural features influence Turkish language learning.

It is noted that studies on the subject of language transfer are generally presented alongside studies in which writing errors have been identified in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language. However, the topic of transfer was not comprehensively discussed in these studies (Abukan & Tandilava, 2021; Arslan & Klicic, 2015; Barcın, 2022; Başar & Coşgun, 2015; Bölükbaş, 2011; Demiriz & Okur, 2019; Emek, 2021; Maden, Dincel & Maden, 2015). It can be seen that the issue of language transfer is mentioned in the studies of grammar, reading, speaking, and listening, and students' errors are discussed (Göktaş & Karataş, 2022; Kurt, 2017; Sonkaya, 2019; Yılmaz & Şeref, 2015).

The errors of foreign language learners are extremely useful in determining the effect of language transfer from the native language to the target language. This study addresses the issue of transfer in the studies of TTAFL students, and it is hoped that this study will contribute

to the field, raise awareness of the issue of language transfer, and help in addressing the problems and errors of Turkish foreign language learners.

The aim of the study is to identify the existing trends in the studies conducted on transfer in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. In accordance with the aim of the research, the studies on transfer were examined based on the following questions that consider the type, year, country, target group, distribution among language levels and learning areas, and format:

1. How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by type?
2. How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by year?
3. How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by country and target group?
4. How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by language level?
5. How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by learning area?
6. How do the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL break down by format?

Methodology

Research model

This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach, with data collection through the document analysis method. Document analysis enables the researcher to collect relevant data, while studying written documents helps to identify the facts and events related to the topic (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). This method was used because it requires a systematic analysis of printed and electronic resources in accordance with established criteria and objectives, in this case, the identification and analysis of studies on transfer in TTAFL. These studies identify and evaluate the errors made by learners of Turkish as a foreign language in different learning domains. This means that studies that contained only a general assessment and did not include a student group were excluded from the study. Similarly, studies that gave examples of the impact of the student's knowledge of other languages in learning Turkish as a foreign language but did not directly address the issue of language transfer from the target language(s) were not included in the study.

Data collection and analysis

Research data on language transfer in teaching Turkish as a foreign language were collected from the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education of Türkiye (URL 1), Google Scholar (URL 2), and DergiPark (URL 3). The searches were conducted using the search terms "teaching Turkish as a foreign language, positive and negative transfer, problems in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, the effect of mother tongue on foreign/second language learning". The studies on the research area were compiled and classified into three groups: Doctoral theses, Master's theses, and other scientific studies. Then, the data were analyzed and evaluated to determine the extent to which they were appropriate for the purpose of the study. The studies dealing with language transfer in teaching Turkish as a foreign language were grouped as dissertations, master's theses, articles, and scientific papers. The studies in which the countries, language levels or language areas were not specified were also examined and listed among the results. The reason for this is that the studies on language transfer within the established criteria are the basis of the study.

The descriptive analysis approach was used for data analysis. This approach includes the data collected after the interviews, observations, and document analysis, which are organised according to the given themes and presented to the readers. The approach, in which the results are discussed and evaluated, consists of four stages (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Data analysis of the study was performed as described below:

1. Forming a framework for descriptive analysis: in this phase, a framework is formed from the collected data, the conceptual framework, and the research questions, and the themes under which the data will be arranged and presented are determined. The format of how the collected data is arranged and presented depends on the research questions.
2. Processing the data based on the thematic framework: the collected data are read and arranged according to the previously found framework. The data are rearranged in light of the given framework and research objectives, and the appropriate and necessary data are processed while inappropriate data are discarded. Accordingly, the contents that were not suitable for the determined research questions in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language were excluded from the study, while the suitable data were analyzed.
3. Defining the results: The ordered data will be defined and direct quotes will be included when deemed appropriate. Accordingly, the collected data are organized according to the themes of the research questions and presented in tabular form. The analyzed studies in this study were presented in figures by type, year, language level, learning area, and type of transfer.
4. Discussion of the findings: the defined results are related, explained and made sense of the findings collected after examining the studies on language transfer in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The researcher discussed the collected findings in accordance with the aim of the research.

Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability, which are among the most important criteria in scientific research, are also very important in qualitative studies. For this reason, the three fields were reviewed by an expert and their accuracy and adequacy were checked to ensure that the data were not miscategorized or lost.

Limitations of the research

In this study, the scientific studies on transfer in teaching Turkish as a foreign language were examined. In this regard, all the studies are accessible as full text, with no limitations in terms of country, year, level, learning area or group, from the field of concrete data and those of individuals learning Turkish as a foreign language in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. The effects of mother tongue or knowledge of other languages on Turkish were discussed and analyzed.

Findings

The results of the studies addressing direct and indirect transfer in TTAFL are presented in the following tables.

*Findings of the question “How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by type?”***Table 1.** The distribution of the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL by types

Type of study	<i>f</i>	%
Articles	81	61.8
Master’s theses	40	30.5
Doctoral theses	8	6.1
Academic papers	2	1.5
Total	131	100

As shown in Table 1, 61.8% ($f=81$) of the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL are articles; 30.5% ($f=40$) are master’s theses; 6.1% ($f=8$) are doctoral theses and 1.5% ($f=2$) are academic papers. The vast majority of studies are articles and, as you can see, few are papers.

*Findings of the question “How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by year?”***Table 2.** The distribution of the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL by years

Year	Article	Master’s thesis	Doctoral thesis	Paper	Total
1998	-	1	-	-	1
2007	-	1	-	-	1
2008	-	-	-	1	1
2009	3	-	-	-	3
2010	1	-	-	-	1
2011	1	-	-	-	1
2012	1	-	-	-	1
2013	4	1	-	-	5
2014	4	-	1	-	5
2015	11	1	1	-	13
2016	4	3	-	-	7
2017	8	6	1	-	15
2018	9	5	1	-	15
2019	11	14	-	-	25
2020	5	5	2	-	12
2021	11	3	1	-	15
2022	8	-	1	1	10

As can be seen in Table 2, there were 1 master’s thesis in 2007; 1 paper in 2008; 3 articles in 2009; 1 article for each in 2010, 2011, and 2012; 5 scientific studies as 4 articles, and 1 master’s thesis in 2013; 5 scientific studies as 4 articles, and 1 doctoral thesis in 2014; 13 scientific studies as 11 articles, 1 master’s thesis and 1 doctoral thesis in 2015; 7 scientific studies as 4 articles, and 3 master’s theses in 2016; 15 scientific studies as 8 articles, 6 master’s theses and 1 doctoral thesis in 2017; 15 scientific studies as 9 articles, 5 master’s theses and 1

doctoral thesis in 2018; 25 scientific studies as 11 articles and 14 master's theses in 2019; 12 scientific studies as 5 articles, 5 master's theses and 2 doctoral theses in 2020; 15 scientific studies as 11 articles, 3 master's theses and 1 doctoral thesis in 2021; 10 scientific studies as 8 articles, 1 doctoral thesis and 1 paper in 2022 were determined according to Table 2.

Findings of the question "How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by country and target group?"

Table 3. Distribution of the scientific studies on the transfer in TTAFL by country and target group

Country	Article	Master's thesis	Doctoral thesis	Total
Syria	21	7	1	29
Afghanistan	14	1	0	15
Palestine	9	2	0	11
Kazakhstan	10	1	0	11
Iraq	7	3	1	11
Bosnia-Herzegovina	6	4	1	11
Egypt	5	4	0	9
Jordan	7	2	0	9
Turkmenistan	6	2	1	9
Tunisia	6	2	0	8
Iran	5	3	0	8
Yemen	5	2	0	7
Albania	4	2	1	7
Nigeria	6	0	0	6
Algeria	4	2	0	6
Sudan	5	1	0	6
Russia	4	1	1	6
Somali, Georgia, Morocco	3	2	0	5
Kenya	3	1	0	4
Pakistan, Germany, the USA, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Azerbaijan	4	0	0	4
Saudi Arabia, Mongolia	2	2	0	4
North Macedonia	3	0	1	4
Lebanon, South Korea	3	1	0	4
Uzbekistan	1	1	1	3
South Africa, Bangladesh, India, Tanzania, Greece, Cameroon, Serbia, Guinea	2	1	0	3
Mali, Libya	3	0	0	3
Uganda	1	2	0	3
Spain, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, Tajikistan, Kosovo, Ghana, Burundi, Belarus, Bulgaria, Rwanda, Niger	2	0	0	2
Lithuania, Indonesia, Ethiopia, China, Rep. of the Congo, Malaysia	1	1	0	2

Vanuatu	0	2	0	2
Bolivia, Chad, Comoros, The Gambia, Moldova, Togo, Montenegro, Mozambique, Djibouti, Czechia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Italy, Hungary, Guinea Bissau, Croatia, Burma, Austria, Turkic republics (unspecified)	1	0	0	1
Korea, Gagauzia	0	0	1	1
Sierra Leone, Thailand, Senegal, Colombia, Eritrea, Venezuela, DRC, Liberia, Ukraine, Oman, the UAE, Sri Lanka	0	1	0	1
Unspecified	11	13	0	24+2 (2 paper)

Table 3 shows that Syria has the largest share of the distribution of scientific studies on transfer in TTAFL by country, with 29 studies (21 articles, 7 master's theses, and 1 doctoral thesis). It is followed by Afghanistan with 15 studies (14 articles and 1 master's thesis), Palestine with 11 studies (9 articles and 2 master's theses), Kazakhstan with 11 studies (10 articles and 1 master's thesis), Iraq with 11 studies (7 articles, 3 master's theses and 1 doctoral thesis), Bosnia and Herzegovina with 11 studies (6 articles, 4 master's theses and 1 doctoral thesis), Egypt with 9 studies (5 articles and 4 master's theses), Jordan with 9 studies (7 articles and 2 master's theses); Turkmenistan with 9 studies as 6 articles, 2 master's theses, and 1 doctoral thesis; Tunisia with 8 studies as 6 articles and 2 master's theses; Iran with 8 studies as 5 articles and 3 master's theses; Yemen with 7 studies as 5 articles and 2 master's theses; Albania with 7 studies as 4 articles, 2 master's theses, and 1 doctoral thesis; Nigeria with 6 articles; Algeria with 6 studies as 4 articles and 2 master's theses; Sudan with 6 studies as 5 articles and 1 master's thesis; Russia with 6 studies as 4 articles, 1 master's thesis, and 1 doctoral thesis; Somalia, Georgia, and Morocco with 5 studies as 3 articles and 2 master's theses; Kenya with 4 studies as 3 articles and 1 master's thesis; Pakistan, Germany, the United States, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, and Azerbaijan with 4 articles; Saudi Arabia and Mongolia with 4 studies as 2 articles and 2 master's theses; North Macedonia with 4 studies as 3 articles and 1 doctoral thesis; Lebanon and South Korea with 4 studies as 3 articles and 1 master's thesis; Uzbekistan with 3 studies as 1 article, 1 master's thesis, and 1 doctoral thesis; South Africa, Bangladesh, India, Tanzania, Greece, Cameroon, Serbia, and Guinea with 3 studies as 2 articles and 1 master's thesis; Mali and Libya with 3 articles; Uganda with 3 studies as 1 article and 2 master's theses; Spain, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, Tajikistan, Kosovo, Ghana, Burundi, Belarus, Bulgaria, Rwanda, and Niger with 2 studies as 1 article and 1 master's thesis; Lithuania, Indonesia, Ethiopia, China, Rep. of the Congo and Malaysia with 2 studies as 1 article and 1 master's thesis; Vanuatu with 2 master's theses; Bolivia, Chad, Comoros, Gambia, Moldova, Togo, Montenegro, Mozambique, Djibouti, Czechia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Italy, Hungary, Guinea Bissau, Croatia, Burma, Austria, and Turkish Republics (not specified) with 1 article; Korea and Gagauzia with 1 PhD thesis; Sierra Leone, Thailand, Senegal, Colombia, Eritrea, Venezuela, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Ukraine, Oman, the UAE, and Sri Lanka with 1 master's thesis.

Findings of the question “How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by language level?”

Table 4. Distribution of the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL by language levels

Type of study	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Academic Turkish	Unspecified level
Articles	11	17	21	21	7	3	1	28
Master's theses	12	15	17	19	10	4	-	6
Doctoral theses	3	3	3	2	2	1	-	3
Academic paper	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	27	35	41	42	19	8	1	38

According to Table 4, there were 27 studies (11 articles, 12 master's theses, 3 doctoral theses, and 1 paper) at A1 level; 35 studies (17 articles, 15 master's theses, and 3 doctoral theses) at A2 level; 41 studies (21 articles, 17 master's theses, and 3 doctoral theses) at B1 level; 42 studies (21 articles, 19 master's theses, and 2 doctoral theses) at B2 level; 19 studies in the form of 7 articles, 10 master's theses and 2 doctoral theses at C1 level; 8 studies in the form of 3 articles, 4 master's theses and 1 doctoral thesis at C2 level; 1 article at Turkish academic level; 38 studies in the form of 28 articles, 6 master's theses, 3 doctoral theses and 1 paper where the level was not indicated.

Findings of the question “How are the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL distributed by learning area?”

Table 5. The distribution of the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL by learning area

Type of study	Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	Grammar
Articles	56	17	12	8	-
Master's theses	33	6	5	3	6
Doctoral theses	6	1	-	-	1
Academic paper	-	1	1	-	-
Total	95	25	18	11	7

Table 5 shows the distribution of scientific studies on transfer in TTAFL by language domain as follows: 95 studies (56 articles, 33 master's theses, and 6 doctoral dissertations) in writing; 25 studies (17 articles, 6 master's theses, 1 doctoral dissertations, and 1 paper in speaking; 18 studies (12 articles, 5 master's theses, and 1 paper in reading; 11 studies (8 articles and 3 master's theses) in listening; 7 studies (6 master's theses and 1 doctoral dissertations) in grammar.

Findings of the question “How do the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL break down by format?”

Table 6. The distribution of the scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL by format

Type of study	Studies that transfer were presented under headings	Studies that transfer were handled indirectly
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Articles	6	75
Master's theses	2	38
Doctoral theses	1	7
Academic paper	-	2
Total	9	122

9 studies were identified in the form of 6 articles, 2 master's theses, and 1 doctoral dissertation in which language transfer was presented in headings in the scientific studies on the transfer of TTAFL. 122 studies did not classify language transfer (see Table 6).

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been noted that there is no comparable study addressing language transfer in TTAFL and the studies directly addressing the issue of language transfer in TTAFL are quite limited (Biçer, 2017). It should be emphasized that the topic of language transfer, which is one of the fundamentals of foreign language teaching, has not been treated as a separate study. It is known that people tend to transfer some elements such as words, pronunciation, alphabet, sentence structure and morphology from their native language to the target language in foreign language teaching. If we examine the foreign literature, we find that the effects of native/second language on foreign language teaching, as well as positive and negative transfer, have been extensively studied and explained with concrete events in many studies (Beisenbayeva, 2020; Major, 2008; Puig-Mayenco, González Alonso & Rothman, 2020; Zahang, 2018).

As the diversity and number of studies in the field of TTAFL have increased recently, it is clear that it will take some time to comprehensively address the issues in major languages such as English. Therefore, a study such as this one evaluates the studies that have been conducted and identifies the needs. This would mean that any gaps in the field would provide guidelines for future studies. Günaydın (2021) stated that there are no criteria for evaluating and classifying spelling errors in a study that examines studies on writing mistakes in TTAFL. Dealing with this type of omission and/or distinction is important for scientific studies to move forward through systematic accumulation.

Upon completion of the investigation, it was determined that the topic of language transfer was addressed in a total of 131 studies within TTAFL. The data collected indicate a strong awareness of the topic. When analyzing the distribution of studies by genre, it is noted that articles are the most common, while essays/papers are the least common. It is suggested that the relative scarcity of essays is related to the tendency to expand these studies and turn them into articles, reflecting the desire of researchers to study the topic in a more comprehensive manner. The numerical superiority of articles over other genres can be attributed both to the large number of researchers working in this genre and to the fact that, unlike the production of dissertations, their production is not restricted to a limited number of researchers. A look at postgraduate studies shows that the number of master's theses exceeds that of doctoral theses. This discrepancy can probably be explained by the quantitative differences between researchers working in this field. The quantitative results related to master's and doctoral theses are similar to the studies of Maden (2021) and Maden & Önal

(2021), which focused on postgraduate studies. When examining the numerical distribution of studies categorized by genre, we can see a similarity with the results of the study by Özer and Turhan (2020).

Although there is no consistent upward trend, it can be seen that language transfer studies in TTAFL are increasing in quantity. This is related to both the increasing specialization within the field and the growing number and diversity of foreign students studying Turkish. However, despite the relatively late start, the lack of studies on this topic more than a decade after the first study suggests a significant gap in experience in the field. The distribution and escalation of studies over time is similar to the findings reported by Maden and Önal (2021) and Türkben (2018).

It is important to highlight that participants from geographically close or Muslim countries predominate in studies examining data from 100 different countries or communities. The fact that thousands of students from different geographic regions and numerous countries are the subjects of such studies underscores the diversity and scope of TTAFL's target population. In particular, the inclusion of post-war Syrian refugees residing in Türkiye in the educational process has led to an increase in studies dealing with Syrians. Another important point is the significant number of studies ($f=26$) that were conducted without country or nationality information. Although these studies did not aim to directly identify language transfer, the omission of details such as participants' native language, country, or nationality, which are critical to research, may lead to underutilization of these studies. The data in this study mirror the findings of Can (2023) on the distribution of groups involved in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. While in this study the studies on Arabic students are in the first place, it was found that a certain group in the form of various foreign students is not in the second place. It could be hypothesized that the prevalence of studies targeting Arabic speakers or those of Arabic origin is related to the influx of Syrian refugees to Türkiye due to migration trends. This relationship could also be related to the increased interest of Arabs in Türkiye and its popular television series in recent years, which has led to an increase in efforts to learn the Turkish language for various motives, including education, tourism, and trade.

It could be argued that the studies show an even distribution across the different language levels. The process of error detection and the subsequent provision of appropriate feedback are particularly important for learners who are in the beginning and autonomous stages of language acquisition. This is primarily because language levels A and B for individuals learning a foreign language are characterized by intensive language transfer of new rules and knowledge. There is no question that it is equally important for language acquisition to encourage students to be as actively engaged as possible during these stages through hands-on activities. Moreover, it could be concluded that the number of learners has a direct impact on the amount of research done at these levels. The tendency of students to pursue individual study after successfully completing levels A and B without having to take further language courses, and the fact that many institutions - especially universities - require B2 level as a prerequisite for application or admission, has a strong effect on the number of learners in level C courses. This phenomenon in turn affects the distribution of studies among the different levels. The fact that there are 38 studies that do not specify a language level shows the importance of paying close attention to method in scientific research. This is because for the studies that were conducted without specifying a level, the questions of what criteria are used

to evaluate and study them, how and why these studies will be used, cannot be answered. The data obtained from this research is similar to the results of the study conducted by Özdemir and Eroğlu (2022), especially in terms of the distribution of studies in the field of TTAFL stratified by language proficiency levels.

The large number of studies in the area of writing, compared to other areas of learning, can be attributed primarily to the fact that a student's errors are easily identified in this context. A review of the foreign literature shows that the emphasis has been on language transfer in the area of writing. Listening comprehension, on the other hand, has received less attention and no separate study has been conducted because transfers are more difficult to identify compared to other learning areas and can be expressed through other skills. The data of this study are consistent with the findings of Demir and Özdemir's (2017) study, especially regarding the frequent focus on writing skills. Küçük and Kaya's (2018) study, which examined the keywords used in research on teaching Turkish to foreigners, also found that writing skills is a recurring theme. The studies of Can (2023) and Şentürk and Yazar (2021) also emphasize that after reading skill, writing skill is the most intensively studied area.

Considering the fact that the main objective of the studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language examined in this study is to identify students' errors or the difficulties they face in acquiring Turkish, categorising language transfers into different headings was not considered useful. However, looking at the total number of studies referring to language transfer, it cannot be said that the topic of language transfer has been adequately and comprehensively addressed. Considering its relatively new status, no study has been discovered that addresses the topic of language transfer in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, nor has any research been used that focuses on this topic.

It is expected that with the spread and promotion of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, research on language transfer will experience a multifaceted growth. It is also expected that prospective studies in this area will be extensively analysed and evaluated.

Identifying the errors and problems in teaching a foreign language is as important as recognising the core of these problems and working to solve them. Accordingly, there is a real need to address the issue of language transfer in TTAFL.

It can be seen that the Turkish language is learned by thousands of people in a large area, considering the countries and communities involved. Studies should be conducted considering this diversity to find out what kinds of mistakes are committed by which group and what kinds of language transfer are common due to mistakes made by these communities in learning Turkish.

Data such as country, nationality, and language level of the participants should definitely be provided in the studies.

The scientific studies on language transfer in TTAFL should be examined in terms of different variables such as the use of concepts, identification and grouping of errors, method, language level of participants, nationality, and countries, and their positive and negative aspects should be discussed.

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