





Needs Assessment for Business Turkish for Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye

Eser Kocaman Gürata^{1*} 
Mustafa Durmuş¹ 
Hüseyin Göçmenler¹ 
İsa Koyuncu¹ 

¹ Hacettepe University, Ankara, Türkiye,
eserkocaman@gmail.com,
mdmustafadurmush@gmail.com,
huseyingocmenler10@gmail.com,
ikoyuncu@hacettepe.edu.tr,
ror.org/04kwvgz42

*Corresponding author

Abstract: This study investigates the language learning needs of Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTPs) in Türkiye, aiming to develop a specialized Business Turkish Course to enhance their social and economic integration. Following the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Türkiye has seen a significant influx of over 3 million Syrians, creating urgent demands for effective language acquisition to navigate business environments successfully. To assess the specific Turkish language skills required, a qualitative research design employing embedded single case study methodology was utilized. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from governmental organizations and non-governmental entities, alongside quantitative surveys targeting 309 Syrian participants. The analysis revealed critical barriers, including insufficient Turkish proficiency and language-based challenges in business communications. Findings underscored the necessity of fostering skills in speaking, reading, listening, and writing to support effective participation in business activities. The results indicate a robust demand for a Business Turkish course tailored to real-world contexts, which integrates legal procedural guidance and practical task execution. The study advocates for the development of curricula that align with global language frameworks, addressing the unique challenges faced by Syrian refugees in the Turkish labor market and contributing to their economic integration.

Keywords: Language Needs Assessment, Teaching Turkish as a Second Language, Language for Specific Purposes, Business Turkish, Syrian Refugees

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1. Introduction

The need for foreign language learning has been increasing due to emerging demands, primarily in the fields of business and education, as well as for reasons such as tourism, security, wars, and migrations. Consequently, individuals' motivations for learning a foreign language vary significantly. This diversity determines learners' motivation and their priorities in language acquisition. Considering the increasing population of refugees in Türkiye, especially for the integration of Syrians in business and social life in Türkiye, learning the Turkish language is of great importance. When teaching languages to refugees, issues such as the level at which the language will be taught, what will be taught, and which linguistic skills will be emphasized come to the agenda. In this context, determining the language needs of Syrian refugees is important in terms of determining the content of the courses to be organized for them and organizing the educational environment according to their needs. Long (2005) states that language needs analyses help determine curriculum design, the development of language skills required for specific needs, the preparation of learning activities, and the selection of language teaching materials and tools. Accordingly, identifying the needs of learners in teaching Turkish as a foreign language plays a crucial role in the preparation of curricula, the development of textbooks and instructional materials, and the implementation of effective teaching techniques and methods.

The civil war in Syria since 2011 has led to a significant influx of refugees into Türkiye, with 3,195,185 Syrians registered under temporary protection as of July 21, 2022 (Presidency of Migration Management, 2024). The concentration of this population in specific regions, such as İstanbul, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, and Adana, highlights the need for education and skills development among adult refugees to facilitate their access to employment and social opportunities (Presidency of Migration Management, 2024). Recognizing the importance of learning Turkish for labor market access, various

projects are underway, particularly in collaboration with government organizations and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the mentioned regions. The PEP (Promotion of Economic Prospects for Refugees and the Host Community in Türkiye) project, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, aims to enhance economic prospects and resilience for both vulnerable Turkish citizens and Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTPs). The present study comprises a part of the "Development and Piloting of a Business Turkish Module for PEP Beneficiaries" project.

Despite efforts through vocational training and language skill development projects, regional and academic research reports suggest persistent challenges hindering Syrians from achieving social and economic integration goals. The latest report from the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP, Türkiye Country Chapter, 2021-2022) identifies language barriers as a primary challenge, alongside the limited creation of sustainable and formal jobs and difficulties in accessing business capital.

Multiple reports highlight the crucial role of language, particularly Turkish proficiency, in the economic integration of SuTPs in Türkiye. GIZ (2022) emphasizes the hindrance posed by the failure to teach/learn Turkish and recommends innovative methods for language instruction. TEPAV (2021) identifies language barriers as a critical problem in labor market integration, suggesting business Turkish classes, CV preparation, and job interview skills as essential components. INGEV (2019) underscores the importance of improving Turkish language skills for economic integration, ranking it third among factors for growth. SENED report (2021) emphasizes the increasing number of Syrian-owned businesses, linking language barriers to Syrian entrepreneurs' challenges. Şen (2022) stresses the significance of language in the employment issue for Syrian refugees. Nimer (2019) highlights the role of language learning, particularly for job seeking. Despite efforts by INGOs, NGOs, and government programs, the persistently low Turkish proficiency level among Syrians poses a significant challenge to social cohesion. The need for a well-designed business Turkish language skills program is evident to succeed in social and economic integration. The latest 3RP report (2021-2022) identifies language barriers as a primary challenge for SuTPs in the Turkish livelihoods sector, alongside limited job opportunities and difficulties in accessing business capital.

Similarly, a review of the relevant literature reveals several academic studies focusing on the language needs of Syrian refugees who have arrived in Türkiye due to war. For instance, Bölükbaş (2016) conducted a study titled *Analysis of the Language Needs of Syrian Refugees: The Case of Istanbul*, while Biçer and Alan (2017) carried out an action research study on the needs of Syrians learning Turkish as a foreign language. Similarly, Dursun (2017) examined the language needs of Syrians under temporary protection in Şanlıurfa. Additionally, Günsel (2020) investigated the language difficulties faced by blue-collar workers with lower levels of education who attended vocational training courses.

Distinct from these studies, no study examines the language skills required and the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and individuals engaged in commercial activities, namely white-collar workers. In this regard, identifying the language learning needs of Syrians is essential for structuring curricula, preparing course content and instructional materials, and determining effective language teaching methodologies for a language course aimed for business purposes.

As mentioned in the studies and reports above, a needs analysis-based business Turkish course is a necessity since no such study has been found either theoretically or practically in the field. To overcome the obstacles mentioned above, Hacettepe University Turkish and Foreign Languages Teaching, Application and Research Center (HU TÖMER) carried out a project titled "Development and piloting of a Business Turkish Module for PEP Beneficiaries" funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, which is the first study of its kind in the field. The initiative aimed to enhance the language skills of Syrian refugees under the "PEP - Promotion of Economic Prospects for

Refugees and the Host Community in Türkiye" Program. The project focused on improving communication skills in various business contexts, including navigating public and private services, conducting business transactions, and fostering workplace relationships. The business Turkish module has been expected to benefit at least 80-100 SuTPs, with a minimum of 30% being women, particularly those engaged in entrepreneurship, commerce, e-commerce, finance, and trade. This needs analysis study was conducted as the first phase of the project mentioned above, which led to a specific course design. The course was shaped by identifying the context-specific language needs of Syrians in business settings, addressing a gap in the existing literature that lacks studies on language challenges faced by Syrian entrepreneurs in the marketplace.

Needs analysis is a research process aimed at gathering data on students' learning needs, desires, and expectations, aiming to tailor the learning environment based on this information, serving as the foundation for developing a curriculum aligned with student expectations and determining program objectives (Graves, 2000; Brown, 1995). Conducting a needs analysis for special purposes, such as designing a language course, as Johns (1991) explains, should be the first step in the initial stage of structuring a language course. The data acquired through this analysis serves as the basis for validating the course activities (Johns, 1991). Needs analysis in language teaching reviews different models and approaches to needs analysis, such as the learning-centered approach by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), which distinguishes between target needs (what the learners need to do in the target situation) and learning needs (how the learners learn best), and the task-based needs analysis by Long (2015), which focuses on identifying and simplifying the tasks that the learners will perform in the target situation.

The present study aimed to conduct a needs analysis to support developing and testing a Business Turkish Module for Syrians. Using a task-based approach, the present study applied a comprehensive model for needs analysis that takes into account both the target situation and the present situation and identifies the types of tasks and activities that Syrians perform in business settings and how relevant these activities are for their social and economic integration as perceived by the Syrians and the stakeholders. However, in alignment with its intended objective, this study focuses on the language skills of Syrian refugees related to occupational (business) Turkish. In this context, the study specifically examines the occupational (business) Turkish language skills of Syrian refugees included as the participant group in teaching Turkish for specific purposes. However, participants' professional skills related to the business world and their respective occupations, as well as the challenges they encounter in these areas, fall outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, since language is an integral part of social integration, particularly in regions where refugees have migrated, this study identifies the needs and expectations of the participants regarding situations in which Turkish for occupational purposes is directly or indirectly relevant—whether as an opportunity or as a barrier to their professional engagement.

The aim is to identify the specific Turkish language skills required in a business context and to address the challenges Syrians face in utilizing the language for business purposes. For this purpose, this study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What do Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTPs) in Türkiye think of their needs and problems regarding business Turkish?
2. What are the opinions of experts and stakeholders from relevant institutions and organizations on the Business Turkish needs and problems of SuTPs?
3. To what extent do the business Turkish needs of Syrians differ in terms of their ages and genders?
4. What recommendations can be made for the design of a business Turkish language course for Syrian entrepreneurs in Türkiye?

2. Method

2.1. Research design

In this study, the case study method, one of the qualitative research approaches, was employed. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, a case study does not aim to present abstract theories or principles to readers; rather, it provides them with real-world cases of real individuals, enabling a deeper understanding of ideas (2021, p. 376). A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon ("case") in depth within its real-world context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not delineated (Yin, 2018, p. 45). Instead of experimental studies that derive findings through complex statistical analyses, case studies focus on an in-depth and longitudinal examination of an individual, event, or institution. This method is frequently employed, particularly in research on first and second-language acquisition and teacher education (Paker, 2021, p. 121).

There are different types of case studies. To achieve the aim of this study and answer the research questions, an embedded single-case design, one of the qualitative case study designs, was adopted. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2007, p. 600), a case represents an example, event, or unit of something and can also encompass a person, an organization, an incident, a decision, an action, a neighborhood, or even a nation-state. In an embedded single-case study, multiple units or sub-units exist within a single case, resulting in multiple units of analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021, p. 313; Uğurlu, 2018, p. 344). In this design, the case is examined as a holistic and single unit, or researchers focus on multiple sub-units within the same case (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021, p. 313).

In this study, two different sub-units were identified for the needs analysis of Syrian refugees' workplace Turkish language skills. The first sub-unit consists of stakeholders, including government institutions and non-governmental organizations, while the second sub-unit comprises Syrian beneficiaries. Data were collected from both participant groups using different data collection tools.

Qualitative data of this research study has been collected via a semi-structured interview form. The form has been used to collect data from the stakeholders: government and non-government organizations. Quantitative data has been gathered via a needs analysis questionnaire from Syrian participants. This research project was examined at the meeting of the Ethics Committee of the Senate of Hacettepe University on 23 August 2022 with the number E-35853172-000-00002357868 and was found ethically appropriate. The data was collected using a consent form. The participants were informed about the confidentiality of the data they provided during the data collection process.

2.2. Participants and sampling

To address what business Turkish language skills Syrian refugees need to acquire in a course to prepare for the real business world, two main groups of participants were chosen to participate in the study. The first included the stakeholders who are enablers of the social cohesion of Syrian refugees in Türkiye to get an in-depth understanding of the Syrians' needs and problems. These stakeholders include authorities and representatives from government organizations, NGOs, and INGOs in Gaziantep and Adana and are critical in the business startup process regarding legal, financial, and educational issues. The first study group was included in the research through purposeful sampling. "Purposeful sampling allows for an in-depth investigation of information-rich cases selected based on the objective of the study. It is preferred when researchers aim to study one or more specific cases that meet certain criteria or possess particular characteristics. In this context, the researcher seeks to understand natural and social phenomena or events and to explore and explain the relationships between them" (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019, pp. 92-93).

Purposeful sampling was employed to determine the profile characteristics of Syrian refugees through a needs analysis survey, to select participants for the Workplace Turkish Module based on specific

criteria, to conduct an in-depth analysis of qualitative data, and to integrate the data collected via surveys with qualitative findings.

The list of the government and non-government organizations who participated in the study are as follows:

1. Gaziantep Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (Gaziantep İl Göç İdaresi)
2. Gaziantep Şehitkâmil Public Education Center (Gaziantep Şehitkâmil Halk Eğitim Merkezi)
3. Gaziantep Provincial Education Directorate (Gaziantep İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü)
4. Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce (Gaziantep Ticaret Odası)
5. Gaziantep Chamber of Industry (Gaziantep Sanayi Odası)
6. Gaziantep Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen (Gaziantep Esnaf ve Sanatkarlar Odası)
7. Gaziantep Turkish Employment Agency (Gaziantep İŞKUR)
8. Şahinbey Municipality (Şahinbey Belediyesi)
9. Gaziantep Red Crescent Community Center (Gaziantep Kızılay Toplum Merkezi)
10. SPARK Gaziantep Office (SPARK Gaziantep Ofisi)
11. SENED NGO (SENEDE Derneği)
12. Arab Industry and Businessmen Association Arap Sanayi ve İş Adamları Derneği (ASSİAD)
13. Adana Seyhan Municipality Women's Solidarity Center (Adana Seyhan Belediyesi Kadın Dayanışma Merkezi)

The second group of participants consisted of 663 Syrians who were asked to respond to an online questionnaire. The purposeful sampling method was also used in the inclusion of the second study group in the research. The participants attending the research study were mostly from Gaziantep and Adana provinces. Considering the limitations of the project, the researchers determined a selection criteria (details are given in the data analysis action) to create a homogenous group of participants for "the piloting of a business Turkish module" project. Out of 663 participants, 309 were eligible and aiming for similar goals. The demographic information of the 309 participants is presented in the following paragraphs in this section.

The study involved 309 participants, with 33% in the 18-29 age group, 45% in the 30-39 age group, and 22% aged 40 and above, indicating a notable concentration of young individuals (18-39) at 78%. Regarding gender distribution, 57% were male, and 43% were female. Despite a slightly higher percentage of male participants, the female representation was deemed satisfactory, challenging prior qualitative claims that Syrian women were less likely to engage in the workforce. The findings suggested that the 30% target for female participation in a business Turkish course among beneficiaries was achievable.

The number of married participants was much higher, with a percentage of 68.9%, compared to the single and divorced groups.

In examining participants' educational backgrounds, exclusion criteria were applied to remove illiterate and primary school graduates. The analysis reveals that the majority of participants are university

graduates, comprising 53.6% of the total. The second-largest group comprises high school graduates, constituting 27.9% of the participants. The highest number of participants are from Gaziantep province, yet this is due to the filtering of the target group based on the selection criteria, which mandates a minimum of 35% female participation according to the inclusivity principles of the project. Among the participants from Adana, only women were selected for the business Turkish piloting project, so Adana represents only 16,2% of the total participants.

The findings showed that a significant proportion of participants are currently employed, with the working group constituting nearly four times the size of the non-working group, suggesting that a majority of participants are already immersed in a work environment, potentially necessitating improvements in Turkish language skills, which could positively impact their motivation in a business Turkish course. Moreover, 86.7% of the participants desire to initiate their business ventures.

2.3. Research instruments and data collection procedure

The data collection process utilized two data collection instruments within the qualitative case study approach. A questionnaire was employed to gather quantitative data, while semi-structured interviews were conducted for qualitative data.

The study utilized qualitative data through semi-structured interviews that contained open-ended questions prepared by the researchers. The interviews with various organizations focused on language needs, problems faced in entrepreneurship, and opinions on a Turkish course for Syrians. The interviews were recorded, and researchers took notes simultaneously during the interviews. The recordings were transcribed.

The second data collection tool is a questionnaire titled "Business Turkish electronic needs analysis questionnaire," which was developed by the researchers to determine the language skills that Syrians need for their profession. Since the second sub-unit of the study, consisting of Syrian refugee participants, represents a large sample of 663 individuals, the use of techniques such as interviews, observations, and focus group discussions is not feasible. Therefore, a questionnaire was employed as a data collection tool to obtain data from this study group efficiently and cost-effectively in terms of time, effort, and financial resources. Another reason for using the questionnaire was to gather both opinions and information from participants regarding their needs related to workplace Turkish language skills through open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Questionnaires have been commonly used by many researchers to conduct needs analysis, and it assists researchers to gain knowledge of the participants' necessities, lacks, and wants (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991, pp. 53-60). Moreover, according to Basturkmen (2010), questionnaire surveys can be used to obtain information from a large number of respondents, and data can be collected in a short period, and it is cost effective.

The questions in the questionnaire were prepared based on theoretical approaches in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) and studies on language needs analysis. The questions were prepared using the "5-point Likert Scale" method, and multiple choice and open-ended questions were also included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 4 sections: (a) questions for getting to know the participants, (b) determining the Turkish language proficiency level of the participants and the problems they have experienced with the language, (c) determining the business Turkish language skills they need and (d) determining the level of technology competencies they have.

The content validity of the prepared questionnaire was obtained by getting the opinions of 6 academicians, including 1 assessment and evaluation expert, 1 instructional designer expert, 3 Turkish education experts, and 1 linguistics expert. The survey questions were translated into Arabic to minimize the possible misunderstanding for participants. Translation checks were made with the help

of a language expert, and the questionnaire was prepared in a bilingual manner. Back translation was also used to translate the Arabic version of the questions back to Turkish to improve reliability and validity. The questionnaire was pre-tested by piloting with 5 Syrian applicants. It was revised and finalized with the feedback.

2.4. Data analysis procedure

In the analysis of the data in this study, multiple sub-units and data analysis units were established in alignment with the embedded single-case design to examine the needs of Syrian refugees regarding workplace Turkish language skills. The first sub-unit consists of stakeholder institutions, such as government agencies and non-governmental organizations, while the first data analysis unit comprises qualitative data collected from this sub-unit through semi-structured interviews. The second sub-unit of the study consists of Syrian refugee participants, who are the direct stakeholders of the case in question. The second data analysis unit consists of the data collected from Syrian refugee participants through a questionnaire.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 154) argue that quantitative data can be used in qualitative research for various purposes, such as identifying trends in a given context, providing descriptive information about an educational program and its participants (e.g., age, race, gender, socio-economic status), or identifying new areas to be explored and new questions to be addressed. Since the needs analysis conducted within the scope of this study provides insights into the development of a Workplace Turkish Module for PEP beneficiaries, including teaching methods, course content, and materials, quantitative data regarding the individuals who will be included in this module were obtained. In qualitative reports, quantitative data are generally presented in the form of descriptive statistics (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 154). In this study, the descriptive statistics derived from the survey data were presented in terms of percentages and frequencies. The data obtained through the survey were not collected to make generalizations to a broader population but rather to make inferences about the specific participant group in this study. Accordingly, the data were analyzed in line with Patton's (2015, p. 815) qualitative principle of "stay qualitative."

The use of quantitative indicators such as percentages and frequencies in qualitative research is particularly preferred in studies with large sample sizes and should be reported in a manner that does not disrupt the overall flow of the report (Demirkasımoğlu, 2021, p. 239). The second sub-unit of the study, consisting of Syrian refugee participants, represents a large sample of 663 individuals. However, due to the scope and limitations of the study, the data obtained from the second study group via the survey were not intended for generalization to a broader population. Therefore, under the findings section, descriptive information is presented in graphical form using percentages and frequencies.

The quantitative data obtained from the second study group through surveys were used to support and explain the qualitative findings derived from the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with stakeholder institutions, such as government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Although the needs of Syrian refugees regarding workplace Turkish language skills were revealed through the qualitative data collected from stakeholder institutions, ensuring data triangulation was necessary to enhance the credibility of the study by the qualitative paradigm and case study methodology. In this regard, the phenomenon under investigation (i.e., workplace Turkish language needs) was explained by comparing various data sources obtained from the real-world context. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data was carried out in parallel with the research questions.

2.5. Reliability

In the process of analyzing the qualitative data, the researchers used in-depth and interactive analysis strategies. The study collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with officials from various government organizations and NGOs, analyzing it through coding and categorization to identify

themes. Researchers checked the reliability by independently repeating the categorization process and had a third expert review the findings. The findings of the researchers were compared and using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula, a high intercoder reliability of 0.90 was achieved. Pseudonyms (K1-K12) were used to report the results. To ensure the reliability of the study, the researchers also re-coded the data at different times and reviewed the coding process in a cyclical process, thus ensuring consistency over time

As for the quantitative data, the questionnaire was prepared in Google forms to be able to share as an online link to reach as many beneficiaries as possible. An informed consent form was included at the beginning of the questionnaire, which informed the participants that the participation in the study was voluntary. To administer the questionnaire, permission was obtained from the Hacettepe University Ethics Committee. Permission and information letters, along with the posters, were sent to the related institutions and organizations, and these institutions and organizations shared the digital link of the questionnaire with their beneficiaries in various ways, such as e-mail, social media, etc. The questionnaire was administered to Syrian participants between July 2022 and August 2022. 663 Syrian applicants submitted the form. Considering the limitations of this study, the views of the stakeholders and the second language literature, the researchers determined a set of selection criteria to select a homogeneous group of participants for "the piloting of a business Turkish module" project. The categories of the selection criteria to create a homogenous group of learners for the business Turkish course are as follows:

1. Face-to-face classes and exam applications of the business Turkish course are to be held only in Gaziantep and Adana. This criterion is based on the limitations of the study. Only the applicants from these provinces are selected.

2. Of the applicants from Adana, only women were selected. This criterion was determined due to two main reasons. One reason is that there was an at least 30% quota requirement of women participation for the business Turkish piloting project, and this could be achieved through purposeful sampling. Another reason is that there was only one place allotted in Adana to implement face-to-face classes and to administer exams, and that was Adana Seyhan Municipality Women's Solidarity Center.

3. Educational background was defined as another criterion. Gilmartin (2019, pp. 99-100) states in his research in language training for adult refugees that learners with no literacy skills or very low levels of literacy in their mother tongue have completely different needs from the group of learners with higher educational backgrounds. To meet their needs, specialized language programs should be implemented. Similar findings were derived from the interviews with the stakeholders within the scope of this study. As it is also stated in the findings, the stakeholders claimed that vocational Turkish courses and language courses wouldn't achieve success for illiterate learners and primary school graduates since the needs of this group are considerably different.

It is also stated in the Council of Europe (2017) that adult migrants can be identified in different literacy profiles, among which various categories can be distinguished based on their educational background. Low or no literacy level groups are categorized in four main groups as A, B, C, and D to help institutions and teachers to provide tailor-made and learner-oriented courses. The individuals (Group A) who did not receive an adequate education in their country of origin may not have developed any notion of writing as a semiotic system, so these are referred to as pre-literate learners. Adults (Group B) who never learned to read or write in their mother tongue or had little education should be supported with programs with 'technical' goals regarding instrumental literacy and functional literacy. Group C individuals are described as semi-literate and had limited schooling in their mother tongue. The educational goals of this group are often instrumental: the reinforcement of fundamental reading and writing skills and communicative language learning. Group D migrants are literate individuals, and with these learner groups, learning process can focus on communicative language learning from the

beginning and can include writing and reading.

Considering these four groups, the Council of Europe (2017) suggests that policymakers to provide specific programs to teach these migrants literacy as a fundamental part of integration. Moreover, it is highlighted that all existing standardized tests are designed for literate candidates, so it is inappropriate and unfair to administer them to migrants in these categories. As a result, Council of Europe offers pre-A1 level¹ with specific objectives and descriptions. Pre-A1 will be a realistic and encouraging level for low or no literacy level groups, which will prepare the individuals as a threshold level for A1 and higher levels of language education. Therefore, in this study, the applicants with no literacy skills and who are primary school graduates were filtered out and not selected for the piloting of the business Turkish course.

4. Applicants with A1 and lower Turkish language proficiency level were filtered out. This criterion was based on the findings from the interviews with stakeholders who stated that an A2 language level should be a requirement to start a business Turkish course. This finding is also consistent with the literature in that according to the common reference levels of Global Scale of English² and CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001; GSE, 2019), the objectives and tasks in relation to professional/business foreign language (English) skills mainly start with the A2 language level.

The researchers examined the submissions and filtered the responses, leaving some applicants out according to the selection criteria. The remaining target group consisted of 309 applicants. The quantitative data from this group of applicants were used for SPSS analysis to determine the needs of the group of learners. A Likert scale was used for quantitative data, assigning values to responses and calculating mean and standard deviations. Chi-square analyses were conducted to explore differences in business Turkish needs between genders and ages, reported under the sub-title of subject areas. Additionally, content analysis was employed for open-ended survey questions.

3. Findings and Results

In this section, the findings of the study are given. Firstly, the qualitative data analysis is presented in tables with codes and categories. Secondly, the data from the questionnaire have been analyzed and presented in figures and tables, including frequencies.

3.1. Findings from the interviews with the stakeholders

The qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with stakeholders, encompass governmental and non-governmental entities. The primary focus is understanding expert and stakeholder perspectives concerning Business Turkish needs and challenges Syrians face. Two overarching themes emerged through content analysis: "Turkish language requirements within a business context" and "problems and difficulties Syrians encounter in using and learning Turkish."

Theme 1: The Turkish language needs of the Syrians in the business context

The first theme retrieved from the data helped researchers to reveal the possible opportunities that would help refugees do well using the Turkish language in the work environment. Findings identified needs and opportunities concerning both present and target situations of the participants.

¹ Go to https://www.yee.org.tr/sites/default/files/icerik/basvuru_rehberi_a1_onesi.pdf for pre-A1 level descriptions for Turkish as foreign/second language

² for detailed descriptions of reference levels go to <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/272343/>

Table 1*Codes and Categories Table for Stakeholders' Opinions on the Business Turkish Needs of Syrians in Business Context*

Categories	Codes
-Providing employment and financial support opportunities at the end of business Turkish education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Providing microcredit loans for participants -Creating job opportunities at the end of the business Turkish education -Integrating vocational education and language education -Providing incentives at the end of the business Turkish education -Providing support for digital sales /online business -Referral to angel investors
-Strategies/methods/techniques to be used in Business Turkish education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Drama, scenario-based activities, question and answer activities in business Turkish education -Giving real-life tasks and assignments -The necessity of not being grammatically focused -The importance of being exposed to Turkish in learning -Organizing speaking clubs for speaking practice -Teaching real-life Turkish / Teaching functional Turkish -Organizing events with joint participation of Syrian and Turkish women -Designing need-based education -Assignments that require class participation during education -Allocating enough time for business Turkish education
-Required Turkish language proficiency level for Business Turkish education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At least A2 language proficiency level requirement for Business Turkish education -Necessity of a placement test -Need for grouping the participants into language levels in business Turkish education
-Materials development and content of a business Turkish course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teaching communication skills in a business context -Teaching business terms and creating a glossary of business terms -Incorporating topics of accountancy, finance, e-commerce, banking, etc. into the business Turkish course -Teaching labor legislation and personal rights -Inclusion of employment contract and entrepreneurship topics/themes in the business Turkish course -Teaching legal rights in terms of business context -Providing information about laws and taxation in the content of the business Turkish course -Providing information about the tradesman exemption certificate -Teaching how to register in the Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen -Providing information about company establishment /starting a business in the content of the course

Table 1 (Continued)

-The effects of age and educational background factors in business Turkish language teaching and learning	-Positive effect of being a university graduate when learning Turkish -Young people are highly motivated in education -Lack of literacy among some Syrians after the age of 40 -Easier adaptation of the younger generation to online education -Participants in the course should not exceed the age of 45 -Middle aged learners do not have enough time for language learning
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According to Table 1, when stakeholders were questioned about the Turkish language needs of Syrians in a business setting, five distinct categories were identified. The first category, "Facilitating employment and financial support opportunities upon completion of business Turkish education," emphasized the importance of financial assistance and guidance on loan possibilities. Stakeholders recommended integrating vocational education, online business support, and referrals to angel investors, deeming this integration critical for participant motivation and aligning course content with real-world expectations.

The second category focused on "strategies/methods/techniques" for Business Turkish education. Participants stressed the importance of employing suitable methods and strategies tailored to participants' specific needs, such as drama, scenario-based activities, and the use of social media. Designing a program based on needs and avoiding a grammatical emphasis in language teaching were proposed to enhance course efficacy and participant motivation.

The third category pinpointed the "required language proficiency level" for business Turkish education, with stakeholders suggesting that at least an A2 proficiency level should be a fundamental prerequisite. Participants recommended categorizing learners based on language proficiency levels through placement tests, drawing from their experience that basic proficiency contributes to vocational training success.

Concerning the fourth category, stakeholders suggested instructing specific legal procedures and communication skills in a business context, emphasizing the importance of practical content related to entrepreneurship, finance, and labor legislation. Creating a glossary of business terms was also recommended as part of the course content.

The fifth category, "effects of age and educational background in language teaching and learning," underscored concerns about the influence of age and educational background on language acquisition. Stakeholders proposed grouping learners based on these factors to tailor courses according to diverse learning needs.

Theme 2: Problems and difficulties in using and learning Turkish

The qualitative data from the interviews have also provided information about the participants' experience in using and learning the Turkish language. Under the theme of *problems and difficulties the Syrians face while using and learning the Turkish language*, several categories emerge, revealing significant challenges and problems regarding the Turkish language in many respects.

Table 2*Codes and Categories for Problems and Difficulties Syrians Encounter in Using and Learning Turkish*

Categories	Codes
-Women's problems in social cohesion and economic integration	-Organizing courses suitable for women's conditions -Providing nursery/day care facilities for children during language education for women -Difficulties in providing equal education opportunities for women and men
-Providing access to language education	-Not having enough time to attend courses (for participants who are already employed) -Offering transportation services for face-to-face lessons -Ease/accessibility of learning at home -Providing distance Turkish education opportunities -The negative effect of giving vocational training in Arabic and English language - Not being exposed to the Turkish language -Providing free/extra internet for encouraging to attend online courses
-The negative effect of the financial incentives in the language education process	-Incentive policies are reducing the quality of the trainings -Seeing incentives as a salary is a problem
-Problems faced in online education	-The problems with online education -Keeping the camera off during online classes - Age factor in online education - Obligation to attend online classes -Lack of access to technology at home (computer, tablet, or smartphone)

Qualitative data revealed substantial challenges faced by Syrians in learning Turkish, categorized into four groups. The first category centered on "women's challenges," highlighting women's disadvantages due to limited access to resources and opportunities. Stakeholders proposed program designs addressing these issues, including online courses and nursery facilities for women with family responsibilities.

The second category addressed "accessibility issues of Syrians in language courses," identifying challenges such as time constraints for active workers, financial limitations, and reliance on translators. Stakeholders recommended supporting participants with transportation and additional internet accessibility packages to improve course accessibility.

The third category, "negative impact of financial incentives in the language education process," expressed concerns about financial incentives adversely affecting education quality. Stakeholders recommended altering this practice to foster learners' intrinsic motivation for language skill improvement.

The final category, "Challenges of Syrians in online education," outlined issues such as low-class participation, inadequate technological skills in middle-aged groups, and a preference for smartphones over computers for online classes. Stakeholders suggested incorporating group and pair work activities to augment participation and motivation in online courses.

In conclusion, these findings underscore the significance of customizing Business Turkish courses to meet the specific needs of Syrian learners while also addressing challenges related to gender, accessibility, financial incentives, and online education. Stakeholder recommendations align with existing literature emphasizing the customization of language courses for business-oriented purposes.

3.2. Findings from the questionnaire

Of the 663 responses received from the "Business Turkish electronic needs analysis questionnaire," 309 responses met the selection criteria for the study. The first criterion was selecting responses from Gaziantep and Adana provinces to determine the target group for the "piloting of business Turkish Module" project. Only female applicants from Adana were selected for two main reasons. Firstly, at least 30% women's participation in the project is required, which could be achieved through purposeful sampling. Additionally, the Adana Seyhan Municipality Women's Solidarity Center was the only suitable place for face-to-face classes and exams, with facilities for women. The second and third criteria were educational background and Turkish language proficiency level. Illiterate applicants, primary school graduates, and those with an A1 language proficiency level were excluded. After applying all the criteria, there were 309 beneficiaries in a homogeneous group. The quantitative data from this group were analyzed to identify their business Turkish needs, which will help design the program and develop content and materials. This part of the report presents the findings of this homogeneous group, addressing the research question: "What do the Syrians in Türkiye think of their needs and problems regarding business in Turkish?"

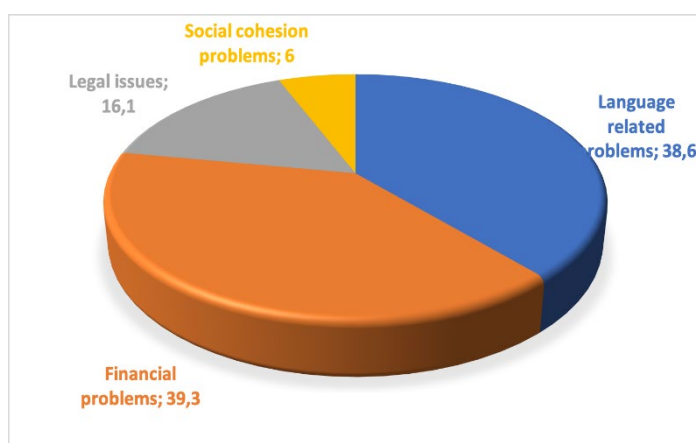
3.2.1. Findings for participants' current situation

Responding to an open-ended question, the participants were categorized into five groups based on the type of businesses they aspired to establish. The majority (59.2%) expressed interest in commercial enterprises, such as import-export, e-commerce, restaurants, marketing, the automobile parts industry, and the cream and cosmetics trade. Regarding e-commerce experience, 64.4% of the participants claimed no prior involvement, while a substantial 87% expressed a desire to engage in e-commerce. The contrast between low frequencies of actual online commerce activities and high frequencies of willingness to commence such ventures suggests a perceived necessity for e-commerce in business contexts. As a result, participants recognize the importance of strong Turkish language skills to thrive in online commerce.

As a result of an open-ended survey question on challenges faced by Syrians initiating or growing businesses, the responses were categorized into four groups, revealing financial problems (39.3%) and language-related issues (38.6%) as the top challenges (See Figure 1). This underscores the need for support in Turkish language skills for Syrians in a business context.

Figure 1

Challenges Faced by Syrians Starting Businesses



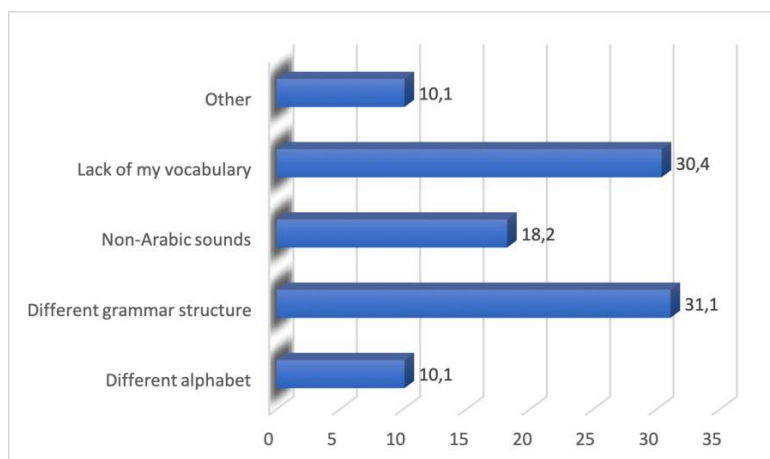
3.2.2. Turkish language proficiency levels of the participants

The survey revealed that 75.7% of the participants attended a Turkish language course during their stay in Türkiye. The language proficiency levels of participants were assessed with a focus on their certification status in the Turkish language. Participants with A1 proficiency were excluded based on the business Turkish piloting project selection criteria. The majority of the remaining participants were found to possess an A2 certificate (47.3%), with the second-largest group holding a B1 certificate. A2, classified as a basic language level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), denotes the ability to comprehend and communicate in familiar situations. Given the linguistic challenges prevalent in the country, a minimum proficiency of B1 is recommended concerning the CEFR. Therefore, the noteworthy proportion of participants holding A2 and B1 certificates (68.8%) implies their suitability for a business Turkish course.

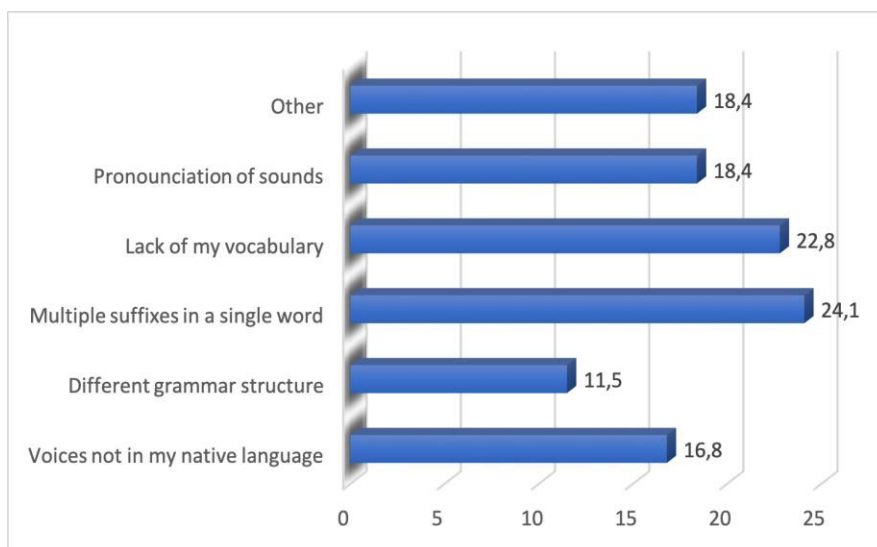
Regarding the challenges faced by participants concerning their writing skills, an analysis of the bar graph discloses that the foremost difficulties encountered pertain to "insufficient vocabulary" in the Turkish language and the "distinct grammatical structures" between Turkish and Arabic. Subsequently, "non-Arabic sounds" are identified as the third most prevalent issue, while the "variance in alphabets" emerges as the least problematic aspect on the list (See Figure 2).

Figure 2

Problems in Turkish Writing Skills

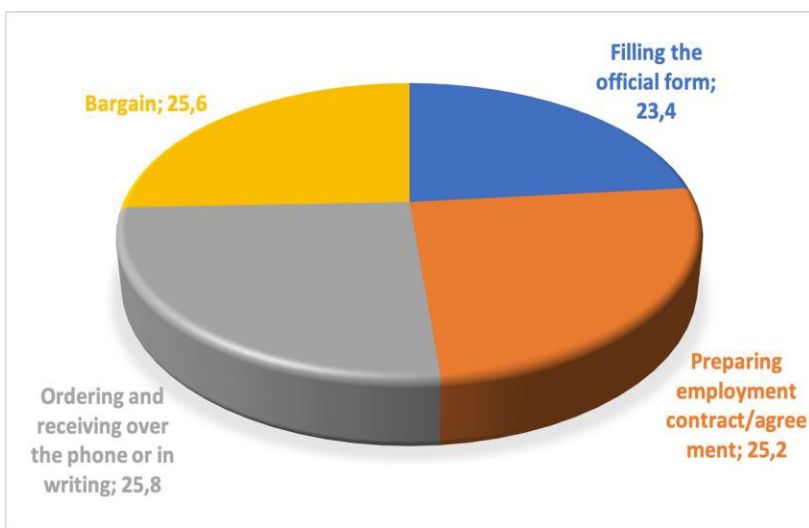


Concerning speaking skills, participants identified the structure of the formation of Turkish words, particularly those with "multiple suffixes in a single word," as the most challenging aspect. The frequency of responses related to the "Lack of vocabulary" mirrors that depicted in the speaking skills chart (Figure 3). This suggests that a deficient vocabulary was perceived as a shared issue, with comparable frequency levels in both writing and speaking skills.

Figure 3*Problems in Turkish Speaking Skills*

3.2.3. Participants' Turkish language needs in business contexts

Analyzing participants' responses regarding applying the Turkish language in a business setting reveals a uniform distribution across four distinct tasks. These tasks include negotiations, completing official forms, conducting buying and selling transactions via phone calls and messaging, and exchanging information through emails. Moreover, participants are actively involved in tasks such as preparing employment contracts and agreements (See Figure 4).

Figure 4*Activities in which the Turkish Language is Used Most in Business Contexts*

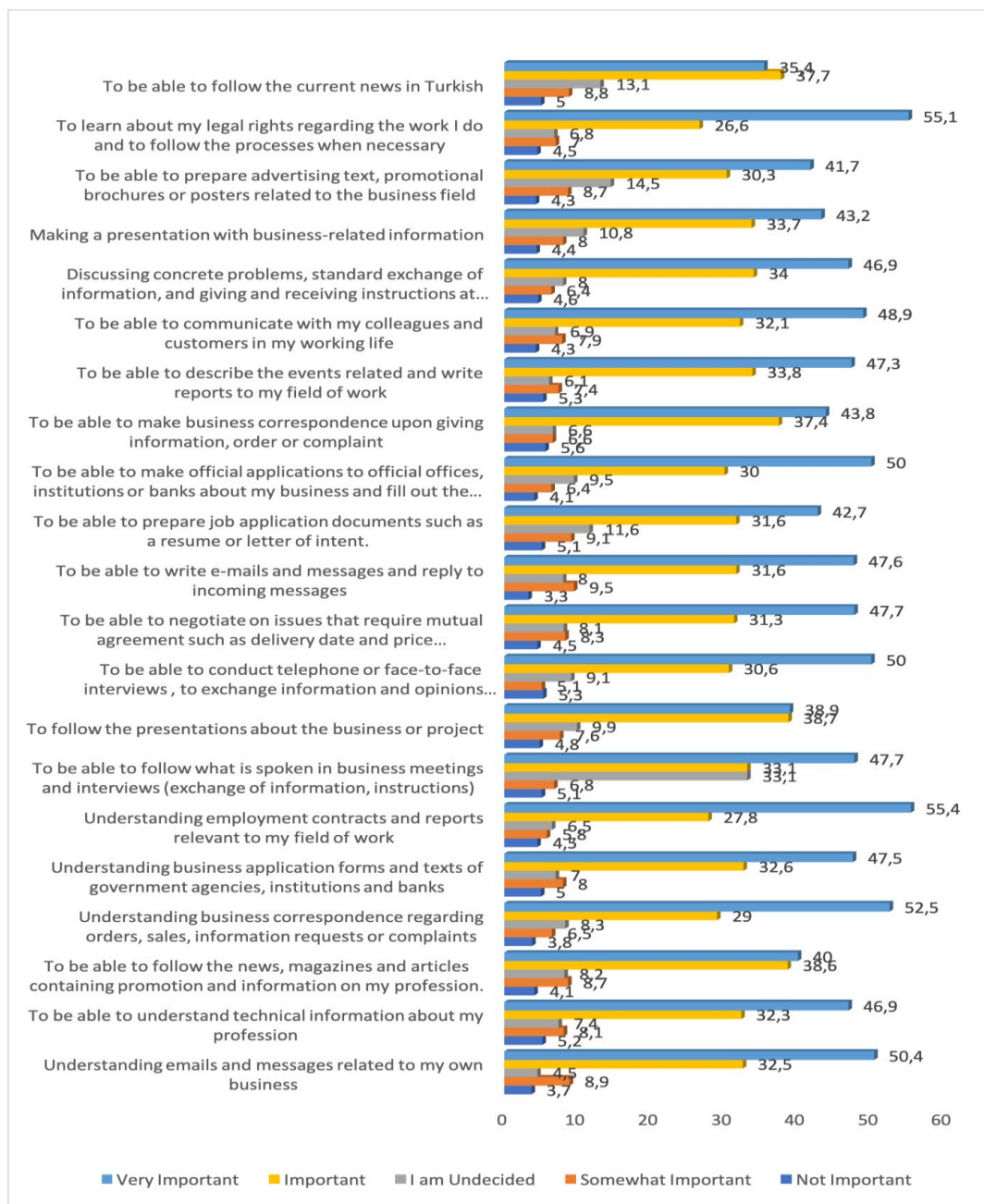
The results related to tasks perceived as challenging by Syrians in a business setting closely mirror the most commonly undertaken activities. This alignment suggests that these tasks are deemed essential and pose difficulties for individuals within the professional sphere (Figure 4).

In light of the learners' perception of 'target situation needs,' all tasks and activities related to business contexts outlined in the questionnaire were considered highly significant, except one task—specifically, "the ability to stay abreast of current news in Turkish." Notably, three tasks emerged as having the highest frequency of perceived importance: "acquiring knowledge about my legal rights concerning my work and navigating relevant processes when necessary," "comprehending employment contracts and

reports specific to my field," and "interpreting business correspondence related to orders, sales, information requests, or complaints." These identified tasks should be given top priority when formulating the objectives of a business Turkish course program (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Business-Related Tasks That are Important to be Done by Using Turkish



Finally, the survey findings indicate a considerable desire among respondents, with 98.9% expressing interest in enrolling in a Turkish course tailored for business purposes. This underscores a robust interest and an urgent demand among Syrians for business-oriented Turkish education.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

This research assesses the challenges SuTPs face in Turkish business contexts due to language and communication deficiencies. It aims to determine the language needs and competencies required for Syrians to engage in commerce, finance, trade, and entrepreneurship in Türkiye. The findings will inform the development of a Business Turkish Module for PEP Beneficiaries, including teaching

methods, course content, and materials. Ultimately, it can help improve the economic integration of Syrians into the Turkish economy.

The survey findings substantiate the core objectives of the "Development and Piloting of a Business Turkish Module" initiative. It is evident from the results that a pressing and expanding demand exists for a business Turkish course that integrates information and guidance on legal procedures with Turkish authorities, along with practical execution of business tasks in these contexts utilizing the Turkish language. These findings overlap with the findings of Bölükbaş (2016, p. 30) in the literature. It is seen that participants mostly use Turkish in their workplaces. Rather than expressing themselves in Arabic, they need to use the Turkish language since it is more effective. Syrian refugees living in Turkey, regardless of their level of Turkish, express themselves in Turkish in most cases in social life. Therefore, to accelerate and facilitate the integration of Syrian refugees into social and work life, language centers affiliated to universities, municipalities, associations, and NGOs should organize Turkish courses not only for students but also for non-student Syrian refugees in work environments who need Turkish for business purposes.

The analysis of stakeholder interviews and the scrutiny of questionnaire data indicate the significance of all four language skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing). Considering the problems with the speaking and writing skills, the findings support the results of Günsel (2020, pp. 97-98) indicating the difficulties in lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and language structures, especially while speaking and writing skills. These skills are crucial and require enhancement to empower beneficiaries to meet their business requirements. Notably, Syrian participants underscore the importance of business interactions such as email correspondence, composing business letters, engaging in telephone conversations with clients, understanding business reports, conducting business negotiations, and participating in business meetings. Proficiency in all four Turkish business language skills is deemed essential for effectively executing these activities. Consequently, a task-based syllabus can be devised to bolster these skills, thereby assisting beneficiaries in operating efficiently in their current or future professional pursuits.

Stakeholders have also suggested similar recommendations regarding strategies, methods, and techniques for a business Turkish course. They stress the significance of incorporating drama, scenario-based activities, question-answer sessions, speaking clubs, and assignments with class participation to maximize the effectiveness of the course. This collective input underscores the imperative of adopting a comprehensive and interactive approach to address the diverse linguistic demands within a business context.

To create instructional tasks suitable for a business Turkish course within a classroom setting, it is imperative to choose work-related objectives from the reference texts of *the Global Scale of English* (GSE, 2019) and *the Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001), taking into account the research findings. Additionally, these identified objectives should be contextualized to align with the specific business scenarios encountered by learners in Türkiye. Learners should be adequately provided with comprehensive guidance and up-to-date information about Türkiye's business laws and legislation to ensure a thorough understanding of the legal framework. Each skill should be enhanced through various engaging activities and exercises to foster a balanced development of the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing). Also, designing a task-based syllabus that integrates real-life scenarios and situations into the learning process is recommended to promote effective and practical language learning. Incorporating e-commerce-specific vocabulary and legal terminology into the curriculum can significantly improve entrepreneurial outcomes. Designing the Business Turkish modules with a stronger emphasis on the specific tasks identified by participants as priorities, such as writing professional emails, managing customer relationships, and participating in business meetings. These modules should integrate task-based learning activities to ensure learners can directly apply their Turkish language skills in real-world business contexts. To create an interactive and dynamic learning

environment, collaborative learning techniques such as drama, scenario-based activities, question-answer activities, speaking clubs, and assignments with active class participation should be incorporated. It can also be suggested to enrich the learning experience and provide valuable insights; experts from government and non-government organizations should be invited to deliver informative seminars and engaging presentations on the most relevant and in-demand topics. To cater to learners' diverse learning needs and preferences, adopting a blended online teaching model that combines synchronous and asynchronous components is advisable, allowing for flexible and interactive learning opportunities. This distance learning instructional design is crucial for this target group of learners, who already work intensively in the labour market and have limited time for intensive courses. As highlighted in Arslan's (2020, p. 83) research on the challenges of teaching Turkish to adult refugees, it is difficult for adult refugees to maintain compulsory attendance for weekday in-person classes. This is because these individuals are often financially responsible for supporting their families and cannot sustain their livelihoods without working. Therefore, course designs that allow them to adjust their schedules according to their availability and manage their learning would be highly beneficial for improving their Turkish language proficiency.

5. Limitations

This study presents valuable insights into the language challenges faced by SuTPs in Turkish business contexts; however, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research relies on self-reported data from participants, which may introduce response bias or subjective interpretations of language difficulties. Moreover, the results obtained are limited to the data of 309 participants and cannot be generalized to the entire population, that is, to all Syrian refugees living in Türkiye. Additionally, while the study incorporates input from various stakeholders, the data was retrieved from Gaziantep and Adana provinces, so the sample size and representation may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across different business sectors and geographic regions in Türkiye. Furthermore, the study primarily focuses on the linguistic aspects of business integration, leaving out broader socio-economic, legal, and cultural barriers that may also affect Syrian entrepreneurs and employees. Lastly, although the proposed Business Turkish course suggestions integrate indicators and references from global language frameworks such as the CEFR and GSE, further empirical testing and piloting are necessary to refine the curriculum/content for optimal effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the critical need for a specialized Business Turkish course to facilitate the economic integration of SuTPs into the Turkish labor market. The findings reveal that proficiency in all four language skills—speaking, reading, listening, and writing—is essential for effective participation in business activities, with a particular emphasis on workplace communication and professional correspondence. The study advocates for a task-based, interactive learning approach incorporating scenario-based activities, blended learning models, and sector-specific vocabulary to enhance the practicality of language instruction. By aligning the curriculum with global language frameworks and integrating real-world business contexts, the proposed Business Turkish course aims to address the linguistic needs of SuTPs while accommodating their work constraints. Ultimately, implementing such a program can contribute to both individual career development and broader socioeconomic integration, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic business environment in Türkiye. In this respect, the study provides significant outcomes for policymakers and decision-makers regarding the issue of interest.

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