MODERN ORIENTATIONS IN TEACHING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: EXAMPLE OF MOSTAR

Yabancılara Türkçe Öğretiminde Çağdaş Yönelimler: Mostar Örneği

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Abstract

The presence of Turks in Balkans started with European Huns in IV. century and continued with the Ottoman Empire. The use of Turkish language proliferated in Bosnia and Herzegovina regions particularly in the era of Fatih Sultan Mehmet. The advancement of Turkish as a literary language following the Conquest of Istanbul had repercussions on Bosnia as well. Turkish, Arabic and Persian courses were given particularly in madrasas where Bosnian people had education. Publication of a good number of Turkish journals in Bosnia, powerful Divan poets in this geography and high number of Turkish words in daily language show that this language has a sound structure in cultural sense. Increasing prestige, social, political and economic quality of Turkish all around the world today has increased the interest to this language. Yunus Emre Institutes, founded since 2008, are the centers for teaching Turkish effectively in more than 40 countries today. Yunus Emre Institute, Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Dzemal Bijediç University and Tercihim Türkçe projects helped rapid propagation of Turkish. There is a consensus on the fact that Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language must have a unique education method. Various studies have been conducted on this topic for many years. In our day when technology and information outdate too fast, a foreign language education equipped with modern and technologic means will offer much more efficient outcomes rather than classical methods. This study touches upon quality and outcome-based education encompassing modern methods through Turkish language education in Mostar and near region.

Key words: Education, Turkish, Mostar, Teaching Turkish, Modern Orientations.

Özet


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In the 21st century, the century of science and education, foreign language education has shown a rapid change in parallel with the developing technology. The definition of traditional education, which is defined as “teaching, schooling, training, and giving necessary information in accordance with an aim,” or “the process of teaching domain-specific information to students in a specific educational institution” (Güneş, 2014: 2), has begun to lose its function. In our day, the aim of education is specified as raising students who can solve problems, adjust their information to the real world, and be lifelong learners (Hains and Smith, 2012: 357). Students who remain passive in the education given through traditional methods have taken active roles and have been replaced by the type of students who can use the information they have learned in their daily lives. To sum up, student is “the person who learns” (Turner, 2011: 123-131). “Called as information age, in today’s world, dynamic people producing knowledge are needed more than anything else. Rapid improvements in science and technology have caused information and experiences learned by adults to go out of date soon and to be insufficient” (Hançer, Şensoy, and Yıldırım, 2003: 82).

In the studies on education, the power of student-centered approach comes from the fact that it enables students to learn from their experiences, to structure the information, and to think reflective (Daley, 2003: 23-30). It has been determined that student-centered education, which is defended by modern education and discussed by interdisciplinary studies nowadays, has positive effects on cognitive and affective learning of students. In student-centered education, while an increase has been observed in issues such as creativity, critical thinking, success, student participation, student satisfaction, self-respect, and learning motivation, a decrease has been observed in issues such as absenteeism, negative student behaviours etc. (Salinas, Kane-Johnson and Vasil-Miller, 2008: 20-28).

An understanding of education that is student-centered, enriched by technological devices, and expanded into the whole life of the student should be taken as the basis also in language teaching. While teaching language to students, it should be paid attention to improve their skills in art and to make exercises on poetry, music, and writing scenarios and theatre scripts. A German linguist reported that language is the loyal mirror of a nation’s characteristics. Unless it reaches a level where it can consciously grasp its national identity and national characteristics, it is impossible for any nation to prevent cultural effects of foreign nations, who are either politically or morally superior, and to prevent the introduction of the words reflecting these cultures to its own native language (Deligönül, 1986: 285).

Turkish is a language-to-be-learned with respect to its long history and the fact that it has been spoken throughout the world from East to West. The presence of Turks in Balkans started with European Huns in IV. century and continued with the Ottoman Empire. After the era of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, especially Bosnia has become a region where the use of Turkish language has proliferated and the people have adopted the language. The fact that Turkish language reached the peak in the 16th Century indicates that Turkish writing tradition has a solid ground. Turkish language’s influence on Bosnians was not limited with the daily life but at the same time, it also enabled the
production of extremely impressive literary works influenced by Classical Turkish Literature. Poets, who had powerful artistic styles, skilfully used prosody (aruz) and metaphorical statements of Ottoman poetry, and could compete with Istanbulite and Anatolian poets, were commonly seen. Particulary Classical Turkish Literature continued its presence in these lands after the end of Ottoman Period. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, literary works written in classical style were generally produced by three classes: works written by Muslim Bosnians, works written by Turkish people who were in the region because of military and governmental duties, and works written by people who were members of dervish lodges and zawiyahs (Gönel, 2012-2: 11). Settlement of Turks in some regions in Ottoman Period, the expansion of Islam in these regions, the use of Turkish words about religion, new crafts brought by Turks, the fact that some students went to Istanbul for education and received their education in Turkey, and their use and spread of some Turkish words when they went back to their homelands led to the introduction of thousands of words into Balkan languages. Apart from these, since Ottoman administrations allowed the nations in the region to use their own languages freely and never forced them, it enabled Turkish words to be easily adopted (Škaljić, 1989: 12-14).

In this geography, both in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Serbia and Montenegro, the fact that some parts of the community who spoke Serbian-Croatian/Bosnian preferred Muslim names both as religion name and nation name, and carried them with pride can only be explained by the positive attitude of the Ottoman rule that lasted for 400 years. However, it is important to note that the period of Ottoman rule did not only create a religious effect but also created a cultural effect that deeply influenced the daily life-style of the people (Djurdjev, 1992: 297). Turkish is commonly observed in the names of places and objects in public language: “Since the official language was Turkish, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian people quoted from Turkish, and many Turkish words and sayings were introduced into the daily language as a result of the relations with government officials, and increasing number of Turkish immigrants in markets and bazaars. Visited Mostar in 1664, Evliya Celebi stated that apart from Bosnian and Latin, people could also speak Turkish fluently, eloquently, and poetically (Bekki, 2010: 79-116). In the last one hundred and fifty years, although the events occurring in Balkans have negatively affected the presence of Turks in this region, it has not been able to prevent the use of Turkish as an active language in almost all Balkan countries. Such resistance of Turkish and its active usage especially in Ottoman Period have created a rich literary source generated by Turkish language in Balkans. As from the Ottoman Period, poets and authors, who were not ethnically Turks, also contributed to the Turkish language and literature” (Şanlı, Jable, 2009:41-50). Even after the end of Ottoman rule in Balkans, Bosnian people have continued to consider themselves as the representatives of Ottoman Empire in these lands, and they have tried to protect this legacy maybe even more careful than Turkey has done (Solak, 2012: 165).

**The Importance of Teaching Turkish to Foreigners and The Contribution of Mostar Yunus Emre Institute and Dzemal Bijedić University to Turkish Education**

Turkish language’s increasing prestige almost all over the world has made it a language that competes in all social, political, and economic platforms. Hence, it has led foreigners to show a special interest in Turkish. Not remaining unresponsive to this interest, Turkish Republic has made an effort to spread Turkish through Yunus Emre Institutes since 2009. With the help of these institutes founded nearly in 40 countries around the world, of Turcology departments introduced in 53 universities, and of “I prefer Turkish” projects spreading quickly in schools, millions of people can meet with Turkish language. Within the scope of this project, 7250 students are learning Turkish as a foreign language in nearly 130 schools in 7 cantons of BiH Federation. In addition to Turkish education,
the education of Turkish culture and traditions are also given. The institute is also organizing In-Service Training Programs for teachers both in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Turkey. In order to teach Turkish in modern classrooms, 40 classrooms were built with the help of Turkish Armed Forces and TIKA. It is aimed that Turkish education will be given more effectively through the created modern language classrooms. As a result of the protocols signed by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, and Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education in 2015, Bosnian will be taught as an elective foreign language as from 2017-2018 school year; and, as a result of the protocols signed in 2016, 130 schools were matched with their sister schools in Turkey. Thanks to these protocols, approximately 3000 students and teachers visit Turkey per year. 2 years later, Bosnian students who are learning Turkish will have the opportunity of having continuous Turkish education for 8 years; with this advantage, they can study on a scholarship in Turkey; and, after they graduate, they can return to Bosnia-Herzegovina and serve their country.

As a result of the cooperation formed with Dzemal Bijedić University 5 years ago, Turkish Language and Education Department was founded; and, the department provides an opportunity for its students to learn Turkish better by charging 3 academicians from Turkey each year. In this department, students are not only learning Turkish but also receiving a wide range of education about Turkish literature through the use of modern education systems. From Pre-Islamic oral Turkish literature to today's modern literature, representatives of Turkish literature, poetry and prose genres, and literary arts are taught in detail. Having its first graduates in 2016, almost all of the students graduating from the department can soon find jobs in Turkish institutions and organizations. Hence, it increases the interest in the department. Attendance of thousands of children to the Children Festival organized in Zenica every year shows how Turkish language has become a powerful way of communication in this area (Dilber, 2017: 1).

**Modern Approaches in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners**

With the developments in technology, the access to information has become much easier and faster in the globalizing world. The traditional teacher who tries to dictate a set of information to students has been replaced by the students who want to get access to the information and look for different methods for it, and use technological devices more active than their teachers. This approach helps students who want to get access to information to learn much easier. We can state some out-of-class and in-class modern approaches in teaching Turkish to foreigners as follows:

**a. Interactive Education System and Z Book Applications:**

Perception of traditional classroom has been replaced by online platforms. Distance education through interactive systems has become a kind of education that is highly preferred by people who are extremely busy in their daily lives and people who have problems with time, place or transportation (Keegan, 1998). It creates approaches towards the ones who learn the essence of new education paradigms. The mosaic of traditional education approach is now distant for today's learner profiles, according to (Prensky, 2005), this era's learners want to learn through group works and projects by cooperating with their peers. Besides, for the learners who have the necessary skills to use high-level technology, although the information is distant, the access is easy (Selwyn, 2009: 364-379). Beside that developing information and communication technologies give acceleration to teaching Turkish as a foreign language, they also make positive contributions to assessment and evaluation. Apart from classroom environment, especially softwares and programs based on individual learning and individual assessment have been designed to develop reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills,
and the knowledge of grammar, phonetics, and vocabulary. The position of teachers are now replaced by software programs such as Articulate Storyline that support individual learning and aim to assess basic language skills. Such programs search for the contribution of educational materials, which are prepared by using scorm package on Moodle education management platform, to foreign language education. It is observed that through these softwares, skills that could not be assessed and evaluated in the past, such as spoken language skills, listening and understanding skills can be evaluated now (Kanburňoglu and Aycan, 2016: 215).

Accordingly, several Turkish Education Centers (TÔMER) of universities in Turkey, particularly Yunus Emre Institute, have made their course documents more modern. In Mostar Yunus Emre Institute and Dzemal Bijedić University, more modern methods are used in Listening, Reading, and Speaking activities through the use of CD and Internet, and Z Book Applications and Mobile phone applications designed in parallel with Student’s Books and Workbooks. Everybody who subscribes to https://turkce.yee.org.tr/ free, which is “Turkish Education Portal,” can learn Turkish in a quick and effective way. With smart board applications and unlimited Internet access, Mostar Yunus Emre Institute also puts these modern applications into service of people who want to learn Turkish. It has been revealed through the academic studies carried out in this field that computer-aided foreign language education has a significant superiority (Tomakin and Yeşilyurt, 2013: 248-263).

Use of Visual Materials

b.1: Interpretation of Caricatures and Pictures:

It is a commonly accepted idea that human beings had used drawing to convey their opinions and feelings even before they used writing. Many humour historians have considered “hieroglyph” writing as the beginning of caricatures (Selçuk, 1997: 7). Caveman’s choice of conveying his thoughts, knowledge or feelings through drawings is a sign that this communication method has an older and more universal feature compared to the other languages existed in the environment he lived or contacted. In 17th century, portraits with animal heads and human bodies were called “caricatura” in Italy. The word caricature is originated from the verb “caricare” which means loading, attacking, filling, exaggerating, and mocking. The term was firstly used in 1646 by Giovanni Atanasio Mosini in the preface of “Diverse Figure”, which is considered as the first theorical discussion on his own technique. According to him, caricature meant the exaggeration of distinctive inborn defects of people with the aim of having fun and creating idealized representations (Lachlan, 2004: 30). Although humour seems contrary to the seriousness of education by its nature, it is a fact that modern unhappy people can learn more easily through humour. For this reason, it can be said that teachers can improve writing and speaking skills of students through caricature and picture interpretation (Emeksiz, 2014: 62-64).

b.2. Watching Movie, Video and Advertisement

While we are learning a foreign language, we also learn that nation’s culture. It is an inevitable fact that traditional Turkish culture is also taught in teaching Turkish to foreigners. It enables students to learn some terms and events in a better way through having enjoyable time via visual and audio supplementaries. In this context, it has been revealed in the conducted academic studies that watching short-length and full-length movies, especially cartoons, has a positive effect on students; it enables them to learn in a more effective and rapid way (Yakar and Yılmaz, 2016: 265). Thanks to this method, students can actively learn topics, which require extra effort to teach in class, such as
phrases, slang, idioms, proverbs, and reduplication as well as the daily life of Turkish people.

TV advertisements also provide important opportunities in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Since they are short and have a rich language, visual effects, interesting words, and cultural contents, TV advertisements can bring many advantages for the improvement of listening skills of foreign language students (Akpınar, 2004: 55). In advertisements, which are watched after the imperative on the basic level is taught to foreigners, not only imperative mood is learned but also new words, verbs, antonyms of these words, phrases, and idioms are learned. Elements of Turkish culture, cultural transmission, traditions and habits of the community, and characteristics of the community can be observed in these advertisements. Chosen in accordance with the level of students, television advertisements as audio equipment can help students to learn the correct pronunciation of words. Beside the fact that students learn gestures and facial expressions of the target language through this visual tool, they can also maintain and enjoy their education by imitating. Hence, it increases the motivation and eagerness to learn; and, it can move students away from the boring environment of the classroom (Yiğit and Yılmaz, 2016: 280).

b. Game and Puzzle Solving Method

In teaching Turkish to foreigners, both student’s books and teachers should give a place to games and puzzles in application techniques with the aim of making in-class training more enjoyable. It would be useful for teachers to choose mind-developing games, which include rhymes, conventional words, sayings, and tunes.

c. Preparing Discussion Platforms

In addition to memorising method commonly used in the traditional education systems, preparing discussion platforms in classrooms also subjects students to the problem of improving thoughts. This obligation enables students to make an effort to use words and to make sentences. Through this effort, students remember their old knowledge and try to learn new words in order to explain their thoughts. While practicing this discussion method, the use of dictionary should be free. Teamwork can be practiced in the class and one of the students can use dictionary to support his/her friends. This method was a commonly used method in Ottoman madrasas. It was observed that sometimes these discussions became so tense that even students and the instructor discussed about the topic; and students refuted the instructor’s ideas within the framework of mutual respect. This is a method that prompts students to search and question (Kenan, 2015: 338).

d. Multiple Educational Environment and Material Design

The importance of interdisciplinary education has appeared in modern education systems. In these methods coming to the forefront especially in numeric fields and physical sciences education, since the lesson is taught in an interrelated way in the same environment instead of different environments, students are able to develop their skills and to be directed to innovations (K. Reinking, J. Vetere and Percell; 2017: 23-37).

Nowadays, foreign language education carried out with limited course equipment cannot achieve the desired success. In order to achieve the desired success in teaching Turkish to foreigners, lessons should be supported with motivational, and interesting course equipment which can stimulate all senses (Arslan and Ergin, 2010: 147). With the development of technology, material diversity has increased. For this reason, the diversity and features of the materials used in educational environment have also increased. The more materials appealing to different senses we use in teaching Turkish to foreigners, the more opportunity students will have for a more permanent and multiple learning. Apart
from these, the success of materials is affected by some factors such as whether a teacher knows which material to use or when s/he should use the material, and whether s/he has necessary technical equipment to design and use materials. If a language is wanted to be learned completely, neither of reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills should be ignored; materials supporting the improvement of these four skills should be used. The class should be monitored by the teacher; and the materials aiming to improve the least developed skill should be used (Duman, 2013: 7). Instead of giving prepared materials to students, teachers can have students prepare materials; in this way, it will contribute to affective, visual, and cognitive development of students. It will also prevent students forgetting the new words they have learned. Problems such as the lack of course materials, that course materials are not prepared in accordance with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, that the published materials are not supported with visual equipment, and that there are limited number of environments which allow teachers to use equipment have appeared in the scientific studies carried out in this field (Er, Biçer, and Bozkırlı, 2012: 51-69). Interesting materials are other factors, which positively affect learning. Thanks to materials, the information recorded visually and aurally in the long-term memory can be more permanent, and the possibility of remembering them increases. At the beginning, everything that s/he hears will sound so distant and meaningless for a foreigner who starts to learn Turkish. For example; with a simple photograph catalog, the terms can be understood more easily and it will be hard to skip or ignore some information. It is possible to use the prepared materials again and again in different classrooms (Duman, 2013: 4).

Apart from these methods, traditional education methods can also be used. Since all these methods exceed the limits of this study, we can only mention the names of some methods. Methods such as Brainstorming Technique, Thinking Hats Technique, Drama Method, Fishbone Technique, Mind Map Technique, Speaking Circles Technique, Six Action Shoes Technique, Demonstration Technique, Questioning Technique, Diagnostic Tree Technique, Socratic Method, Explanation/Confirmation, Forecasting/Inductive Inference – Deductive Reasoning, Hearsay, Working on Keywords, Using Words in Contexts, Association, Transfer, Extrapolating, Essoin, Making Analysis, Summarizing, Synthesizing, Preparing Draft, Rearrangement, Self-Observation, Use of Bodily Movements, Using Mechanical Materials, and Working Together (Harputoğlu, 2016: 96) can be considered.

CONCLUSION

In modern century, the interest in foreign languages has increased with globalization. People achieve the ways of communicating with different cultures through learning those languages. In today’s world where everything competes with speed, the interest in modern education systems rather than traditional education has increased also in language education. In almost all education systems, teachers are not considered as the only owner and distributor of knowledge anymore; instead, they have become guides who teach how to obtain information. Students can determine their own methods through practicing, experiencing, and deducing. In language education, there is not one method anymore; instead, an approach that supports the expansion of education throughout the life of a student and puts the student in the centre of education has come to the front.

The interest of foreigners in Turkish also expands in parallel with it. As the interest increases and people all around the world tend to learn Turkish, methods of teaching Turkish should be revised. In Bosnia and its region, which has always been a productive geography for the expansion of Turkish language, the use of thousands of Turkish words even today enables the language to expand easier. In Mostar and its region, thanks to Yunus Emre Institute, Dzemal Bijedić University, and Turkish teachers in local schools,
the use of Turkish language is expanding among students day by day with an increasing demand. In this regard, it can be said that teaching methods and sources of especially Yunus Emre Institute and Dzemal Bijedić University Turkish Language and Literature Department meet the standards and updates. Through Z books uploaded to smart boards and the dense use of interactive systems, students are enabled to adopt Turkish language and culture in a short span of time. Students densely using technology and making an effort to obtain information expand the education of Turkish language in all fields of their lives. If instructors use modern methods in teaching Turkish as some of which were mentioned above, it will increase the efficiency and enable students to receive an entertaining language education.

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