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A Study on the Predictors of Written Expression Level of Turkish Learners as a Foreign Language

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In the context of teaching Turkish to foreigners, this study aimed to assess whether attitudes towards the target language, grammatical knowledge, speaking skills, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and prior writing knowledge could predict success in writing in the target language. To investigate this, a relational survey method and a quantitative research design were employed. The study sample comprised 147 B1 level-foreign learners studying Turkish as a foreign language at the Turkish Language Teaching Center (TÖMER) in Ankara during the 2022-2023 academic year. The study utilized a multiple-choice test to assess reading comprehension, an informative listening text titled "Ay'a Yolculuk (Journey to the Moon)" along with a 20-question short-answer test to evaluate listening comprehension, a rating scale for assessing speaking skills, and a cloze test for measuring Turkish grammar knowledge. Moreover, in this study, a short-answer test was employed to assess the participants'prior knowledge of writing. An attitude scale was used to measure students'attitudes towards learning Turkish, while a 6+1 analytical assessment scale was used to evaluate students' writing skills. When the predictive impact of the chosen independent variables on writing skills was examined, these variables collectively accounted for 66% of the variation in writing achievement. The ranking of the influence levels of these variables on writing achievement (from most to least influential) was as follows: prior knowledge, grammatical knowledge, reading comprehension, attitude towards the target language, speaking achievement, and listening achievement.

Introduction

Teaching Turkish to Foreigners

Throughout history, human beings have been social creatures driven by a desire to share their thoughts. Therefore, language has served as a tool for communication both directly and indirectly. Language is an agreement and communication system through which people express their thoughts and feelings by using words or signs (Turkish Language Association, 2011). It is a sophisticated tool that enables societies to effectively convey collective ideas, sentiments, and desires in terms of both sound and meaning. Many areas such as politics, social interactions, education, and commerce require the use of language as a tool, making the acquisition of a foreign language alongside one's native language inevitable. In the 20th and

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21st centuries, communication networks connecting large populations developed significantly, especially due to globalization, and the acquisition of foreign languages has become a necessity. This has enabled individuals, societies, and communities to interact with different cultures, share information, participate in international trade, establish diplomatic ties, and access a multitude of educational opportunities. Therefore, learning a foreign language has become an integral part of people's lives and has led to an increase in the demand for language education. In this context, teaching Turkish as a foreign language has gained significant importance in global interaction.

Turkish, spoken by an estimated 220 million people worldwide, ranks among the top seven most widely spoken languages (Aykaç, 2015: 164). "Its widespread use fosters a natural learning environment for foreigners. Recent global circumstances, particularly driven by social and political advancements, have positioned Türkiye to engage with diverse markets, leading to growing interest in Turkish language acquisition. Consequently, the necessity of teaching and learning Turkish as a foreign language has become inevitable" (Yüce, 2005: 86).

While the systematic history of teaching Turkish as a foreign language is not well documented, Turks have consistently engaged in and communicated with other nations throughout their history. The journey of teaching Turkish began in 1072 with Mahmud of Kashgar's work, titled Divân-ı Lügâti't-Türk, which aimed to teach Turkish to Arabs. This effort continued with individual initiatives until the republican period. During this period, Atatürk ordered the establishment of the Turkish Language Association (TDK) and initiated systematic studies to examine and develop Turkish. Institutional efforts to teach Turkish to foreigners began with the establishment of Turkish Teaching Centers (TÖMER). Turkish Teaching Centers affiliated with Ankara University, Gazi University, Bolu İzzet Baysal University, and Ege University have played a pioneering role in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Currently, this task is primarily undertaken by Turkish Teaching Centers within universities or private institutions, following the European Union Common Framework Text. Institutions for teaching Turkish abroad include Turkish Cultural Centers, Turkish Language and Literature departments at universities, Turkology chairs, Turkish Teaching Centers at embassies, and Maarif Foundation Schools, all of which are dedicated to teaching Turkish as a foreign language (Aytan & Ayhan, 2018). Internationally, the Yunus Emre Institute is particularly notable for its mission to teach Turkish, offering both online and in-person courses across numerous countries worldwide.

Foreign language teaching continues throughout history and remains important today (Günaydın & Arıcı, 2020). The increasing prevalence and global recognition of languages with a significant speaker base, such as Turkish, require sensitivity to language policies. In this context, the promotion of Turkish as a foreign language depends not only on the number of language teaching centers but also on the quality of educators in these institutions. Instructors' competence in understanding their target audience and in effectively selecting and applying language-teaching methods is crucial to students' language development. In particular, the techniques used to teach writing skills are of great importance in helping students acquire new language structures.

Acquisition and Measurement of Writing Skills in the Field of Teaching Turkish to Foreigners

In the process of learning a foreign language, foundational language skills serve as fundamental pillars of language acquisition. This is particularly crucial in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, where effective instruction in these skills is essential

for learners to comprehend and utilize all facets of the language. According to Azizoğlu et al. (2019), individuals typically progress from mastering listening skills as an initial step in native language acquisition to developing their writing skills in the final step. Likewise, in second language acquisition, writing skills often follow the development of listening, reading, and speaking skills (Kılınç & Tok, 2012; Demirel & Şahinel, 2006). This situation arises primarily because the acquisition of writing skills depends on the level of development of other language skills (Arslan & Klıcıc, 2015).

Writing skills are of significant importance for both native and foreign language learners (Takıl, 2016). Writing proficiency is more difficult than other skills (Herrick & Otto, 1961). However, writing skills affect reading comprehension (Bruning & Horn, 2000), Therefore, it is one of the most important skills to learn (Hammill, 2004).

As students enhance their grammar, vocabulary, and expressive skills through writing, they sharpen their critical thinking skills and analytical skills. Writing skills, alongside listening, reading, and speaking skills, enrich language usage and foster a deeper understanding. Consequently, the writing process helps learners effectively organize their thoughts and feelings, establish coherent narratives, and communicate clearly. Specifically, in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, emphasizing writing skills empowers students to engage more profoundly with the language, allowing them to express their thoughts accurately and effectively.

Certainly, developing writing proficiency can be demanding for learners who struggle to attain the desired levels in listening, reading, and speaking during foreign language acquisition. Enhancing writing skills in a foreign language requires the simultaneous performance of multiple functional tasks such as word selection, language structures, syntax, and text editing (Melanlıoğlu & Demir Atalay, 2016). Initiating the development of writing skills from fundamental levels, including complex structures, and establishing a strong foundation are pivotal for effectively improving these skills (Nurlu & Kutlu, 2015). To ensure effective language acquisition, instructors must not only employ language teaching methodologies proficiently but also account for learners'target languages and individual differences. A study that aims to determine the impact of students'attitudes towards the target language, grammatical knowledge, speaking skills, reading comprehension levels, listening comprehension levels, and prior knowledge of writing on their writing success in the target language will offer crucial data for future research on writing skills.

In language education, it is crucial to integrate listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills right from the start. These fundamental skills are essential at all times during the use of language, which is the basis of communication (Barın, 2004, p. 22). The predictive influence of each skill on the others is significant. For instance, having prior knowledge of a subject enhances one's ability to express themselves in writing at a desired proficiency level. The cognitive aspect of writing involves organizing previously acquired information through mental processing (Kapar Kuvanç, 2008, p. 55).

At this point, vocabulary stands out as a significant factor influencing writing skills. Tiryaki (2013) emphasizes that the initial phase of teaching writing involves alphabet education, followed by vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Şengül (2014) addresses the alphabet issue in teaching Turkish as a foreign language and stresses the primary role of alphabetic knowledge in developing writing skills. Hamaratlı (2015) advocates for the word network method as a means to enhance writing skills among foreign Turkish learners. Research on grammar

proficiency and foreign language instruction (Aramak, 2016; Islıoğlu, 2015; Boylu, 2014; Yağmur Şahin, 2013) focused on the methods, necessity, and impact of grammar education on language learning. Additionally, students' attitudes toward writing are another factor affecting their writing skills. Therefore, in foreign language education, determining students' attitudes toward the target language and taking measures to motivate them are crucial (Karatay & Kartalloğlu, 2016, p. 205). Knudson (1991, 1992, 1993, 1995) also found a positive relationship between attitude and writing success. Regarding studies on the relationship between writing skills and attitude, Graham, Berninger, and Fan (2007, p. 517) stated that writing attitude is among the motivational factors that positively influence writing. Yıldız (2016) further asserts that a positive attitude toward writing significantly contributes to the success of students learning Turkish as a foreign language. Considering that skills affect, support, and develop each other in language teaching, it is essential to integrate and evaluate each skill equally.

Purpose of the study

This study aimed to determine whether factors such as prior writing knowledge, attitude towards the target language, knowledge of the target language grammar, speaking achievement, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension levels can predict writing achievement among learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language.

Method

This study sought to determine the correlation between writing proficiency of Turkish as a Foreign Language learner and various variables. It also employed a relational screening method and quantitative research design. The relational screening model is used to ascertain the presence of co-variation among two or more variables. In this model, the focus is on determining whether variables change together and understanding how this change occurs (Karasar, 2011).

Population and sample

The research sample comprised B1-level foreign learners studying Turkish as a foreign language at Turkish Teaching Centers in both state and foundation universities located in Ankara's city center during the 2022-2023 academic year. The sample was selected using random cluster sampling from a total population of 147 learners across seven branches. Among the sampled learners, 90 (61.2%) were male and 57 (38.7%) were female, all of whom were high school graduates or held equivalent qualifications, with ages ranging from 18 to 27 years.

Measurements tools

In this study, the researcher developed a multiple-choice test to assess the learners'reading and listening comprehension levels. The texts and questions used in this test were validated for their appropriateness and level by three field experts who held doctorate degrees in teaching Turkish. The initial measurement tool for assessing reading comprehension comprised of 20 multiple-choice questions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the test, a 40-question measurement tool was first administered to 42 B1-level learners. After analyzing the results, items with low reliability were eliminated, resulting in a final 20-item measurement tool. During the reliability assessment of the scale, participants were given 1 point for each correct answer and 0 points for each incorrect answer. Their

performance was then ranked from highest to lowest. In the item analysis, the top 27% of scorers were categorized as the upper group, whereas the bottom 27% were classified as the lower group. Scores from the remaining 46% of the participants with medium achievement levels were excluded from the analysis. Table 1 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 1. Item analysis of the multiple-choice test developed to determine the level of reading comprehension

Questions	pj	qj	sj^2	rjx
S1	0.58	0.64	0.23	0.68
S2	0.68	0.64	0.23	0.45
S3	0.47	0.55	0.25	0.45
S4	0.46	0.53	0.25	0.52
S5	0.37	0.59	0.24	0.60
S6	0.43	0.54	0.25	0.56
S7	0.58	0.63	0.23	0.45
S8	0.37	0.57	0.25	0.48
S9	0.45	0.64	0.23	0.61
S10	0.62	0.66	0.23	0.54
S11	0.52	0.42	0.24	0.50
S12	0.36	0.67	0.22	0.61
S13	0.36	0.55	0.24	0.79
S14	0.45	0.38	0.23	0.68
S15	0.47	0.48	0.25	0.66
S16	0.43	0.42	0.25	0.83
S17	0.58	0.35	0.22	0.68
S18	0.43	0.53	0.24	0.71
S19	0.41	0.62	0.24	0.50
S20	0.36	0.46	0.24	0.68

The item difficulty index ranges from 0 to 1, where items scoring between 0.30 and 0.70 are considered moderately difficult (Karaca, 2006; Tekin, 2019). In this study, the difficulty (pj) of the items in the initial reading comprehension measurement tool ranges from 0.37 to 0.68, indicating a moderate difficulty level across all test items. The discrimination index (rjx) varies between -1 and +1, with values exceeding 0.40, indicating item distinctiveness (Karaca, 2006; Tekin, 2019). The discrimination indexes of the items in the test employed in the study range from 0.45 to 0.83, indicating sufficient discrimination for the items. The average difficulty level of the test was 0.43, indicating an average level of difficulty in the test. To assess the reliability and internal consistency of the 20-item test designed to assess reading comprehension, the KR20 value was analyzed. According to Büyüköztürk (2006), a KR20 value of 0.70 or higher signifies high internal consistency and, consequently, high reliability of the test. In this study, the calculated KR20 value for the test was 0.82, indicating appropriate internal consistency for the test items, and thus, appropriate reliability.

The second assessment tool utilized in the study was designed to measure listening comprehension levels. This tool comprises a 286-word informative listening passage titled "Ay'a Yolculuk (Journey to the Moon)" and 20 fill-in-the-blank questions related to this passage.

The following statements can be given as examples of questions in this measurement tool.

"The name of the first vehicle to reach the moon is ...."

"The vehicles that transport astronauts to the moon and back to Earth are known as..."

The third tool was a rating scale created to assess the learners' speaking skills. This scale was developed to measure pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and speaking fluency. It comprises 11 items, each rated on a 5-point scale. The rating options are "definitely observed," "observed," "partially observed," "not observed," and "definitely not observed."

The following statements can be given as examples of the items in this measurement tool:

"(S/he) uses the words correctly when speaking."

"(S/he) pronounces the words correctly."

"(S/he) avoids making sounds such as "errr" or "hmmm" that can disrupt fluency in speech."

The fourth measurement tool employed in the study was a cloze test designed to assess learners' knowledge of Turkish grammar at their level. This test involved filling in missing verbs and nouns in the original text, which were removed by the researcher based on the correct tense, person, and form for verbs, and adding the appropriate suffixes for nouns. In addition, appropriate punctuation marks should be placed in the gaps provided in the text. The base forms of verbs and nouns extracted from the text are also provided.

The following paragraph provides an example of the questions in this test:

[...] Hans (run)...........to the place where ……….. (brother) showed. Seawater was gushing out in bubbles from one part of the (set) …………... The hole gradually (gets larger) ………………. "Oops! What (be) do now? If our elders do not come and repair this hole immediately, the water will flow.......... (this hole) quickly, and maybe it will destroy the set. He immediately climbed onto the embrakment and (shout) .... with all his might:

-The set has been pierced. The set has been pierced!

A short-answer test consisting of 25 items was designed to measure learners'prior knowledge of the topic of writing "Gemiler ve Deniz Yolculuğu (Ships and Sea Voyage)." This test included questions about situations and concepts related to ships and sea voyages. More importantly, learners were informed that they could answer questions using words from their native language if they could not express themselves in Turkish.

The following statements can be given as examples of questions in this measurement tool.

"The rooms on passenger ships are called ...."

"Ships used for human transportation are called ...., while ships used to transport cars are called ...."

The "Scale for Determining Attitudes towards Learning Turkish as a Foreign Language," developed as a 3-point Likert-type rating scale by the researcher, was employed to evaluate learners' attitudes towards Turkish. This Likert-type triple rating scale consists of 15 items grouped into three factors: liking Turkish, the ease of learning Turkish, and the usefulness of Turkish. Respondents were presented with options of "disagree," "undecided," and "agree" agree with each item. Positive statements were scored from 1 to 3 (disagree to agree), whereas negative statements were scored inversely. To ensure content validity, the opinions of field

experts were sought. For construct validity, factor analysis identified three factors that accounted for 69.87% of the total variance, with all items having factor loadings of .30 or higher. Additionally, the scale's reliability was tested, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .71.

The "6+1 Analytical Writing Evaluation Scale" was utilized for assessing students'writing achievements. This model originated in the USA in the 1980s. Its primary feature is the analytical evaluation of writing education and the written products (Culham, 2003; Spandel, 2005; Özkara, 2007). The 6+1 Analytical Writing Evaluation Model is also important because it allows teachers to use common criteria when evaluating. According to this model, a written product should be evaluated in terms of seven criteria: ideas, organization, style, word choice, sentence fluency, spelling, and presentation (Paquette, 2002).

Ideas encompass the details that enliven and captivate the presented information, focusing on the development of the text's meaning or the message it aims to convey. Organizations include the structure of the text, arrangement of paragraphs, and smooth transition between them. Style represents the author's approach to engaging the reader, showcasing personality, taste, and distinctive writing style. The selection of words should be rich, vivid, and precise to accurately convey the intended meaning. Sentence fluency is crucial for ensuring that ideas flow smoothly, allowing the writer to cohesively connect thoughts. Spelling ensures clarity and understanding for the reader, whereas presentation encompasses the overall visual appeal of the text on the page. Each criterion in the 6+1 Analytical Writing and Evaluation Scale is assessed as follows: a score of 5 indicates full meeting of the writing criteria, 3 points for partially meeting them, and 1 point for not meeting the criteria.

Implementation

The applications were conducted in my classroom environment by volunteer instructors who were briefed about the research and measurement tools. The researcher was present in the classroom during the application but did not actively participate. In the first week of the applications, during the speaking class, instructors had students engage in a 3-minute research talk on the topic of their choice and then assessed their speaking achievements using a speaking rating scale. Following this activity, the scores provided by the researcher and the instructors were compared. Consistent scores for the same criteria were considered unchanged. In cases where there were different scores, a consensus was reached, and a final score was assigned to the student. A reading comprehension test was administered within one class hour on the first day of the following week. On the second day, a listening comprehension test was conducted within one class hour. On the third day, a knowledge quiz on ships and sea voyages was administered within one class hour. On the fourth day, both a grammar test and an attitude scale towards learning Turkish were administered. On the fifth day, the students were asked to write any text they wanted about the sea voyage. The written products obtained from the learners were reviewed by experts who held doctorates in Turkish. The students were scored based on the consensus reached by three experts. The results were then uploaded to a computer and the correlation and regression coefficients were calculated using SPSS 25.

Ethics

All instructors and learners participated in the research voluntarily, and each participant was informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

Findings and Comments

In this section, the findings obtained from the applications are presented in tables and interpreted.

Table 2. Normality test of the subjects' scores from the measurement tools used in the research

Test	Skewness	Kurtosis
Prior knowledge test on writing topic	-,244	-,959
Attitude scale towards the target language	,609	,177
Knowledge test on the grammar of the target language	-1,137	1,140
Speaking achievement scale	-1,044	,437
Reading comprehension test	-,519	-,024
Listening comprehension test	,942	,913
6+1 analytical writing and evaluation scale	,117	-,869

Table 2 presents the skewness and kurtosis values for scores obtained by learners across various assessments: a prior knowledge test on writing, an attitude scale for the target language, a grammatical knowledge test for the target language, a speaking achievement scale, a reading comprehension test, a listening comprehension test, and a 6+1 analytical writing and evaluation scale. Analysis of these values shows that all score distributions have skewness and kurtosis coefficients ranging from -1.137 to 1.140. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), skewness and kurtosis coefficients within the range of +1.5 to -1.5 indicate normal distribution characteristics for scores in social sciences. Therefore, it can be concluded that the scores used in this study indicate normal distribution characteristics.

Table 3. Distribution of students' scores from 6+1 analytical writing evaluation criteria

Criteria	X	S
Ideas	2,4	1.35
Organization	2,6	.99
Sentence fluency	2,5	.36
Word choice	2,4	1.62
Style	2.1	1.57
Spelling	2,7	1.09
Presentation	2.1	1.25

When examining Table 3, it was observed that the sampled learners received relatively high scores in organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and spelling. However, they received relatively fewer points in ideas, style, and presentation criteria. It can be concluded that the students' scores based on the 6+1 criteria were average or below average.

Tablo 4. The relationship between the criteria used in evaluating the writing and the total score they received from the scale

Dimensions N=147		Ideas	Org.	Sentence	Word	Style	Spelling	Present	Total
Ideas	r	1.00							
	p	.							
Org.	r	.282	1.00						
	p	.006	.						
Sentence	r	-.121	.245	1.00					
	p	.355	.068	.					
Word	r	.031	.091	.632	1.00				
	p	.847	.481	.000	.				
Style	r	-.087	.327	.441	.387	1.00			
	p	.585	.007	.000	.001	.			
Spelling	r	.040	.233	.214	.065	.011	1.00		
	p	.725	.078	.087	.721	.964	.		
Present	r	.091	.171	-.094	.099	-.012	-.062	1.00	
	p	.454	.153	.532	.418	.945	.696	.	
Total	r	**.346**	**.644**	**.623**	**.629**	**.571**	**.482**	**.437**	1.00
	p	.005	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.

Table 4 shows that there is a positive relationship between the scores obtained from all criteria used to evaluate writing and the total score received from the written product (r = 346, p < .05 for ideas; r = 644, p < .05 for organization; p for sentence fluency). <.05; r=482, p<.05; word choice, r= <.05). These results suggest that each criterion used to evaluate written work significantly affected writing achievement. In particular, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and style play a more important role in overall success, while presentation, writing, and ideas have less impact. This observation may be because students focus less on the entire text when they concentrate on aspects such as writing, presentation, or ideas.

Tablo 5. The prediction of writing achievement based on prior knowledge of writing, attitude towards the target language, grammatical knowledge, speaking achievements, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension levels.

	Variables	B	S. Error	β	t	p	Binary r	Partial r
Writing achievement	Fixed	9,920	1,966		5,045	,000		
	Prior knowledge level	,651	,053	,760	12,329	,000	,721	,608
	Reading comprehension	,208	,097	,158	2,150	,033	,179	,106
	Attitudes towards the target language	,068	,067	,058	1,021	,309	,086	,050
	Listening	,021	,020	,070	1,042	,299	,088	,051
	Speaking	,057	,017	,178	3,325	,001	,271	,164
	Grammatical knowledge	,248	,105	,162	2,354	,020	,195	,116

Table 5 shows whether prior knowledge of the writing subject, attitude towards the target language, knowledge of the target language, grammatical knowledge, speaking achievement, reading, and listening comprehension can predict writing achievement. In the regression

analysis, the correlation coefficients between these variables were assessed, and all were below .80, with a VIF value below 3 for each independent variable. This led to the conclusion that there was no issue of "multicollinearity" among the variables. As per the table, the variables examined in the study accounted for 66% of the writing achievement (R=0.812, R^2=0.659). When examining the standardized regression coefficients, the relative order of importance of the independent variables on writing success was as follows: prior knowledge of the writing subject, grammatical knowledge, reading comprehension level, attitude towards the target language, listening success, and speaking success. According to the regression analysis results, the regression equation for predicting writing success is "*writing achievement= 9.920 Fixed + .651 prior knowledge level + .248 grammatical knowledge + .208 reading comprehension + .068 attitude towards the target language + .057 speaking achievement + .021 listening achievement.*" Based on these results, it can be said that writing success is predicted especially by the level of prior knowledge, grammatical knowledge, and reading comprehension. The most important predictor is the level of prior knowledge about the subject to be written about.

Conclusion and Discussion

Conclusion

This study examined how students' writing skills were influenced by their prior knowledge of writing, attitudes towards the target language, grammatical knowledge, speaking achievement, and reading comprehension levels. The results indicated that the main factors influencing students' writing achievements were their prior knowledge of writing, grammatical knowledge, and reading comprehension. In particular, prior knowledge of the writing topic was found to be the most significant predictor. We assessed learners' written work using the 6+1 analytical writing evaluation scale and found that they were more successful in organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and spelling than in aspects such as idea development, style, and presentation. Regression analysis revealed that writing achievement is influenced by several factors, including prior knowledge level, grammatical knowledge, reading comprehension, attitude towards the target language, and listening and speaking achievements. These factors collectively accounted for 66% of the total impact on writing achievement. When examining the literature, Kapar Kuvanç (2008, p. 55) states that prior knowledge affects writing skills. Varışoğlu (2013), in his study investigating the effect of the combined collaborative reading and composition technique in teaching Turkish to foreigners, found that this technique increased students' writing achievement.

This study offers important data for enhancing students' achievements in learning Turkish as a foreign language, particularly in terms of their written expression skills. By highlighting the influence of prior knowledge, grammatical knowledge, and reading comprehension on writing achievement, this study underscores the essential need to consider these factors in language teaching and assessment processes. To achieve effective and proper written expression, it is necessary to apply the principles of external structure, internal structure (content), language and expression, as well as spelling and punctuation (Sever, 2000).

Discussion

Organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and style significantly influenced the overall success of students' written expressions. These aspects have been found to be more effective than other factors such as presentation, spelling, and ideas. As learners pay excessive attention to spelling, presentations, or ideas while writing, they often focus less on the entire text. Therefore, technical aspects, such as organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and style, play a more critical role in determining the success of written expressions. These

elements contribute to the clarity and fluency of writing by directly affecting its structure and expressive quality. Based on these data, it appears that learners often overlook the overall meaning and depth of the text, focusing instead on details such as spelling and presentation. Demir and Deniz (2023, p. 135) classified the elements of written expression; "topic, purpose, message, main idea/main emotion, auxiliary ideas, style, language, expression, word, sentence, paragraph, spelling, punctuation, plan, title, introduction, development, conclusion, and format."

Considering creating written work requires initial knowledge stemming from observation or mental processes, it is possible to say that learners' achievement in these technical areas forms a foundation based on knowledge and observation. Learners should establish a balance between technical aspects (such as organization, fluency, word choice, and style) and content and expression (ideas, presentation, and depth) when improving their written expression skills. This approach ensures that their writing works are not only structurally correct, but also rich and impressive in content.

The research findings indicated a significant impact of grammatical knowledge on writing proficiency. This underscores the importance of learners' command over grammar rules and their focus on the structural elements of language as determinants of writing achievement. However, the fact that learners were less successful in areas such as idea development, style, and presentation may indicate a lack of aesthetic language in their writing. Many studies in the literature (Aramak, 2016; Islıoğlu, 2015; Boylu, 2014; Yağmur Şahin, 2013) aimed at determining the grammatical proficiency of students learning a foreign language point out that learners need grammatical knowledge to reach the desired level of language teaching, especially regarding writing skills.

Achieving a balanced development of content, expression, and technical aspects is crucial in the process of learning Turkish as a foreign language. When developing their writing skills, learners must focus on content, expression, spelling, presentation, and ideas. This approach guarantees that their written work is rich and effective in terms of technical aspects and content.

Suggestions

Based on the research findings, a significant correlation was observed between the criteria used for assessing writing, as well as with the overall score. Therefore, it is recommended that instructors of Turkish language instruction for foreign learners focus on these criteria when teaching writing. Spelling and presentation have a very limited relationship with writing quality. In other words, there is a difference between writing well and writing, with a focus on beauty and aesthetics. Therefore, instructors should consider these two aspects of writing separately in their teaching practices while instructing Turkish to foreigners. This differentiation is particularly crucial for learners who use non-Latin alphabets in their native language. It is important to explain the spelling of Latin letters and related considerations based on language proficiency levels.

There was a significant relationship between sentence fluency, organization, word choice, and style. In this case, it is recommended that aspiring writers have a strong vocabulary and sentence knowledge to create their own style. Additionally, they should improve their text organization skills by reading the work of other writers.

In this study, we observed that the relationship between writing and reading comprehension skills was significantly stronger than that between listening and speaking. Thus, it is important to view language skills holistically. However, it is also crucial to recognize that activities aimed at enhancing one skill may have a limited impact on another. When language skills are analyzed in terms of expression and comprehension, writing and speaking are grouped together, yet their correlation is limited. Conversely, when skills were categorized by the channel used, writing and reading were in the same cluster. In light of this, educators teaching Turkish to non-native speakers should integrate reading and writing into their lesson plans to enhance learners' achievements.

One of the most interesting findings from this study is that prior knowledge significantly influences writing performance. Rather than employing simple texts in Turkish instruction, educators may find it beneficial to incorporate materials containing cultural insights, historical contexts, daily life scenarios, or captivating cultural information. Furthermore, engaging in writing tasks based on common texts can enhance learners' achievement in written expressions (Başaran, 2020). This is due to the fact that producing well-written texts not only enhances writing skills but also improves positive attitudes towards writing in particular and Turkish language acquisition in general. Producing quality texts offers the opportunity to utilize Turkish effectively and explore its subtleties.

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