



A language learning adventure of a person succeeded the language training

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APA Citation:

Özden, M. (2018). A language learning adventure of a person succeeded the language training. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 14(3), 233-252.

Submission Date:13/07/2018

Acceptance Date:20/07/2018

Abstract

Language learning is a process that probably starts even while in the womb and lasts lifelong. This process begins with the acquisitions of the mother tongue, diversifies with academic needs in the following years and continues with foreign language learning besides the mother tongue. Language learning; can be defined as the communication process acquired or learned by physical, psychological and mental maturation, with the stimuli surrounding it. While native tongue acquisition is a spontaneous process in its natural environment; foreign language learning is a conscious and planned process that arises with the desire or need of the person. Foreign language education in Turkey covers 9 years training that includes the first year of undergraduate education and starts at primary school; however the level of success in learning a foreign language is very low. In the study, the contribution of the foreign language training experiences of a person who has succeeded in learning a foreign language, to the teaching of a foreign language or a mother tongue has been evaluated. Data; was collected and interpreted by narrative research design from qualitative research methods. As a result of the study, it was concluded that language learning occurs effectively in the early ages, in the classrooms with a small number of learners, with the support of the family, training of each language skills separately and by adding a new knowledge on a previously learned one.

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Keywords: Foreign language learning; foreign language learning process; narrative study

1. Introduction

At present, success in academic and social life is directly related to knowing one or even more than one foreign language besides mother tongue. People who know one or more foreign languages confront fewer obstacles on their career steps. Nowadays, it is obvious that to be able to present more than one knowledge of foreign language in the portfolio for the employment leads to greater possibility to be employed. Both state and private institutions present priority to employ the foreign language-speaking individuals. For this and similar reasons all over the world, educational institutions supply a foreign language teaching program for their citizens from the early school stages . Considering the importance of learning foreign language, professional foreign language teaching training is provided both in formal educational institutions and various private courses in Turkey, too.

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The necessity and desire to learn a foreign language has been a matter of considerable importance since ancient times. Religion, trade and art were influential in the past, among the factors that caused the need for learning a foreign language. When it comes to the 21st century, learning and teaching a foreign language is an important factor that brings success or failure in social life. Reforms and innovations in education, in social and political life in Turkey after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, has been effective in training both the mother tongue and foreign language. With the end your of being a part of a new developed civilization, this new Republic has been fostered the teaching and training of western languages, especially English. There is pretty great emphasis on foreign language education in formal educational institutions in Turkey. Indeed, Turkey Grand National Assembly issued in the third year a Program Circular of Ministry of National Education which is also known as, "Education Pact" or "General Ministry of Education and Training Program" enclosed the statement that emphasized the importance of teaching foreign languages in language courses regarding the high necessity both in our country in practice and economic life, 8.3.1923 The Minister of National Education Ismail Safa (Özler) "(Binbaşıoğlu, 2015, 247).

Secondary school curriculum in Turkish Republic can be divided into two as before and after the Republic. Prior to the Republican period, the final form of foreign language lessons in the secondary school program was the Arabic, Farsi, and Lisan-i Ecnebi (Foreign Language). There were 4 hours foreign language classes per week at 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grades (Cicioğlu, 1985). In the renewed program in 1924, the foreign languages taught in the first, second and third grades were increased to 5 hours per week, In the Secondary school program launched between 1938 and 1949; foreign language classes were 12 hours. It was 9 hours between the years 1949-1970.

In the 1931, foreign languages at the high schools were increased to two in the curriculum. The first foreign language classes were 5 hours per week and the second foreign language classes were 3 hours per week. In 1981-1982 foreign language courses in weekly course distribution in general secondary school and high school were 3 hours in junior high school 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades; In the high school, 3 hours in each 3 grades, 4 hours in the 1st and 2nd grades in literature department, and 5 hours in 3rd grade (Akyüz, 2006, 355). Obviously, even before the proclamation of the Republic and in the period after that, the Turkish National Education System has valued to the foreign language education.

The research conducted by British Council and TEPAV in 2014 with the expertise of two institutions in different fields in order to evaluate foreign language training and especially English education in public schools, English language training was reported to performed poor than expected in the country.

"In terms of English language proficiency, Turkey has yet to catch the rival economies. Considering several criteria on speaking in English, Turkey has consistently low ranking. For example, English Proficiency Index 2013 (EPI) developed by English first, ranked Turkey among 60 countries as of 41. In 2012, the total Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) average score of both native Turkish speakers and Turkey residents are 75 out of 120 which is similar to the countries that do not use Latin Alphabet like Ethiopia and Sudan"(TEPAV, 2014).

Over the course of many years, in terms of integrating to the western civilization, Turkey has been trying to implement the European Union's language policies. "It is targeted that European citizens could speak European languages, at least two or three of them. According to this, European citizens are expected to learn the first foreign language in primary education, the second foreign language in secondary education and the third foreign language at the university "(Erdoğan, 2002, 122). "European Language Portfolio" Project by the Unit of European Council of Language Policies designed for foreign language training in Europe, promotes having a language passport of each European citizen, and in 2001 this portfolio project has been initiated in Turkey by the approval of Board of Education Department of the Turkish Ministry of Education. "It has been deemed appropriate for the practice to be started in

private Turkish schools, Anatolian high schools and super high schools, especially in foreign language education, with a gradual approach gradually to general high schools. The working group formed by the Board of Education has developed the European Language Portfolio Model for the students aged 15-18 years in high schools. The prepared language portfolio model was sent to schools for the purpose of being tested at the beginning of 2002-2003 academic years and the pilot project started to be implemented in pilot schools "(Gültekin and Anagün).

It is obvious that, foreign language teaching in Turkey; is conducted in a systematic and planned program which begins first in primary education and results in the first year of undergraduate education. Additionally, projects and studies in Europe has also been taken into consideration and sampling in Turkey. However, not every individual who has experienced these language levels in education has the ability to learn foreign languages. Therefore, it is necessary to address the questions about who, when, how much, how to get the education in foreign language teaching. Many factors like student, teacher, teaching method and process, learning resources etc. influence the success of the training given in the field.

1.1. Literature review

Actually, Turkey has conducted various research related to teaching foreign languages. First of all, in the master research conducted by Dağ (2008) the European Language Policies implementations at secondary schools in Turkey were analyzed and concluded that foreign language classes curriculum, course books, contents and methods for foreign language training in Turkey at secondary schools should be designed as multi-lingual and multi-cultural methods. What is more, teachers of language should also take part in up to date in-service training and should be provided to implement these innovations. Another research made by Haznedar in 2010, addressed to the teaching and assessments / evaluation methods and technics which they used in the classroom. The study also includes a general evaluation of 8 year of basic education reform by the foreign language teachers who employed at formal state schools.

On the other hand, Çetintaş (2010) made a research that analyzes the implementations on foreign language education by Ministry of Education in order to realize the commonality of the standards with the European Union within the scope of 'continuity principle' of European Council in foreign language education. From the point of view of the EU's principles of continuity movement, the research displays the applications in the field of foreign language teaching within the transition from primary school to secondary, discusses the problems incompatible with the principle of continuity in foreign languages, and discloses the solutions.

In Turkey, one of the studies relating to the situation in the foreign language teaching done at Yücel and et al. (2017). The data obtained in the study give an idea about the situation of foreign language teaching in Turkish education system. "In this study, the curriculum of English lessons of the last 15 years was examined within the framework of various criteria, the understanding of the developments in the programs was aimed" The curriculum of the English language lessons in two primary schools (2006 and 2013) and four secondary schools (2002, 2011, 2014 and 2016) has been analyzed in the context of program design principles (scope, progression, continuity, coherence, balance, usefulness and flexibility). According to findings, it has been observed that developments in the world are followed on the field of language education in primary and secondary English lesson curricula, and made attempt to include innovations in the programs. The research resulted with the conclusions that the primary school education programs are generally compatible with the design principles except flexibility but the recommended periods are insufficient" (Yücel et al., 2017).

In Turkish society, the tradition of storytelling tradition has been since ancient times. From the very early Turkish societies, the method story telling has been used to educate the society, and to develop the

desired behaviour. Indeed, the tradition of educating the society through storytelling is a common practice, especially by eastern societies. "The stories are in fact as old as human history, and they have been carried by the previous generation day by day as a way of conveying people's individual experiences, observations, talks, or feelings through internal filters. Poems, legends, personal experiences, autobiographies, etc. it has always been the desire to convey the individual and social experiences of mankind in different ways. It seems that this desire will always be here to stay. The desire of people to present their experiences to others by blending them with inner perception filters is a fact to be taken into account "(Saban, Ersoy, 238: 2017). This tradition that started with epics and episodes also influenced the research methods used today. The narrative research has been preferred in the study since the investigation concerns the experiences of an individual.

1.2. Research questions

The study aimed to propose some solutions encountered in foreign language education system in Turkey by evaluating a successful language learning story of an individual who trained in another foreign language learning system, rather than identify the current situation in Turkey.

In general, this study was conducted to determine what should and should not be done in order to be successful in language teaching, especially in foreign language teaching. In response to this objective, the following questions were sought:

1. Is the environment where individual resides in important while learning a language?
2. Does the parent's education and profession play a role in language learning?
3. Does preschool education and the features of this education have a role in language learning?
4. Does the role of primary school education and the nature of this education play a role in language learning?
5. Does the school type that the students get training has a role in learning the language?
6. Does language teaching methods and the features taught in lessons have a role in language learning?
7. What is the role of homework for learning languages?
8. Is there a place for separate studies of language skills in language learning?
9. Does changing the environment in which language is taught and the conditions in this new environment has a role in learning a language?
10. What must be done in order to make the learnings permanent for the learners in language learning?

2. Method

Narrative research is identifying what should be done and what should not be done by taking into consideration what narrators share about any subject through their personal experience so that other people interested in the topic can benefit from it. Narrative research can be conducted by using diaries, photographs, letters, autobiographic writings and other data. Generally the notes on the topic are shared with the narrator and the written records may be done with cooperation (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, 87). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that this kind of research can be conducted by different people at different circumstances. "Narrations are not mirrors; they do not break the past and reflect. Imagination and strategic interests affect what kind of stories narrators will choose, how they will bind the events and how they will make them meaningful for others. Narrations are helpful in research

because story narrators reproduce the events instead of interpreting them. The explanations in the narrations are the truth, they are not the loyal representatives of the past, they form connections between the past, the present tense and the future” (Reissman, 2005). “Qualitative researchers generally use words in their analyses and they generally collect or build up stories about what they research. But there are some qualities that distinguish narration researchers from qualitative researchers. From necessity, these different qualities reveal a difference in these two different research paradigms. The common approach of narrative researchers is to describe stories, narratives, or sequences of events. Generally, these researchers adopt the assumption that stories are a basic unit for human experience or else one of them”. (Clandinin, 2006). “Narration in the most basic sense is explaining an aspect of oneself by using the desired symbols. What does this mean? All components of communication appear as a result of a narration; all components of communication express narration as a narration. A narration requires an action and they appear via the speakers or the writers. A narration is not a series of random, meaningless words. What exactly is revealed by this communicative action? A speaker/writer narrates a specific narration and final narration. In the center of narrative investigation are questions” (Medeiros, 2013). “When narrative research started as the individuals’ everyday experiences, we knew that narrative research was much worth than individual experiences. Narrative research enables the exploration of each individual experience which are formed and shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, family and institutional narratives. Narrative research starts and ends with the experienced stories of the participants. Narrative research enables us to work on finding the ways to enhance and change the experience of the individual in both a phenomenal and methodological appearance” (Clandinin, 2013).

“Narrative research is a difficult approach to use. It requires the researcher to collect a big amount of information about the participant. In addition to this, the environment in which the participant lives should be understood well. In order to reveal individual stories, from the sources that connect certain stories, one should have different points of view” (Creswell, 2016, 76).

The major reason why narrative research is used in education is because individuals are beings that lead lives that enable them to acquire experiences that can be narrated into stories individually or socially. This research type which focuses on stories, investigates how people experience the world through the stories that they create. With this point of view, it can be identified as constructing and reconstructing process of educational, individual or social stories. (Saban & Ersoy, 2017). “The focus of narration research with human experiences can be associated with John Dewey and Jerome Bruner. In addition to this, Eric Erikson has also contributed to the conceptualization of narrations as a research technique by investigating the life experiences from the point of view of psycho analysis. It has been stated that the first use of narration in the field of psychology was started by Freud who made interpretations of his personal experiences. The subject that the researcher is mostly concerned with is to explore the experiences of participants. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) divide these experiences into two; as individual experiences and social experiences. According to this, individual experiences are experiences that an individual experience by himself, whereas social experiences are experiences that are a result of interacting with people in the environment” (Saban & Ersoy, 2017pp. 248-249). In this research narrative research has been used, because it has been aimed for people working on language instruction to benefit from the personal experiences of a person who has been successful in learning a language. By taking into account what has been narrated, it has been desired to identify what should be done and what should not be done in language instruction.

2.1. Sample / Participants

An individual who employed as a lecturer at a university in the western part of Turkey and has a good level of language competences in speaking, listening, writing, reading in four foreign languages

besides her mother tongue. The study includes the experiences she told in the face-to-face interview with the individual in March 2016.

2.2. Instrument(s)

The thematic derivation of the data obtained in the study has been as follows.

1. Thema the 1st: Nazan Arifoğlu's foreign language learning process
 - 1.1 When and how she starts learning a foreign language
 - 1.2. Methods, techniques, tools and materials used for learning foreign languages
 - 1.3. The beginning and the end of the foreign language learning process
2. Theme 2: As a scientist, Nazan Arifoğlu
 - 2.1. As a successful scientist in learning languages, Nazan Arifoğlu
 - 2.2. The role of Nazan Arifoğlu's family and surrounding community in language learning
 - 2.3. Difficulties in learning a language
 - 2.4. Facilities for learning languages
 - 2.5. Prejudices of her while learning languages
 - 2.6. Personal skills in learning languages

2.3. Data collection procedures

In the study, the data were collected in compatible with the method of narrative research. In order to determine the experiences of an individual who has succeeded in learning foreign language and the effects of these experiences on the language teaching and learning process, the open-ended questions prepared by the researcher and addressed to the person and the answers were interpreted. There are various approaches used in narrative researches. In the study, the type of thematic analysis is chosen from the types of thematic analysis, structural analysis, interactive analysis and actual analysis which are used in narrative researches. "The thematic analysis approach is useful when it is theorizing a number of events or when there are common thematic items about participants and events. What is important here is the content of the obtained data, rather than the context in which the data are obtained and language used in the research process "(Saban and Ersoy, 2017, p.256).

2.4. Data analysis

Narrative study; has performed with a woman scholar who serves at the university located in the west of Turkey.

8. Does the surrounding community have any importance in language learning?

Could you please inform us about your place of birth and family?

My name is Nazan Arifoğlu. I was born on 02 October 1972 in the city of Kardzhali in Bulgaria. I lived in this region Kardzhali with my family till I was 17 years old. The %80 percent of the population were Turkish within the years I lived until 1989, in Kardzhali, Bulgaria. In 1989, there was also a great wave of immigration. Because of the persecution to Bulgarian Turkish in the country, my family decided to move Turkey. After all, when I finished the 1st year at high school, we moved to Turkey. We settled in the city of Bursa. I have been living in Turkey since 1989.

Lecturer Nazan, who started his experience in foreign language learning in Bulgaria, participated Bulgarian education system till their forced migration from Bulgaria.

How did you learn Turkish language?

My mother said, "You will also learn to read and write Turkish," when I was in the 3rd year of primary school and we learned. My mother had found the alphabets that remained from her friends who were teachers and she taught both of us, me and my sister/brother, Turkish letters when we were in primary school, yet. Because Bulgarian was written in Cyrillic alphabet, and I learned for the first time Latin alphabet at home. So I learned to read and write in Turkish at home

Lecturer Nazan did not get systematic mother tongue education in Bulgaria where he grew up as a minority but it seems that the family has laboured to teach her to write and read Turkish in Latin alphabet.

9. Does the parent's education and profession have any role in learning a language?

My Master; what is the profession and education background of your father and mother?

My father is a medical doctor; he had two specialties in Bulgaria. Internally, gastrology and dietology. My mother is a medical doctor, too. She is a neurologist. When we came to Turkey, my father was registered only as internal medicine specialist bypassing the necessary exam here in Turkey again. And my mother also got the same process for her specialist as neurology. Both of them continued their profession when they moved to Turkey.

Her parents got their bachelors degree and have been working in the field of medicine. It is inferred that her parents have supported consciously to the education of their children in general and to their language education specifically and contributed to the success of her language learning.

10. Does preschool education and the features of this education have any role in language learning?

Because I was born and grown up in Bulgaria, depending on the education system and the conditions in Bulgaria, both nursery and kindergarten were all necessary for all of the children. About one and a half or two years old children are given firstly to nursery soon after they learn their toilet habits. Then I went to kindergarten for a year before the first grade.

Nazan Hoca continued his education life obligatory with nursery school and later with the kindergarten, and since early childhood education is compulsory from the age two, it is seen that the early start of education life has made a positive contribution to success. When comparing to Turkey, the age to start primary education seems older.

Was the language of instruction during the nursery school, Turkish or Bulgarian?

It was Bulgarian. Actually one or one-and-a-half year old child starts speaking merely with one word or two words, so I actually learned Bulgarian language when I went to the nursery in Bulgaria.

Was Turkish language spoken among the members of your family?

Turkish was spoken in the family and when we went to the nursery Bulgarian was spoken. Almost all of the Turks were like that. All Turkish children were subjected to the same compulsory education in Bulgaria. Furthermore, all the women had to work during the socialist regime in Bulgaria. Therefore,

there were nurseries in every neighbourhood and every district for the kids. These nurseries were authorized and controlled by the state.

Lecturer Nazan starts learning speaking and learns to speak Bulgarian concurrently her nursery school experiences that starts at the age of one-and-half, however her mother tongue is Turkish. This indicates that an individual can learn both languages at the same time at an early age, and communicate on both levels. To some extent, it may address the question of the age that the language teaching should start.

Pre-school education starts at the age of one-and-a half and goes on till the age of seven. Well, prior to the primary school education, kids must participate in the kindergarten. Were there any differences between the education in kindergarten and nursery?

What the differences between the kindergarten and nursery were about the location and the period of education. Kindergarten was on the ground floor of the primary school building and we were attending the kindergarten education there. Therefore, we started to bear the feeling gradually that we would be the pupils soon, that was what I felt there. And it was semidiurnal, we did not have to stay there whole day like in the nursery. Whereas, the kids were staying in the nursery school till their parents came to pick the kids up at quitting. Certainly, there were both kindergartens and primary schools in each neighbourhood, district and region. Thus, none of the kids had to go to a remote school with the buses. Because of this I did not have any difficulty going to the school.

It seems that the government builds up the available situations for children who are old enough to attend the kindergarten, set up to be able to move on their own and live outside the control of their parents. The child could go to kindergarten on her own and it is understood that structure of the system is schooling near home since they are still small.

Your mother tongue was Turkish and Turkish was spoken only in the family. In the kindergarten Bulgarian was spoken. Was there any study of teaching any foreign language, for you the third language, in the kindergarten?

The songs were being taught. Russian songs were being taught. There, especially during the socialist regime, everyone was expected to know Russian. Just like the expectation for everyone to know English in Turkey, the expectation was everyone had to know Russian.

From the beginning of kindergarten, students were being taught in Russian beside the Bulgarian language. Nazan teacher compares this with the necessity of learning English in Turkey. In pre-school institutions in Turkey and simple daily conversation in a foreign language song, colours, numbers and so on are trying to be taught. However, the lack of compulsory preschool education in Turkey, students that do not receive pre-school education this make it impossible for them to encounter with another language and this situation delays their chance to face with a foreign language.

4. Does the role of primary education and the features of this education play a role in language learning?

Then you started primary school education?

I have only studied Bulgarian in the first semester. First of all I must say that, in the educational system in Bulgaria, children can only go to primary school after the age of seven. So when I was born in 1972, I started primary school in 1979 instead of 1978. In other words, according to the understanding of the socialist regime, the child must go to the school after turning the age of seven and

becoming the age of eight so that the learning perceptions of the kids formulated in their biological development. We did not have any Turkish lessons in the school. This is because of the Bulgarian government's assimilation policy of the socialist regime. We only read Turkish at home, even after 1984 Turkish was completely banned.

Comparing to Turkey, the age of the children for starting primary school seems to be quite late. 5- 5.5 years with the request of the family is the age for starting primary school in Turkey; After the age of 5,5, the start of primary school can be delayed with the request of the parents. That is to say an average of starting primary school is 6 years old in Turkey. Another thing that needs to pay attention is that the Turks living as minorities here struggled in hard conditions to learn their mother tongue at that time.

How many years did the primary school last, my master?

Primary school last 3 years, there was primary education to the third grade. I am talking about the old system, the socialist system, because I do not know about the current system. Secondary school was from the fourth grade to the seventh grade.

Although primary education starts at the age of 7, children are included in the education system at the age of 2; It is observed that kids are getting pre-school education for 5 years: 4 years in nursery and 1 year in kindergarden, primary school for 3 years, secondary school for 3 years and then high school.

5. Is there any role of the school type that the student attend in learning language?

Did the student do her/his school choice or was the state supposed to direct her?

The direction of the state could also be the issue. More precisely: Time to time our teachers recommend us like "your mathematical knowledge is good, you should go to construction vocational high school or go to the electronics technical department". I noticed when I came to Turkey that technical or vocational schools are accepted as high schools for the students who get the lowest mark or who are not successful enough in primary and secondary school. However, the student who is not good enough to pass the exam of any school stays in the general high school in Bulgaria.

I remember that our teachers sometimes made family meetings and they advice the families about the students competences and skills so that the student would be more likely to be guided and directed here. One day when the Bulgarian State started to change our names, my mother told me pretty decisively that 'you are going to get foreign language education at high school, so you have to enter Anatolian high school exam, you are going to prepare yourself for those exams.

Which grade is this you mean, my master?

The seventh grade, I studied Bulgarian, Turkish and Russian until the seventh grade. I studied Bulgarian, Russian was a compulsory course, including the first-year in primary school it was two hours a week. After the fifth grade, we have to get another language course either German or French. I chose German as a foreign language because we did not have a teacher of English in our school, indeed my mother heard that German is closer to English and I studied German on this purpose.

The students were learning Bulgarian and Russian, except Turkish, until the seventh year. When compared to Turkey instead of English as a foreign language which is often taught they taught Russian in Bulgaria. After the 5th semester, it is observed that a second foreign language is taught for two hours a week as an elective course.

There are conducted second foreign language teaching practices in some public schools that provide similar training in private schools. The reason why such practices are not carried out in all the schools is the lack of educated teachers, insufficient number of classrooms, and the other elements like these,

too. So the effect of increasing the number of teachers in foreign language teaching in Turkey should not be ignored in increasing the success in learning a foreign language

6. Does language teaching methods and the teachings in courses have any role in language learning?

How this language lesson conducted, my master, can you remember now? What was being taught?

In German classes?

Yes, in German classes’?

If the sampling is from Turkey, the grammar in subjects English taught here at the first grade of the university were being taught at the first grade of the primary school.

Is it from the fifth grade of the primary education?

Yeah. We were learning everyday speaking pretty well, and then there was a grammar teaching similar to that here.

Were there any writing activities?

Yes, there was writing activities. But when compared to Turkey, we had much more time for speaking activities, and our teacher had enough time to check our pronunciation, too. I can make a better comparison to the second and third grade at the high school since I attended these classes in Turkey, too. The number of students did not exceed 25 people even in the classrooms of ordinary neighbourhood schools in the district; therefore the teacher was performing oral examinations for all of us. We began to have written exams more when we came to Turkey. I didn’t almost get any oral exam in language classes. In the period while I was a student in Turkey, verbal performance skill was not assessed except written performance.

With the beginning of the fifth grade, a new foreign language starts to be taught, and it seems that the lessons focuses on four basic language skills separately to teach this new foreign language. Nazan teacher underlines the similarity of this foreign language education to the content of courses taught undergraduate level foreign language education in Turkey.

After the fifth grade of elementary education, foreign language education is being introduced. Any one of the three languages is preferred and you have chosen the German language. When you were in the seventh grade of primary education, you were getting the courses in Turkish, Russian, German and Bulgarian. After that, how did you continue your education?

Then I went to Anatolian high school in Turkey. There was the prep. Class for one year and if you pass the prep calls at the end of the school year and the teachers thinks that you’re successful, so you can continue to the next class. The vast majority of families do not direct their children there because they know that education is extremely difficult. So there was not any exam or test. The second important point is that many of them think that they will learn English but wouldn’t have any profession. When you graduate from a technical background in Bulgaria, one earns a qualification, at least as a construction technician or electrician. However, the Anatolian high school graduate is only graduated with foreign language knowledge. He does not have a profession. What is more many families had a tendency about their child that they did not want to expose their children to this hard and intense education. Moreover, if the child cannot pass the language exam at the end of the preparatory class, he / she will go to another high school again and there will be a one year of loss for the student, besides.

When she finished the secondary school she started a high school similar to Anatolian high school in Turkey and she got a prep class foreign language education at this school. It is informed by lecturer Nazan that the preparation class was very difficult and on the condition that one cannot succeed in this class, didn't have right to get further education at this high school.

Did you have only language hours in prep class?

We got only language hours in prep class. When we started we were 22 students but at the end of the school year we were 17. Because five of us decided that it was too hard and they gave up. I was also started to cry one week later we started. Because we didn't have any teacher of English in our school since we weren't living close to the central region. Because of this I got language education in German. However many of the other students knew English quite enough. Normal schooling was half day but the prep class in Anatolian high school level education was carrying on whole day. Our English classes were 30 hours a week. Besides maths and Bulgarian language and literature hours we had like in Turkey Turkish language and Literature, and two hours a week maths in order not to forget physics, chemistry and maths. Bulgarian language and literature was also two hours a week. We had grammar, speaking and translation hours separately. Apart from these we had two hours listening to support the learning whole day we got. At that time we had tapes. They made us to listen the tapes and discuss about what we had listened. We had discussion hours and all of these courses were pretty interactive. When there was a break, the best Beatles songs pronounced in English were playing. Well, the teacher check us whether we were listening or not. The goal was studying even in the breaks, actually. We later became aware of this activity that it was a kind of study; too. I can say that I could learn pretty good English, there.

Lecturer Nazan succeeded in prep class thanks to the intensive training provided in the primary and secondary school although she did not learn English in primary and secondary. In the prep class, grammar, translation, speaking, listening and discussion classes were conducted intensively. Even in the breaks in prep class it is understood that studies have been done about language. English songs were played for this reason as understood.

7. What is the place of homework in learning languages?

Well, were you provided any homework except the studies at school? What kind of assignments were they giving?

Yes, very serious assignments. We had to write each of the words we learned during the day for about five lines in the first month. We had special assignments. The homework notebook was being checked the next day for sure by the teacher. We had to fill out those five lines and that was a serious burden. The teacher was released after the first month, and she told us that we could decide how much we wanted to write, because some of you have visual memory and some of you work better by typing. Later on they did not check the vocabulary, but they gave composition essays very often. In different issues; At the beginning since our English knowledge was poor, we were supposed to write about our family, then our neighbourhood, what we were doing, what kind of activities we were doing outside of the class. As we expand our vocabulary, we were supposed to write compositions on different subjects' continuously.

It is obvious that dictation studies are an effective method for language learning. At the beginning of the prep. class more dictation work is being done to the students, but later the practices on writing is left to the preference of the students and to their needs. This indicates that the students have reached a level of consciousness after a period of studying language learning.

8. What is the role of separate studies on different language skills in language learning?

Were there essay writing assignments every day? Or was it a certain number of times a week?

Composition assignment was written for composition lesson. Translation assignment was given for translation lesson. We did not have translation hours every day; it was two days a week. Similarly, composition was also two days a week. At the end of each lesson, every teacher was providing homework about his/her lesson at the end of each class.

Well, did you have any homework related to listening and reading?

There was no homework related to listening and reading. In the course time, we were doing exercises related to listening and reading. I mean, he was already speaking to us and assessing our speaking skill. While he was listening to our speaking he asked, "ok you! Tell us what did he say or what he wanted to say?" He was asking our speaking and assessing our utterances right there. We were speaking English. Speaking in Bulgarian was strictly prohibited in the course time, everybody had to speak English.

There were written assignments for writing classes and translation assignments for translation classes. Although there were no homework related to listening and reading, it is obvious that there were intensive studies about these subjects, too. Oral exams are concerned with the development and measurement of both listening and reading skills. The prohibition of using languages other than English in the lessons has been effective in the development of listening, reading and speaking skills of the students.

Was there an English exam after the prep. Class?

We were not taking exams, and if there were teachers who had attended our class all year round, a board was being formed. This board, which was formed by the teachers decided about who could continue and who could not. There were also friends who gave up during this training. That's why we were seventeen students. And all the remaining seventeen students passed.

At the end of the prep year, the result of the student's efforts and development is decided by the board of the teachers, not by a single exam, which is about whether the students will continue to study or not. In this regard, the student is being encouraged to study every time during the year and in the required amount of time, and at the end of the year, the test anxiety is prevented.

After the prep class, was the foreign language taught other than English, Russian?

Yes, they do not teach Russian as a foreign language. If the student was in the foreign language class she/he can choose the second language. In other words, students who are in the English class can choose either German or French. Students in the French language class may choose either English or German. I chose German again. So I have never been contacted with French. Because there was a past already on German language. After that I continued to German language. Similarly, you need to choose

German or French if you're study in in English department in Anatolian high school. There is the same system here.

The Russian is an official language and to some extent some of the lessons were being conducted in Russian; After the preparatory class, a second foreign language teaching was started.

8. Does the environment being used for the language, learning being changed and the conditions being changed have an effect on language learning?

You completed the ninth grade there. You had to immigrate to Turkey after having completed theninth grade there. You continued your education here at Bursa Anatolian High School. What kind of difference is there between the educations there and here in Turkey?

There is a big difference. When my father and I presented the documents they told us that since your child had studied English only for three years in Bulgaria, it is impossible for her/him to be successful here. Since in Turkey students can take the Anatolian High School Entrance exam after completing both the third or fifth grade and the other students had studied English for five years, your child would be unsuccessful and it would demotivate your child they said. Yet, my father said: ' If he/she is unsuccessful, we will think about it'. There were 48 students in the class. We hardly ever took and speaking exams. We only took written exams so it was easy for me.

Lecturer Nazan, explained that there are great differences between Turkey and Bulgaria in terms of foreign language lessons, despite the fact that she had continued her education at a good, state school in a big city in Turkey. Though students in Turkey had studied English for five years, she became successful. What made her surprised was the increase in the number of students in the class and the lack of speaking exams. She also informed that though foreign language lessons seemed to be hard, she became successful as a result of the information based on memorization.

In Turkey the number of students in one class doubled. Did the education you took in Turkey assist you? Or was the education you took their sufficient for you?

We never spoke during the foreign language classes in Turkey. The composition courses in Turkey were really useful and made us develop our language. We also took reading lessons, which really made me unhappy. The thing we did was to read one or two pages from the book aloud without any discussion. In my opinion, we should have done the reading activities at home and discussed it in the class. We only did aloud reading without making any comments. We used to make comments after we had done the reading activity in Bulgaria.

It is clear that in Turkey there are no conversation parts during the lessons, real working is done on writing and it makes the language learning effective and lasting. One of the constructive thins done in Turkey is about the writing skill, which is a sub skill. It is also clear that although reading assignments are given to students as homework, there is no oral discussion to evaluate whether the students have comprehended the given text.

Did the teacher speak English or Turkish in the class?

They spoke English. I think it is an important difference in Turkey. In Bulgaria chemistry, maths and physics lessons were not in English, perhaps because of the fact that the teachers are not good at English. It was weird that these lessons were in English in Turkey. They told my father that since his child had not taken these courses in English there, she would be unsuccessful. However, they were taught in Turkish. Only the exam questions and the sentences written on the board were in English.

That was why it wasn't difficult for me. Since maths and chemistry were my favourite subjects it was easy for me to master the jargon. They were informed that unlike in Bulgaria, the medium of instruction in Turkey is English and it made her and her family worried. However, during the process we see that the subjects are taught in Turkish and only the exams are in English, which made her successful.

When you finished Anatolian High School, which languages did you know? Which were the languages that you could speak, write read and comprehend?

Turkish is my mother tongue. The words that I have learnt since I was born are Turkish. Moreover, I know English even though I do not speak it fluently and I sometimes fluff. I can also say that Russian is obligatory in Bulgaria, I can also speak it.

Lecturer Nazan cannot only comprehend what she hears and reads but also can write and speak in four languages.

10. What are the things that must be done by the learners to make the learnings permanent?

Would you please provide some information about your educational life after high school?

I went to private courses in the last grade of high school. I had very good grades in the pilot exams, and my mathematics teacher in Bursa Anatolian High School recommended me to study engineering. My dream was studying in the university of Bosphorus or METU (Middle East Technical University).

Is it because they use foreign language in their classes?

I decided that it would be better for me to study at one of these two universities, because they both teach foreign languages and those who graduated from engineering departments there can find work more easily, and then they can do well and hold on the market. I made ten choices on the universities. But I panicked the exam and I was out that year. I have again prepared quite seriously the following year. I have made regular pilot exams by myself and this helped me very much with the stress of exams. In the following year, I got my fourth choice METU food engineering.

Was education in university Turkish or English?

Education was totally in English language. In the first semester, except the compulsory Turkish Language and Literature and Turkish History of Revolution courses, all other courses were in English.

Lecturer Nazan stated that she preferred schools after high school with undergraduate degrees in foreign language education because foreign language education and foreign language education schools supply better education and later present better job opportunities. During the undergraduate education, all courses except HEC courses continued to be conducted in English and the level of English knowledge of her increased thanks to this factor.

METU is a university that gives education in English. Do they have preparation classes, if yes, did you study prep. class?

Like most of the universities which gives education in English there is a placement exam in METU. I took the placement exam and passed it and I directly started the first class. In METU after the preparation class there was an exam and the students who passed this exam started the first class but in their first class they did not know any words or terminology about their departments or branches. I had friends who even did not know what the English words for plus and minus are in maths lesson. We

were sitting in the lecture hall and the lecturer was talking in English completely. The language of the education is compulsorily in English and because of this it is not possible to talk sometimes in Turkish because there are a lot of foreign students. There were Albanians, African Americans (blacks), Kenyans, Zimbabweans, and Malaysians. Everyone chose this university as the language of the education is English so they have to teach in English. And this student asks what the English words for plus and minus are to the other friends and after 30 minutes the student doesn't understand anything about the lesson.

Lecturer Nazan did not study prep. class before her undergraduate study and as she studied English in her pre university life, she didn't have any difficulty in the first class. She thinks that the reason of the difficulty of the undergraduate departments that gives education in English is the lack of the teaching of the terminology about the undergraduate department. In this perspective it would be beneficial to teach the terminology of the undergraduate departments in the preparation classes.

You passed the prep class and started the first class. You studied vocational lectures and English lessons. And you didn't study any other foreign languages and you finished your school in four years. And you graduated after four years. The knowledge of the foreign languages is assessed with the exams organised by Assessment Selection and Placement Centre. Can we learn your marks?

First of all, YDS was previously KPDS. I got 88,75 in September 2015 KPDS. Bulgarian KPDS exam I entered in 2011, I got 99 when it was still KPDS. And I got 79 from Russian.

You already know your mother tongue Turkish, and you are working in your field as a faculty member. Is the language of your publications in Turkish? Or is it in English? Or do you publication your papers in other foreign languages you know? Which makes you easier, more effective when you are writing or reading?

We take care to publish internationally in scientific terms. That's why I usually write the papers in English. Actually It is because on the basis of necessity. Because publishing in English presents me both a higher score and a wider variety of magazines, and I write directly in English. Writing in Turkish and then translating it into English is much more difficult of course.

Well, so, in which language you are thinking? Do you write any other type of papers? Essay, memory, story. If you write, which language do you prefer to write in?

No, I did not write it like that. I can write in all the language I know. I have been working in English more recently, so I prefer writing in English. But I may write in Turkish as well. However I have to note that in prep class, our English teacher in Bulgaria told us that, "you can speak a language on the condition that you can think on that language too." Therefore in which language you speak, you have to think in that language right that time. Reasonably whatever language you're talking If I can manage to think, I can already talk. But I was going to say a Turkish sentence, I started it but until I pronounce it in English, it does not come to an end. In the end you do not even understand what you say. The same goes for writing. Thus, if I write in English, I already think in English, and then when someone enters to my room while I was thinking in English, She/he often said that he looked again weirdly. Because not in Turkish but in English I produce the utterances: nearly I would say Welcome! Instead of Buyrun!

Under the illumination of the scores you have received I can see that you can speak, read, listen and write with all of the language you know. In the language you are writing, you are speaking, you are thinking on that language too.. Do you make a special effort in order not to lose your language skills?

Yes, I am reading book is Bulgarian. Time to time I am reading in Russian, too. However if there is not available any book in these languages I am reading on the internet. To keep the language

alive you need to talk to someone who knows that language. I do not do much about Russian, I watch Russian movies on the internet in order not to stay too far. We may notice that the language skills if not used, can be lost over time.

Thank you very much, my master!

Lecturer Nazan, who had a master's degree and a Ph.D. after the Bachelor degree, stated that her publications generally in English as she preferred, but she could also publish papers in or her languages she knew. Language grades she got and use of foreign languages in her ongoing academic career demonstrate her success in learning languages still.

Lecturer Nazan stated that she could think both on that language that she could write and read. Furthermore She noted that she could write scientific papers in other foreign languages she knew but she does not write. She said that she did reading, listening and writing studies for the foreign language level not to fall, but she does not have opportunities to practice other languages she knew except English”.

3. Results

The teacher named Nazan, who started her education in the Turkish education system at the ninth grade, has told us the language learning story she had experienced in Bulgaria and Turkey.

1. In the language classes in Turkey there are problems related to the system. Factors such as trying to teach a language in crowded classes, teachers not finding an opportunity to deal with students individually, families not co-operating with teachers, and families not being made aware of the learning process influence the student success negatively. It is possible to conduct lessons in reading and writing in crowded classes, but it is not possible to have speaking classes in such a crowded environment. In contrast to Bulgaria, where teachers deal with students individually and make house visits to solve problems, which is not possible in Turkey because of crowded classes and the insufficient number of teachers. It is important for teachers and families to come together on a regular basis both to inform the families and to raise their awareness. It has been found in language instruction studies that the physical, economic and demographic properties of a system are effective. In order to be successful in language education, planning and implementing these plans play a vital role. Perhaps the key to success or failure is deciding on who to teach, and when and how to teach. When planning language teaching activities, we should put into consideration the needs of the society and the individual and their qualities and make adjustments accordingly. We should also make sure they are applicable and sustainable.

2. It has been observed that family plays an important factor role in getting through the difficulties during education life and eliminating the deficiencies, and that when children are raised bilingually, they have the chance to read and write in both languages. It has also been observed that children are capable of learning the second language in the official system that the language is given, whereas the native tongue learned in the house is enough to read and write. This situation shows not only how important the family is in trying to get rid of the deficiencies and eliminating obstacles but also, children who are raised bilingually can read and write in both languages.

3. In Turkey pre-school education is not mandatory, but the number of students that are able to get pre-school education because of economic and social reasons are, as in 2016-2017: age 3, 12.48% age 4, 36.17%, age 5, %70.02% (MEB 2017) The increase in the number of pre-schooling will influence the cognitive, mental and social development of children positively and help increase the success of the foreign language education in Turkey. The preschool education in Turkey is optional and the level of foreign language education in preschool education is not very high. Children starting preschool

education at a young age, and thus starting foreign language education at a young age will also have positive effects for children born in Turkey, because research shows that starting from the age of 1,5 every individual is capable of learning two languages and communicating in these two languages. Apparently starting language instruction at pre-school has had positive effects in the foreign language learning process.

4. Starting from the fifth grade, a second foreign language is also taught and it has also been observed that a great deal of effort has been put into teaching all of the four skills individually. The skill to learn is an important scholarly competence, and it is clear that the learning ability is not innate. The very popular phrase “to learn to learn” is not a motto, but the truth. In order to be a good student, you have to gain the ability to learn. Therefore, the most important duty of the learner should be to develop this skill. The teacher can never learn on behalf of the learner. One of the most important features of an individual is having a unique learning style. There is no one right or wrong learning style. Every individual learns uniquely, therefore teaching is always the process of the individualization of the learning (Kara, 2004).

When the students reach high school, it is observed that students are encouraged to attend regular high school or vocational schools according to the students’ abilities or the parents desire, and that the students who attend vocational schools attend higher education according to their fields. It is understood that if the student is encouraged by families and motivated individually to learn a language, it is possible to be successful.

6. It is understood that in foreign language prep classes, students are exposed to grammar, translation, talking, listening, and discussion activities and even in breaks they are involved in language activities. It is also understood that dictation activities are done especially during the early stages of prep classes, and that it is an effective method in learning a language. Even though during the early stages, students are asked to do dictation activities, in the later stages writing activities are done according to the needs or choice of students. It has been observed that students reach the desired awareness in the language learning process.

7. It is a fact that when students’ language learning process is not evaluated with just one exam, but a yearlong observation and evaluation by a committee of teachers and when the students’ study habits being regular and sufficient are monitored, exam anxiety is prevented in the end of the term.

8. In teaching a language, writing and translation assignments should be given individually, and a good deal of reading and listening activities should be conducted. It is understood that oral exams are effective in evaluating and increasing the listening and reading skills and when students are forbidden to speak in any other language but the target language, the reading and speaking abilities develop much better.

9. Nazan stated that after immigrating to Turkey and being educated in a good public school in a big city, she had a chance to observe the differences of foreign language classes in Bulgaria and Turkey. The crowded classes, oral exams almost never being conducted, in spite of the fact that native language classes were perceived as difficult but given in activities that require memorization are the differences that she observed in the Turkey. The positive feature of Turkish schools in terms of language teaching is that although speaking lessons are not conducted, there are writing lessons, and although reading skills are done by giving as assignments, they are not reinforced by discussion classes.

10. It has been observed that during B.A attending a university, where the classes are all conducted in English except for the mandatory YÖK lessons, makes a meaningful difference in knowing and improving a foreign language.

It has also been observed that during the prep classes, teaching students the terminology of their related fields would be helpful.

4. Discussion

In order to have a permanent ability in a foreign language, one must be able to think, speak and write in that language and in order not to lose the language skills that is acquired, one must do activities in reading, writing, listening and speaking. One cannot love what they do not know, they can love what they know, so enjoying the works of art that is written in the target language may help enhance knowledge and develop it. Language is a combination of four skills, knowing a language means understanding what is listened to, talking about opinions, understanding what is read and writing what you design. This approach has been conducted in the language lessons in Bulgaria from the beginning, and the fact that the classes are not crowded and that students have the individual time and attention of the teachers has made a great difference. Also the fact that parents are educated makes a positive contribution to education especially in language education.

5. Conclusions

The main conclusions of the study should be presented in a short Conclusions section, which should not simply repeat earlier sections.

1. It is essential to start foreign language education as soon as possible. With the help of the experience of learning a foreign language at a young age, it is understood that it is easier to learn a second, third or even fourth language.

2. In order to supply for the needs and interests of their children, parents should put an effort to know them better.

3. In order to be successful in learning a foreign language, individuals should know themselves, their strengths, weaknesses and especially their needs.

4. In Turkey, neither in foreign language education, nor in Turkish language education, a curriculum which enhances all four skills has not been developed so far. In both foreign language education, and in Turkish language education, course contents that are suitable for the aim, the newly university graduate teacher candidates having the necessary skills, the instruments that are enhanced with renowned approaches, methods, techniques and being supplied by the institutions, the teacher candidates being supplied with the necessary accreditations and later being seriously evaluated are the factors that will increase the success in foreign language education.

5. Some of the requirements that will increase the success in language teaching, are the institutions not only training teachers that have the sufficient skills, but also founding language classes that are not crowded, and recruiting language teachers in these classes.

6. In order to develop the qualities of language learners and language trainers, sufficient sources should be supplied, if necessary trainers should be provided with cross border training. The institutions should also make contributions in order for the trainers to share their experiences and information with others.

7. In order to learn and teach a foreign language students, parents, and educators should use the sources and benefit from efforts as much as possible. Using the time, place, individuals and materials, correctly and effectively and developing policies for this aim is highly crucial.

8. With this narration study, it has been aimed to raise awareness on increasing the success of the foreign language education and native language education in Turkey, by sharing the experiences of individuals that have been successful. By taking into account and continuing the correct approaches of

the institutions, families, and individuals that have been successful in learning a foreign language and working on improving the insufficient areas and correcting the wrong, it is possible to reach success.

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Dil öğrenmede başarılı olmuş bir bireyin dil öğrenme serüveni

Öz

Dil öğrenme insanın doğumu ile belki de daha anne karnında iken başlayan ve ömür boyu devam eden bir süreçtir. Bu süreç, anadili edinimi ile başlamakta ilerleyen yıllarda akademik ihtiyaçlarla çeşitlenmekte ve anadili yanında yabancı dil öğrenme ile devam etmektedir. Dil öğrenme; çevreden gelen uyaranlarla, fizikî, ruhsal ve zihinsel olgunlaşma ile edinilen veya öğrenilen iletişim süreci olarak tanımlanabilir. Anadili edinimi doğal çevrede ve kendiliğinden oluşan bir süreç iken yabancı dil öğrenimi; bilinçli, planlı ve kişinin istek veya ihtiyacı ile ortaya çıkan bir durumdur. Türkiye’de ilköğretimden başlayarak lisans eğitiminin ilk yılı da dâhil olmak üzere 9 yıl yabancı dil eğitimi verilmektedir, buna karşı yabancı dil öğrenmede başarı düzeyi oldukça azdır. Çalışmada yabancı dil öğrenmede başarılı olmuş bir kişinin yabancı dil öğrenim süreciyle ilgili tecrübelerinin gerek yabancı dil öğretimine gerekse anadil öğretimine katkıları değerlendirilmiştir. Veriler; nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden anlatı araştırması deseni ile toplanmış ve yorumlanmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda dil öğrenmenin erken yaşlarda, az sayıda öğrencinin bulunduğu sınıflarda, ailenin desteği ile, dil beceri alanlarının her birine ayrı ayrı yer verilerek ve her öğrenilen bilginin üstüne yenisinin eklenmesi ile olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: yabancı dil öğrenme, yabancı dil öğrenme süreci, anlatı araştırması

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