



## REASONS FOR ERRORS DONE BY BELARUSIAN LEARNERS LEARNING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

### TÜRKÇEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN BELARUSLU ÖĞRENCİLERİN TÜRKÇEDE YAPTIKLARI HATALARIN NEDENLERİ

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**ABSTRACT:** Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language (TFL) has gained importance recently and several studies are carried out in this field. Especially, learners of linguistically different communities (Byelorussian/Russian) are observed to make errors while learning Turkish. If making errors is an integral outcome in learning a TFL, then to what extent is it true for Byelorussian learners to do errors while producing Turkish sentences? What are the specific areas Byelorussian learners do errors? What are the reasons for doing errors in Turkish? What are solutions to cope with linguistic problems while learning TFL? This study investigates the answers of these questions and makes suggestions for TFL learners.

**Keywords:** Teaching Turkish as a foreign language, different language families, error done by foreign learners

**ÖZET:** Türkçenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi son zamanlarda büyük bir önem kazanmıştır. Özellikle, dilleri birbirinden farklılık gösteren toplumlarda (Belarus/Rus) dil kullanıcılarının Türk dilini öğrenirken hata yapmaları da normal olarak karşılanabilir. Hata yapmak gerek ana gerekse erek dilde doğal bir sonuç olmasına rağmen, bu çalışmada, Belaruslu öğrencilerin Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenirken yaptıkları hataların nedenleri, en çok nerede hata yaptıkları ve bu hataların nasıl ortadan kaldırılacağı ile ilgili araştırma yapılmış ve çözüm önerileri sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğretimi, farklı dil aileleri, yabancı öğrencilerin yaptıkları hatalar

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The process of learning a foreign language has always been considered as difficult by learners whose native language has linguistic dissimilarities from the target language. Ossipstuk (2010) emphasizes this dissimilarity as depth and states that the deeper the grammatical and semantic features are, the more TFL learners refer to their mother tongue ( $L_1$ ). In this case, there might be a limited linguistic overlap at the lexical and semantic levels between languages; additionally, even though there is an awareness of patterns in a language or/and cognitive power towards a foreign language ( $L_2$ ) facilitates learners' understanding and cognition of the way the language functions, it may be insufficient for full communication, especially, for Belarusian learners learning Turkish, both of which have linguistic differences (Veliyeva 2005). When compared Russian and Turkish in terms of similarity and dissimilarity, certain features such as a) *the alphabetic system*, b) *synthetic language vs agglutinative*, c) *article*, d), *adjective*, e) *verb*, and f) *word order* are observed.

### 1.1. The Alphabetic System

Upon consideration of the families, Russian belongs to the Indo-European family, East-Slavic branch of the Slavic group whereas Turkish belongs to the Altaic branch of the Ural-Altaic family of languages. With a modern version of the Cyrillic alphabet, Russian has 33 letters while Turkish has 29 letters in Latin alphabet. Among the 33 letters of Russian, *e, k, m, h, o, p, c, t* are identical in available symbols but *e, h, p, c* are the varying sounds of Turkish concerned. In other words, they are differently pronounced because words which already have a standard spelling in the same script as the other language may be incorporated without being respelt to reflect the pronunciation (Sebba 2006). Hence, the use of a Cyrillic alphabet in Russian leads learners to pronounce Cyrillic letters and their combinations, and automatically transfer this in other foreign languages. As a result, they have bad pronunciation due to the fact that they compare their  $L_1$  with  $L_2$  in terms of

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phonology during their learning process when two languages are completely different from each other (Candaş Karababa 2009).

### 1.2. Synthetic vs Agglutinative Language

Russian is a synthetic language and Turkish is an agglutinative one; Russian is fleective, (a lot of affixes and flections explicit in one word). For instance, the same flection might express a lot of different grammatical categories, and different flections might express the same grammatical category unlike agglutinative languages, like Turkish. In Turkish, on the other hand, due to its agglutinative nature, it relies heavily on morphology and it uses morphemes added to the stems of nouns as suffixes (plural, case endings) and to verbs, including tenses, subject-conformant verb inflection, verb nominalization, interrogative form and some pragmatic verb variants. Such inflectional and/or derivational changes also convey information about mood and voice (Cip 2008). Additionally, each flection has only one function (but very few exceptions) and the number of suffixes might range from one to ten, while it is typical for a Russian suffix to have several grammatical meanings combined. Therefore, to foreign learners Turkish words often look very long and unanalyzable as in the example *kitapçılarımızdakiler* “the ones which are in our bookstores” given below:

*Kitap*<sub>1</sub>+*ç*<sub>2</sub>+*lar*<sub>3</sub>+*ımız*<sub>4</sub>+*da*<sub>5</sub> +*ki*<sub>6</sub>+*ler*<sub>7</sub> [<sub>1</sub>base nominative form, <sub>2</sub> suffix to indicate a person associated with a profession, <sub>3</sub> plural marker, <sub>4</sub> possessive suffix for first person plural, <sub>5</sub> locative suffix, <sub>6</sub> suffix in pronominal usage, and <sub>7</sub> plural marker, the same as <sub>3</sub>. (Göksel & Kerlake 2005)]. Even though it seems very confusing at first glance, Turkish is very systematic and regular, not incomprehensible as it seems. By being familiar with the rules, flection becomes easy and logical.

### 1.3. Gender

There is no gender differentiation in Turkish whereas in Russian there are three genders: masculine, feminine, and neutral. In Turkish, there is no need to remember whether a noun is masculine or feminine like in some Latin languages or Russian.

### 1.4. Article

When compared their basic grammatical features in terms of similarity, both languages have no article, either definite or indefinite. When the object of the verb is indefinite, it is in the nominative case, by itself, or proceeded by *bir* in Turkish, which means *a* or *an* in English. In other words, determinedness is expressed via case variation (accusative case) as given in the example below:

*Film*<sub>1</sub>+*i*<sub>2</sub>+*seyret*<sub>3</sub>+*ti*<sub>4</sub> +*m*<sub>5</sub> “I watched the film”

(<sub>1</sub> base nominative form, <sub>2</sub> suffix to indicate the accusative case, <sub>3</sub> stem of the verb, <sub>4</sub> suffix for past tense marker, <sub>5</sub> first person singular suffix)

### 1.5. Noun Declension

There are 3 classes of noun declension in Russian with only one in Turkish. Due to the presence of the noun declension in both languages, the sense of a noun is determined from the context in which it appears. Both languages have 6 cases: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Locative, and Instrumental in Russian versus Ablative in Turkish.

### 1.6. Adjectives

In Russian they decline according to case, gender and number and agree with nouns in case, gender and number while in Turkish adjectives have a stable form.

### 1.7. Verbs

The verb has two aspects: Imperfective and Perfective, similar to English Indefinite and Perfect infinitives while in Turkish the essence of differentiating aspects is different, namely the presence of the subject during the action (Cip 2008).

### 1.8. Word Order

As in any agglutinative language, it is possible to change word order in Russian and in Turkish. This is because the information about part-of-speech and syntactic function of a word is usually embedded in its pattern in the context. Therefore, it is flexible without changing the core meaning of the sentence. For instance, the words in the sentence (*Dün sinemada filmi seyrettim.* (I watched the film in the cinema yesterday)) can be in different orders as seen below:

*Dün sinemada filmi seyrettim.* “Yesterday in the cinema the film I watched.”

*Sinemada dün filmi seyrettim.* “In the cinema yesterday the film I watched.”

*Filmi dün sinemada seyrettim.* “The film yesterday in the cinema I watched.”

*Seyrettim dün sinemada filmi.* “I watched yesterday in the cinema the film.”

*Filmi sinemada dün seyrettim.* “The film in the cinema yesterday I watched.”

*Seyrettim filmi dün sinemada.* “I watched the film yesterday in the cinema.”

In the examples above, it is seen that all of the sentence variants are grammatically correct.

Whatever the word is stressed is most accurately described as pitch accent, that is, a high tone on the accented syllable (Underhill 1976). But the order is highly flexible in Turkish and this is also possible in Russian; verbs conjugate according to the person, number, tense, voice and mood, 3 tenses (Past, Present, and Future) and 3 moods (Indicative, Subjunctive and Imperative); there are short adjectives that do not decline; attributive adjectives precede nouns.

However, the direct word order is different in both languages: *S-O-P* in Turkish versus *S-P-O* both in conversation and the written language in Russian. Primary emphasis tends to be initial in Turkish, with a slightly weaker emphasis in the end. In other words, in Turkish the headword always precedes the related word (except attributive adjectives) while in Russian there is the headword following the related one; prepositions in Russian have the form of suffixes or postpositions in Turkish; except a few usages there is no prefixation in Turkish, but Russian is a language that uses prefixes extensively; in Turkish all postpositions require the headword in the nominative or genitive cases while in Russian all prepositions are associated with a specific case attached to their headwords.

Whatever the similarities or dissimilarities the languages have, the essential point about learning a foreign language is primarily to use it without hesitating how many errors are done. Even though it is declining the motivation, it could be taken into account that these could be feedback for the learners to monitor and even assess their outcome throughout the learning process (Edge 1989). Truly, doing errors should be considered as a normal and inevitable part of their learning process, and these may appear due to 1) the transfer from the native (Belarussian) or official language (Russian), 2) an analogy with something correctly learned in the foreign language, 3) a natural guess, 4) vagueness in remembering the right form, or 5) a general lack of accuracy and language skill.

Even though learners seem to have acquired certain forms of the target language well, it is a natural outcome for them to produce errors. The reason for this could be that they might result from various reasons such as interference from the native language (i.e., assuming  $L_2$  and  $L_1$  are similar), an incomplete knowledge of the target language (i.e., transferring this knowledge in a sentence in  $L_2$ ), and the complexity of the target language (i.e., not being aware of that  $L_2$  has more suffixes other than  $L_1$ ).

When all these views are taken into account, it seems a natural outcome for learners to do errors, especially, when they learn a foreign language that has more different features than theirs. Thus, at first glance, it seems hard to predict where learners do errors. However, in longitude learning, teachers might realize some predictable errors stemming from the identical cases, but being structured differently in both languages (e.g., the genitive case in Turkish and in Russian). Sometimes even similar errors might result in misleading information identified by linguists in different linguistic structures (number of cases in Turkish could be given as 6 or 7 in some resources, Banguoglu 2004) in different categories (Kara 2010). No doubt, real communication demands risk taking and nothing can be learned without taking risks and doing errors (Ergenç 1983). However, speculating about the theory of critical cognitive thinking, errors might be eliminated to a certain extent. From this reality, teachers should have sensitivity towards the differences between two languages and should have an encouraging effect on their learners to make them aware of similarities and discrepancies between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  (Açık 2008; Mavasoglu & Tum 2011).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Participants

The participants are Belarusian learners (N.35) enrolled at Minsk State Linguistics University, Belarus. They study Turkish 4 hours per week as a 2<sup>nd</sup> foreign language or a 3<sup>rd</sup> foreign language. Their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> foreign languages are analytic or synthetic ones such as English, German, Italian, or French. These participants have been randomly selected from different groups (Department of English, Department of Intercultural and Interrelation, and Department of Interpreting and Translation). Turkish lessons are given to these learners 4 hours per week by one Native Speaker and one Local Teacher, who teaches Turkish as a foreign language for 5 years.

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1. Data Collection

In order to tackle the problem more deeply, a poll-grammar test and essays- is conducted to investigate the items regarding language skills. Both include related parts on where and what type of problems learners have during their learning process. All their written texts (N:103) were analyzed twice by both the Native Speaker and the Turkish teacher in order to classify the type of errors. The type of errors classified and listed in 6 items are determined as: 1) *The Uses of Cases*, 2) *The Use of the Genitive Case*, 3) *The Misuse of Postpositions and Prepositions*, 4) *The Usage of the Predicative*, 5) *Unnecessary Pluralization*, and 6) *The Misuse of the Place of Affixes*. Even though the first two items include the usage of cases, both instructors decide to take the use of the genitive case as the second item because of the reason that this case is formed very differently in both languages.

### 3.2. Analysis

#### 3.2.1. The Uses of Cases

When learners face difficulties in a foreign language, they usually look for similarities between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> (Ergenç 1983). Realizing of this expectation results in a success; however, unless the expectation is realized, the mother tongue is dominant while producing L<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, TFL learners dramatically do errors in the usage of cases (Güven 2007; Aydın 1997). The following tables highlight false statements of Belarusian learners in common as follows:

**Table 1. The Use of Cases**

	sentences	Russian and English translation
1	*O <b>bana</b> çok beğendim. Onu çok beğendim.	<i>Он мне очень понравился.</i> <i>I liked him very much.</i>
2	*Ben <b>hafta sonu markete</b> çalışıyorum. Hafta sonu markette çalışıyorum.	<i>По выходным дням я работаю на рынке.</i> <i>I work at the market at the weekend.</i>
3	*Dün <b>için</b> Olga buket <b>hediye</b> ye getirdi. Dün Olga için buket hediye getirdi.	<i>Вчера он принес для Ольги в подарок букет.</i> <i>He brought a bouquet as a gift for Olga yesterday.</i>
4	*Ben dün <b>arkadaşıma</b> aradım. Ben dün arkadaşımı aradım.	<i>Я вчера позвонил своему другу.</i> <i>I called my friend yesterday.</i>

\*Learners' sentences (The first sentence in each box belongs to a student and the other is the correct form of that sentence in Turkish structure)

Example 1. \*O *bana* çok beğendim.  
(Ben)/Onu çok beğendim.  
He. Acc./0-very much-like-Past-1sg.  
*I liked him very much.*

In Example 1, the use of the subject in not obligatory as Turkish is a pro-drop language (pronoun-dropping), which means pronouns may be omitted when they are in some sense pragmatically inferable. As seen in the example, the predicate has the personal ending; therefore, it is one of the errors Belarusian learners do while producing their sentences. The other problem in the statement is the dative case used in Russian; thus, *bana* (to me) appears in Turkish version. As, it is

formed as nominative case in Russian (*He seems to be nice to me* [*Он мне очень понравилс*]), learner begins the sentence with the subject “*O*” (*He/She/It*) in Turkish.

Example 2. \*Hafta sonu markete çalışıyorum.  
(*Ben*)/Hafta sonu markette çalışıyorum.  
I/0-weekend-market-Loc.work-Present-1sg.  
*I work at the market at the weekends.*

In Example 2, as also mentioned in the first example above, the subject is not obligatory to use in Turkish. Additionally, the error of learners results from the different cases used in both languages. While it is the dative case in Russian, it appears as locative/prepositional case in Turkish. Therefore, as Ergenç (1983) states, learners seem to transfer knowledge from their native or official language,  $L_1$  [*По выходным дням я работаю на рынке.*]. In this case, in Turkish it could be translated as *I am working for the market*, but *not in the market*. The other error done is the word transfer, which is *Hafta sonu* as it is a singular word in Russian; nevertheless, it should be *Hafta sonları* in Turkish if student wants to express regular work *at the weekends*.

Example 3. Dün için Olga buket hediyeye getirdi.  
Dün Olga için buket hediye getirdi.  
Yesterday Olga for-noun-Nom. noun-Nom. bring-Past-3sg.  
*He brought a bouquet as a gift for Olga yesterday.*

In Example 3, learners use preposition *için* [*for* in English and *для* in Russian] before the name by transferring the knowledge from either their native language or the second/third foreign language they learned. In the sentence, [*Вчера он принес для Ольги в подарок букет*], learners seem to transfer information about the nominative case for the name, Olga [*for* Olga in English) from their other foreign language even though in their native language for makes the name Olga, taking the suffix -u in the genitive case form [*для Ольги* in Russian]. Learners seem not to do error about the name. In Russian structure, learners need to change the name, Olga and *hediye* [gift] as each takes a suffix, but it is used without any change in Turkish like English. Therefore, there is unnecessary suffix added to the word *hediye* in this sentence. However, in Russian the female proper name also takes a suffix [*“Ольга”* the last letter **a** in Olga changes into **u** as in Olga *“Ольгу”*] related to the postposition *için* considering feminine gender in Russian, the nominative case for the proper name in Turkish makes it easy for these learners. Nevertheless, it is observed that learners are likely to do an error for the usage of the dative case, which is the necessary part of the Russian structure in the statement given in Example 3. even though it is abundant in Turkish. Üstünova (2004) states that language functions differently: contextual and structural. Learners usually focus on the structural part of language rather than the functional part of it as exemplified above.

Example 4. *Ben dün arkadaşımına aradım.*  
(*Ben*) dün arkadaşımı aradım.  
I/0-yesterday-friend-my-Dat.-call-Past-1sg.  
*I called my friend yesterday.*

In Example 4, the error here is the usage of the case form. “*Aramak*” means *to call* and in Russian, the verb “*to call*” is always followed by a noun in the dative case [*Я вчера позвонил своему другу*]. [*Друг*] means friend and the last **y** is added for the suffix of the dative case. In fact, in Turkish, there is also another verb “*telefon etmek*” used in the dative case. If the learner used the second verb, it would take dative case and this could be understood by the listener. However, learners use the verb “*aramak*” rather than “*telefon etmek*”; thus, this error is inevitable while producing that statement.

### 3.2.2. The Use of the Genitive Case

The most difficult case for foreign learners of Turkish is the *Genitive Case* (*tamlayan durumu*) and ample use of “*izafet*” connected with it. *Izafet* is a syntactic relation between two nouns of which the first one is the related one (attributive) and the second one is the headword as in the examples:

- kadınımın çantası (means “*possession, property*”) – a (the) woman’s bag,

- kadın çantası (relation to the group) – a bag for women,

The corresponding structures in the Russian are usually made up using either the genitive case (*of*-phrase in English) or the suffix to form a relative adjective from a noun (the Genitive case in English). The following table gives an idea about the different usage of the Genitive Case.

**Table 2. The Use of the Genitive Case**

	sentences	Russian and English translation
5	*Babam bugün onun <b>araba anahtarı</b> kaybetti ve bütün gün arkadaşı ile aradı. Babam bugün (onun) arabasının anahtarını kaybetti ve bütün gün arkadaşı ile (onu) aradı.	<i>Сегодня мой папа потерял ключ от своей машины и искал его с другом весь день.</i> <i>My father lost his car's key today and looked for it with his friend all day.</i>
6	*Türk yemek yedim. Türk yemeği yedim.	<i>Я ел Турецкое блюдо.</i> <i>I ate Turkish food.</i>
7	*Bende şehirde ev var. Benim şehirde evim var.	<i>У меня есть квартира в города.</i> <i>I have a flat in the city.</i>
8	*Mehmette büyük bir ev var. Mehmet'in büyük bir evi var.	<i>У Мехмета есть большая квартира.</i> <i>Mehmet has a big flat.</i>

\*Learners' sentences (The first sentence in each box belongs to a student and the other is the correct form of that sentence)

Example 5. \*(Benim) Babam bugün (onun) *araba anahtarı* kaybetti ve bütün gün arkadaşı ile aradı.  
(Benim) Babam bugün (onun) arabasının anahtarını kaybetti ve bütün gün (onun) arkadaşı ile (onu) aradı.  
(My) Father-Gen.-today-(his)-car-Gen. key-Gen.Past-lose 3sg.-Conj. all day-(his)-friend-Gen.-inst.-Past-3sg  
*My father lost his car's key today and looked for it with his friend all day.*

Due to the lack of *izafet* in Russian language, learners tend to transfer the rules of the studied language (e.g. English) so as their variant is a typical stonewall construction with no suffixes applied. As observed in Table 2, the genitive case seems different in both languages. For instance, in Turkish (onun) arabasının anahtarı(nı) means *his father's key* in the genitive case but in Russian [ключ от своей машины (meaning *key from his own car*)] it is used in another case. Key [ключ] is used in the nominative case. This difference results in doing the same error for many learners since the noun "key" is in a nominative case not only in their native tongue but also in studied language. The other problem is that the key and car are not related to each other in Russian as it is in Turkish; therefore, it is tremendously difficult for learners to grasp the meaning of possession or to form the structure.

Example 6. \*Ben/ Türk yemek yedim.  
Ben/ Türk yemeği yedim.  
I/0-Turkish-food-Gen.-Past-1sg.  
*I ate Turkish food.*

In this example, the same phenomenon is observed. In this case there is no Noun-Noun relation. However, in the learners' mind it is an Adjective-Noun phrase which results in the use of the *izafet* construction without any suffixes. Hence, the learners associate words like *Türk*, *Belarus* with their being in the form of adjectives as in the English example *Turkish food*. As a result, it is seen that learners have lack of information about L<sub>2</sub> in order to form the appropriate structure.

Example 7. \*Bende şehirde ev var.  
Benim şehirde evim var.  
My/0-city-Loc.-flat/house-Gen. There is/Verb To Have-1sg.  
*I have a flat/house in the city centre.*

In example 7, a very vivid case can be observed when the learners tend to omit the reduplication of the possessive meaning in nouns, which is obligatory in Turkish. The omission of the possessive suffix in nouns results in the change of meaning whereas in Russian it is enough to merely

omit the possessive pronoun itself. In Russian [В этом городе у меня есть дом (meaning *Benim şehirde evim var.*)] is used in the same manner; however, [В моем городе есть один дом meaning (*Benim şehrimde ev var*) could be produced wrongly since şehir is the word of which has two vowels and the second affix is dropped when this word is attached a suffix. The main error stems from the usage in Russian which is [у меня (meaning *bende* in Turkish and *on/with me* in English)]. At the initial stages, learners may have failure and make mistakes while transferring this knowledge from their native or official language, L<sub>1</sub>.

Example 8. \**Mehmete büyük bir ev var.*  
 Mehmet'in büyük bir evi var.  
 Mehmet-Gen.-big-one-flat-Gen. There is/Verb To Have-3sg.  
*Mehmet has a big flat.*

In Example 8, it can be attributed to the fact that in Russian the same structure is used in the locative case by the preposition “у” and the verb “есть” and the relations between the headword of the izafet construction and the related word are somewhat lost. By Russian-speaking learners these are perceived as independent parts of one sentence behind which they seem not to see the potential izafet construction in Turkish. The important factor to cause the mistake is also the absence of the verb “to have” in Turkish, which results in confusion of the structure in which it is composed as follows:

*My in-the-city flat-my there-is.*

Such circumstance is likely to be explained by the fact that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> foreign languages studied by the informants are analytic languages (French, German, Italian) while Turkish is an agglutinative language, and all its grammatical meanings are expressed through the use of separate suffixes. Besides, the presence of only one type of the stonewall construction in the studied language causes problems differentiating which izafet to use and the absence of the verb “to have” causes several relations to arise. Therefore, most of the learners are observed to pay no attention to add necessary suffixes to the words.

### 3.2.3. The Misuse of Postpositions and Prepositions

Another mistake is observed in the usage of the Turkish postpositions which correspond with prepositions in Russian: [ablam için (for my sister– для моей сестры)], [annem gibi (like my mother– как моя мама)], [(senden başka–except you–кроме тебя)], [Ahmet ile (with Ahmet – с Ахметом)].

**Table 3. The misuse of the Postpositions**

	sentences	Russian and English translation
9	*Ben dün mağazada annem ile arkadaşımın için bir hediye aldım. Ben dün mağazadan annem ile arkadaşım için bir hediye aldım.	<i>Я вчера купил в магазине подарок для мамы и для моего друга.</i> <i>I bought a gift with my mother for my friend in the store.</i> <i>I bought a gift for my mother and my friend in the store.</i>
10	* <b>Gibi</b> anne 3 gün önce arkadaşım beni davet etti için doğum günü. Annem gibi 3 gün önce arkadaşım beni doğum günü için davet etti.	<i>Три дня назад мой друг пригласил меня на свой день рождения как моя мама.</i> <i>3 days ago my friend invited me for his birthday party like my mother.</i>
11	*Hemşire sık sık Duyguyu tiyatrodaki karşılanıyor. Hemşire sık sık Duygu ile tiyatrodaki karşılaşıyor.	<i>Медсестра часто встречает Дуйгу в театре.</i> <i>The nurse often meets Duygu at the theatre.</i>

Example 9. \**Ben/dün mağaza annem ile arkadaşımın için bir hediye aldım.*  
*Ben/dün mağazadan annem ile arkadaşım için bir hediye aldım.*  
*I/0-yesterday-market-Abl.-mother-Gen.Inst.-friend-Gen.Inst.-one-gift-Past-1sg.*  
*I bought a gift for my mother and friend in the store.*

*I bought a gift for friend with my mother in the store.*

The Russian-speaking learners tend to confuse the ablative case with the locative one which is obviously used in their L<sub>1</sub>. Thus, this type of error is very common among the foreign learners. Upon consideration that they learn Turkish as a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> foreign language, it appears as a natural attempt to apply for the appropriate suffixes using their cognition and information of other languages L<sub>2</sub> they know. The other error seems to be the usage of word *arkadaşımın* and postposition *için* [for] in the genitive case since in the example of *for me* which is *benim için* in Turkish is used in this case.

Example 10. \**Gibi anne 3 gün önce arkadaşım beni davet etti için doğum günü.*  
 3 gün önce *Benim/0*arkadaşım annem gibi beni doğum günü *için* davet etti.  
 3 days ago-*My/0*-friend-Gen-Acc-like-my-mother-Gen-birthday-Inst.invite-Past-3sg.  
 3 days ago my friend invited me for his birthday like my mother.

The problems the learners encounter while struggling with a complicated sentence in the language might result from either their native language or European language they are practicing. Hence, it seems to be necessary to place all relative words in post-position, unlike in their native language and the languages they study. The other error is the usage of the postposition *gibi* [like/as in English and *как* in Russian] and the order of this preposition considering their native language or the target language.

Example 11. *Hemşire sık sık Duyguyu tiyatrodaki karşılanıyor.*  
 Hemşire sık sık Duygu ile tiyatrodaki karşılaşıyor.  
 Nurse-often-Duygu-Inst-theatre-Loc.-meet-Pres.-3sg.  
 The nurse often runs into Duygu at the theatre.

The Russian-speaking learners tend to confuse the accusative case with the instrumental one which is required by the verb in their native language. Hence, there is also mistake about choosing the correct verb. In this example, *karşlanıyor* means is ‘being met’ in the passive form whereas *karşılaşıyor* means ‘encounters/meets/runs into’ in the simple present meaning.

As seen in Examples 9, 10, 11 above, it is clear that TFL learners have difficulties in transferring the Russian language structure with the headword following the related one into the Turkish one where the headword always precedes the related word; and the prepositions in Russian are in the form of suffixes or postpositions in Turkish.

### 3.2.4. The Usage of the Predicative

At the initial stage the interference of the foreign language with the native one is rather significant. The most common ones are to be found in sentences with the Nominal Predicate. The point is that in Turkish there is the verb “to be” (*olmak*). Göksel and Kerlake (2005) state that the copula correspond to the verb ‘be’ in most cases and has different forms. At the initial stages or non-verbal sentences, the verb ‘be’ is used in the personal form that looks like a predicative suffix attached to the preceding nomina (noun, adjective, numeral, or pronoun):

**Table 4. The Usage of the Predicative**

	sentences	Russian and English translation
12	* <i>Sen doktor.</i> Sen doktorsun (Informal) Siz doktorsunuz. (Formal)	Вы – доктор. You are a doctor.
13	* <i>Biz beş.</i> Biz beşiz.	Нас пятеро. We are five.

Example 12. \**Sen doktor.*  
 Sen doktorsun.  
 Siz doktorsunuz.  
 You Noun-verb to be- Predicative -Present.-2 sg (Informal or Formal).



*You are a doctor.*

Example 13. \*Biz beş.

Biz beşiz.

We Num.- verb to be- Predicative -Present.-1pl.

*We are five.*

As observed in Table 4, the learners' answers often lack the predicative suffix as they forget to use predicative suffix because such a sentence doesn't change in statement in Russian, English and other languages «doctor» as given in the example: *You are a doctor. Are you a doctor?* However, being not aware of the different usage of the pronoun *sen* and *siz* is seen as an error here even though in Russian there are two different pronouns as in Turkish. Even though the word *Вы* means second person plural or formal you, the sentence is produced with the more common one which is *sen*, which is informal you or first person singular.

### 3.2.5. Unnecessary Pluralization

Unlike most European languages, the Turkish language does not have an abundant usage of the plural form. Thus, when a subject of the sentence is in the plural form, there is no need to show its plurality again in the predicate or in attributes related to the subject. Such a principle of language resources may not be always immediately taken into account by TFL learners.

**Table 5. Unnecessary Pluralization**

	sentences	Russian and English translation
14	*Şimdi benim iki <b>kitaplarım</b> var. Şimdi benim iki kitabım var.	Сейчас у меня есть две <b>книги</b> . Now I have 2 books.
15	* Biz çok <b>turistler</b> gördük. Biz çok turist gördük.	Мы видели много <b>туристов</b> . We saw many tourists.

Example 14. \*Şimdi benim iki *kitaplarım* var.

Şimdi benim iki kitabım var.

Now-Time expr.-*my*/0 adj. Gen-number-noun- Gen/verb to have- Pedicative-Present.-1 sg.

*Now, I have two books.*

Example 15. \**Biz çok turistler* gördük.

*Biz*0-çok turist gördük.

*We* Adj.- quantity/ noun/verb to see- Predicative -Past.-1pl.

*We saw many tourists.*

In Examples 14, and 15, it is obvious that TFL learners transfer the plurality from  $L_1$  and/or official language or from the other  $L_2$  while producing Turkish structures. In these examples, the meaning of plurality is doubled both in the numeral, in the numerical pronoun, and in the headword expressed by the noun.

### 3.2.6. The Misuse of the Place of Affixes

This error often occurs due to the numerous affixes learners have to deal with while learning Turkish, and it is likely to be explained by merely confusing the place of their distribution in the word. Besides, the confusions also arise as different affix-distribution schemes change the meaning of the word itself: *arkadaşlarım* – my friends, *arkadaşım*lar – *they are* my friends.

**Table 6. The Misuse of the Place of Affixes**

	sentences	Russian and English translation
16	* Yarin <b>arkadaşım</b> lar bize geliyor. Yarın arkadaşlarım bize geliyor.	Завтра наши <b>друзья</b> приезжают к нам. Tomorrow my friends are coming to us.
17	* Ben şimdi <b>üniversiteden</b> oturuyorum. Ben şimdi üniversitemde oturuyorum.	Сейчас я сижу в университете. Now I am sitting at the university.
18	* Siz İngilizce <b>konusuyorsunuz mu</b> ? Siz İngilizce konuşuyor musunuz?	Вы говорите по английски? Do you speak English?

Example 16. \*Yarin *arkadaşım*lar bize geliyor.  
Yarın arkadaşlarım bize geliyor.  
Tomorrow-friends my-Gen-Pron.Dat-verb to come-Predicative-Present.-3 pl.  
*Tomorrow, my friends are coming to us.*

Example 17. \*Ben şimdi üniversitemde oturuyorum.  
*Ben/0- şimdi üniversitemde oturuyorum.*  
*I now-university my-Gen-Loc- Predicative -Present.-1 sg.*  
*Now I am sitting at the university.*

Example 18. \*Siz İngilizce konuşuyorsunuz *mi*?  
Siz İngilizce konuşuyor musunuz?  
You-English- verb to speak-Predicative -Present.-2pl.Q  
*Do you speak English?*

In Examples 16, and 17, it is rather typical for TFL learners to feel confused about the place of different affixes which has no analogy in their mother tongue or the studied languages due to their being synthetic ones. As seen in Example 18, Russian-speaking learners tend to use the interrogative affix, *mi* as if it were a separate independent particle as it occurs in their L<sub>1</sub> («*ЛИ*») without adding the predicative verb to it, merely, transferring the Russian rules onto the Turkish structure.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In light of this study, it can be concluded that learners use different learning strategies in order to understand how a language functions. However, during their learning process, most foreign language learners encounter difficulties mainly resulting from different reasons: a) interference from the native language, b) an incomplete knowledge of the target language, c) the complexity of the foreign language they are learning, d) unfamiliarity of words in a new language, e) lack of course materials to enhance their knowledge in that language, and f) identical linguistic patterns between the native language and target language but different meaning in between. Eliminating these difficulties is likely to involve them in the target language more in motivating activities or to encourage them to employ appropriate strategies for creating different structural statements. When cognitively-leading strategies are designed and presented by the teachers, it will be easy and prolific to learn a foreign language that has completely different linguistic background from their native language. Thus, considering all these errors into account and being familiar with learners' native languages, teachers should insert different strategies such as teaching the verbs with their case endings, encouraging learners using asynchronic computer mediated (e-correction via e-mails) in order to embolden these learners to face more Turkish sentences via technology, motivating learners to present their products with powerpoint during Turkish lessons, making corrections in or on reflection and asking students to find their own errors on the written texts, encouraging students to prepare their own exams, and finally contributing to prepare more materials in order to help them encounter common problems in Turkish (Mavasoglu & Tum, 2011). To summarize, no matter how difficult or different the languages are, the role of language teachers plays an important part in activating learners' cognitive skills and creative thinking abilities in classes by exposing them to different structures of the language they are learning.

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## Extended Abstract

Farklı dil ailelerinden gelen öğrenciler yabancı bir dili öğrenirken ve belirli dilbilgisel birimleri oluştururken zorluk çekmektedirler. Kendi anadilleri, resmi dilleri ya da öğrenmiş oldukları dillerin yapısını biliyor olmalarına rağmen, hedef dilde belirli yapıları oluşturmalarında dillerin farklı dil ailelerine ait olmaları dolayısıyla bazı engel ya da zorluklar olabilir. Bu çalışmada Hint Avrupa ailesine ait olan Doğu Slav dillerinden Rusçayı resmi dilleri olarak konuşan, anadilleri Belarusça olan Belaruslu öğrencilerin Ural-Altay dil ailesine ait olan Türkçeyi öğrenirken karşılaştıkları sorunlarla ilgili bir karşılaştırma yapılacaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkçeyi ikinci ya da üçüncü yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Belaruslu öğrencilerin Türkçedeki dilbilgisel birimleri oluştururken nerede, nasıl ve neden hata yaptıklarını tespit etmek; anadilleri veya resmi dillerinden ya da yabancı dil olarak öğrendikleri diğer batı Avrupa dillerinden dilbilimsel birimleri transfer edip etmediklerini incelemek; ve bu hataların çözümlenmesinde önerilerde bulunmaktadır. Birbirinden farklı dil ailelerine ait Rusça ve Türkçe benzerlik ve benzeşmezlik açısından incelendiğinde, alfabetik, sentetik, analitik, bükümlü ya

da eklemeli dil olmaları, cinsiyet, artikel, sıfat, fiil, isim çekimleri ve cümle yapılarının farklı görülmesine rağmen sözdizimlerini oluştururken yapılan esneklik ve bu tür benzer kullanımların da olduğu görülmektedir. Örneğin, bu iki dil farklı dil ailesinden ve farklı alfabelere sahiptir. Rusçada cinsiyet durumu söz konusuyken Türkçede bu durum yoktur. İsim çekimleri ele alındığında her iki dilde de 6 durumdan 5'i benzer olmasına rağmen Rusçadaki vasıta durumu Türkçedeki uzaklaşma durumundan farklıdır. Bu durumda Belaruslu öğrencilerin hata yapmaları doğal görünmektedir. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini Minsk Devlet Dilbilim Üniversitesi'nin Kültürlerarası, Uluslar arası, Çeviri Bölümleri ve Yabancı Diller Fakültelerinde Türkçe öğrenen 35 öğrencidir. Bu öğrenciler birinci dil olarak Almanca, Fransızca, İngilizce ya da İspanyolca gibi dilleri öğrenirken, doğu dillerini de ikinci ya da üçüncü yabancı dil olarak öğrenmektedirler. Bu öğrencilerle çalışma 12 haftalık bir dönemi kapsamaktadır. 12 hafta boyunca öğrencilerden günlük tutmaları istenmiş ve ayrıca haftalık ödevlerini e-posta yoluyla Türkçe öğretmene göndermeleri istenmiştir. Öğrencilere günlük tutturmanın amacı öğrencilerin günlük tutarken ders stresi olmaksızın yazma becerilerini geliştirmektir. Ancak, günlük incelenirken öğretmen günlükteki hataları düzeltmemiş, öğrencilerin Türkçe tümce yapılarını oluştururken neler hissettikleri ve neler yazmak istediklerini kayıt altına almaya çalışmıştır. Ancak, öğrencilerin gönderdikleri e-postalar düzelterek öğrencilere düzenli gönderilmiştir. Bu da sınıftaki zamanın daha etkin bir şekilde iletişimsel yaklaşımla geçirilmesini sağlamıştır.

Sonuçlardan da görüldüğü gibi öğrenciler hataları yaparken iki dil yapısının birbirinden farklı olmasından, sözler arasında bağ kurulamamasından, sözcüklerin bildikleri diğer dillerle çağrışım yapamamasından ve daha da önemlisi kendi dillerindeki eylemlerle Türkçe eylemlerin farklı durum eki almasından etkilenmektedir. Öğrenciler hataları yaparken ana ve resmi dillerinden transfer yapmakta ya da öğrendikleri diğer dillerden etkilenmektedirler. Her iki durumda da öğrencilerin başka dille kıyaslama yaparak öğrendikleri görülmüştür. Çünkü Türkçenin yapısı farklıdır. Ancak diller ne kadar birbirinden farklılık gösterse de dillerin oluşumunda benzer dilbilgisi birimleri bulunduğundan Türkçeyi öğreten öğretmene büyük görev ve sorumluluklar düşmektedir. Bunlar, öğretmenin öğrencilere günlük tutturarak günlüklerini haftalık izlemesi; sözcüklerini geliştirmek için günlüklerde belirli sayıda sözcük öğrenmelerini sağlaması; eylemleri ad durum ekleriyle birlikte öğretmesi; mümkün olduğu takdirde ödevlerini e-posta yoluyla istemesi; ödevlerin teknolojinin olduğu sınıflarda herkesin görebileceği bir sunumla öğrenci merkezli yapmasını sağlaması ve aynı anda var olan hataları diğer öğrencilerin sınıf ortamında düzeltmesini istemesi; ve hatta sınavları öğrencilerin kendilerinin hazırlamalarını sağlayarak kendilerini önemli hissetmelerini sağlamak olarak sıralanabilir.