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Teaching German as a Second Foreign Language at Primary Education in Turkey

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Abstract

It is a known situation that knowing a single foreign language is not enough in the 21st century and that knowing a second language will give an individual privilege. Accordingly, in recent years, serious steps have been taken related to foreign language teaching in Turkey. In Turkey is beginning to be taught in basic education German as a second foreign language after English as a first foreign language. Due to the increase in the importance given to the second foreign language, it has become an important situation to organize activities according to the interest and readiness of the student in order to achieve the desired success in learning German. In this context, the aim of this study is to provide examples of activity design in which communication for German teaching after English in primary education is at the forefront. In this study, is designed activities related to the topic "Einkaufen, Farben, Obst und Gemüse, Mülltrennung, Berufe, Artikel, Krankheiten" located in the German language curriculum in basic education in Turkey. Considering the cognitive, physical and affective development of the students in the design of the activities, many teaching principles such as relativity to the student and the principles of experiencing by doing have been brought to the fore.

Keywords: Turkey, Basic Education, Second Foreign Language, German, Teaching Activities.

1. Introduction

Today, there is a serious interaction and communication between countries depending on many developments such as technological, economic, social and political. The importance of knowing a foreign language for this communication is once again understood. In this context, it is known that knowing a single foreign language is not enough and that knowing a second language will gain privilege for the individual in the 21st century. Therefore in Turkey in recent years it has been taken serious steps regarding the teaching of foreign languages. Turkey in 1997, the 5-year compulsory basic training period was increased to 8 years. As a result of that, the curricula of basic education were rearranged and many new learning areas were included in the curriculum. One of these areas is foreign language teaching. According to this new regulation, English as the first foreign language has been taught from the 4th grade of primary education. German as a second foreign language has been added to the programs as an elective course from the 4th grade of primary education (MEB, 2006). Foreign

language education and training in recent years as can be understood from the regulations at an early age, in Turkey is increasing importance of foreign language teaching. As a matter of fact, with the 4 + 4 + 4 education law that started to be implemented in the 2012-2013 academic year, foreign languages have been taught at lower levels of primary education and in 2012, English was taught from the 2nd grade. This new law has positively changed the perception of the German language in our country (Balci, 2016). Because in Turkey until 2012, both in public schools and in private schools was not given due importance to German (Karaman, 2017: 105). However, with the changes made in the regulations, German was brought to the fore as the second foreign language after English as the first foreign language. The increasing importance given to German teaching has brought the need to design different teaching methods, techniques and activities. In order to achieve the desired success in German teaching, it has become an important issue to organize activities according to the interest and readiness of the student. In this context, the aim of this study is to design activities in which communication is at the forefront for teaching German after English at primary education level. In this study, is designed activities related to the topic "Einkaufen, Farben, Obst und Gemüse, Mülltrennung, Berufe, Artikel, Krankheiten" located in the German language curriculum in basic education in Turkey.

2. Teaching German as a Second Foreign Language in Basic Education in Turkey

As in teaching the first foreign language in basic education, it should also be ensured that the students are interested in the activities used in the second foreign language teaching. Because, first of all, if the student develops a negative perception and attitude towards German, it will prevent her from achieving success in the learning process. Therefore, in teaching a second foreign language after the first foreign language at an early age, the child's perception and attitude towards the language in question determines whether the language learning process will be successful or not. The methods, approaches, techniques and activities used, especially the teacher, play an important role in the formation of the child's perception and attitude in the second foreign language teaching process in basic education. As a matter of fact, in a foreign language course designed in accordance with the readiness level, interests and wishes of the child, active participation will be higher and the chance of achieving the desired success will be higher. In this context, it is necessary to focus on an activity-oriented education in German teaching in basic education. Because of its natural nature, foreign language teaching includes abstract rules (Thalmayr, 2008). Considering the physical and mental development of children in basic education, it will be seen that abstract thinking skills do not develop at the desired level and it will not be easy for them to learn abstract concepts. Because the concrete transactions period covers the period between 7 and 11 years of age. During this period, children can understand the rules regarding concrete concepts. The abstract operations period is the period of 11 years and after. During this period, children start to learn abstract concepts and problem solving (Ari, 2017: 105-106). Therefore, in order for this process to be successful and to attract the students' interest in the learning material, it is necessary to concretize and transfer the abstract linguistic structures to the student as much as possible. Because the creation of learning environments with the experiences children encounter in daily life or where they are likely to encounter will make a great contribution to the foreign language learning process of the student. In order to achieve this goal, activity-centered teaching should be brought to the fore.

A number of teaching principles should be taken into account while designing the activities. The first of these principles is the principle of relativity to the student. Relativity to students is that all activities and learning situations planned in the teaching process are designed according to the developmental characteristics of the student and the student is placed in the center. This principle is of particular importance as it forms the basis of all other teaching principles (Köksal & Bünyamin, 2017: 21). Another principle to consider when designing activities is the principle of readiness. The principle of readiness means that the student has all the skills, interests and attitudes, and prior knowledge on the subject that he / she needs to learn a new learning material (Sünbül, 2011: 26). If the student cannot make a connection between the previously learned knowledge and skills and the new subject to be learned, it becomes difficult to have permanent learning. For this reason, when designing the activities, care should be taken to prepare the students in a way that they can make mental associations.

In the principle of closeness to life, which is another principle, it is important to transfer the information that can be used actively by the students in daily life and that serves the living skill to the student (Karabacak, 2021: 172). According to this principle, it is not functional to teach abstract information that cannot be used by the student. At this point, it comes to the forefront that students should not be given a mere rule transfer as in traditional foreign language teaching, but instead should be given linguistic structures needed for communication. Because the main purpose of language teaching is not to teach the rules of language that are abstracted from the content; It is to provide students with reading, listening, speaking and writing skills depending on the of their class levels and to enable them to use the language effectively (Göçer, 2015: 233). As Kalfa stated, "the goal in foreign language teaching is to be able to establish the correct and effective communication required in daily life with the foreign language that the student has learned. It is important that the teaching process is designed to meet the need in this direction" (2015: 250).

Another point to be considered while designing the activities is to create learning environments that will enable students to learn by doing and experiencing. Turkey adopted the constructivist theory of teaching in the education system since 2005, and all training programs were organized in the framework of this theory. According to this theory, the student actively participates in the learning process, learns by doing knowledge and skill. According to Helmke, the basis of the constructivist approach is not to give information in teaching, but to structure the knowledge in the student's mind (2009: 68). The information that is processed and structured in the mind of the student becomes permanent information and becomes functional.

As in the first foreign language teaching process, the main purpose in the second foreign language lessons is to enable the student to express himself first in the target foreign language. Therefore, learning environments should be organized taking into account the communicative competence. As is known, communicative competence is the information needed to communicate in a language and their use at the skill level (Aktaş, 2005: 90). Since the development levels of children are not suitable for using written language in a foreign language, bringing more speaking skills to the forefront increases efficiency. In basic education, it is an important issue to emphasize the activities where the speaking skill is at the forefront.

3. Activity Designs for Teaching German in Basic Education

The following concrete examples of activities designed for some topics in the German teaching curriculum at the basic education level in Turkey are given. These activities are planned considering active participation, communicative competence and teaching principles. In addition, while designing the activities, each activity was organized based on a learning approach and method.

3.1. Activity 1: Krankheiten (Diseases)

In this activity, the student understands the German equivalents of the diseases. It is expressed in German 10 diseases that are frequently encountered in daily life, including "Erkältet, Fieber, Kopfschmerzen, Husten, Halsschmerzen, Bauchschmerzen, Ohrenschmerzen, Zahnschmerzen, Pocken, Grippe". This event has been planned with a real hospital environment in mind. In daily life, there are patients waiting to see a doctor at the hospital. The body language of these patients is different depending on their illnesses. Therefore, figures with 10 different diseases were pictured in this activity, as seen below. When the designs and features of the figures are examined, it will be seen that they can attract the attention of young children. Because in the activities, figures similar to the characters that children watch in cartoons were preferred. In addition, the colors of the figures' clothes are striking for children. Scripting has been done in a hospital environment with sick figures. Human figures representing each disease are waiting for their turn in the waiting room. There are German expressions on each figure. In this activity, students are asked to match the illness of the figures in the waiting room with the sentences written in the German language on pink papers. Later, the teacher takes the role of a doctor in the classroom and asks "Was ist los?" to each student by directing the question, he tells the students to express in German which disease they have.

Picture 1



As explained above, in this activity, the student was given experience and the German of the diseases was tried to be taught and communication skills were gained. Indeed, the goal of basic education in Turkey primarily to acquire knowledge and skills in accordance with the needs of students and society's expectations of its age (Güven, 2012). At this point, German language teachers should also have some qualifications. Therefore, today it is not foreign language teachers who transfer knowledge as it is; there is a need for teachers who provide the reproduction of knowledge and give the opportunity to use what has been learned in daily life. At this point, teachers have a great duty and responsibility. One of these tasks is designing and organizing creative activities. Because, according to Jank and Meyer, the learning process is not by taking the student's learning input passively; it is formed by the experiencing of the information himself or herself (2014: 288). This goal can be achieved by providing the students learning environments where the student can gain experience.

Picture 2



As it is known, games are of great importance for children at the basic education level. Since play is an action that must be fulfilled to meet vital needs, it can be evaluated as an exercise (Aydın, 2014: 72). Transferring a situation that children enjoy doing in their daily lives to learning environments both makes the learning process

more enjoyable and the desired success is achieved. Therefore, in the above activity, inspired by the puzzle game, they were asked to combine the images of diseases and their German equivalents correctly. For this activity, firstly, puzzle pieces are drawn on paper and then these pieces are cut. Images of the disease and disease names are written on these cut puzzle pieces. It is recommended to organize this activity as a group, as it will contribute to the learning of children from each other within the group. Because in group work, students feel a common responsibility for the successful fulfillment of the task and contribute to each other's learning (Storch, 2009: 307).

3.2. Activity 2: Articles (Artikel)

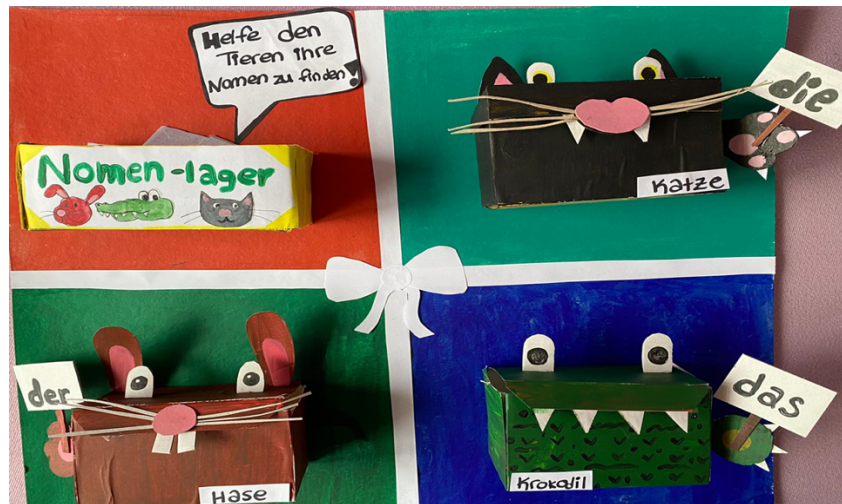
The topic of article is one of the most important and abstract topics in German. Because it is necessary to know the articles in order to use many structures such as akkusativ, dativ, and genitive. In German, each genus name has an article. There are three articles in German language: Der, Die, Das. Since there are no three different articles in English as in German, concretizing this subject as much as possible will facilitate the learning process of students. This activity is organized based on the constructivist approach and the discovery learning method. In this activity, the abstract subject of the article is tried to be reinforced with animals. A banner showing the Artikel of their name is prepared in the hands of each animal model. An animal is prepared for each article. Der Hase (rabbit) for "der" article, die Katze (cat) for "die" article and das Crocodile (crocodile) for "das" article. On the other hand, words that take the articles of der, die, das are selected and images of objects such as "das Auto, das Haus, der Stuhl, die Blume" are added to the Nomen-Lager (name box).

Picture 3



Above are the images of the objects that take the articles of "der, die, das." First of all, using these visuals, a general review is made by asking the students which object takes which article. Then the teacher asks the students "Helfen den Tieren ihre Nomen zu finden?" and by repeating this question, it enables the students to make a visualization in their minds. Here, animals are personified and tried to be portrayed as people in need of help.

Picture 4



In order to give clues to the students, a banner showing which article it represents was given to each animal's hand. At this point, students think about the articles of the images given in a mixed way and place them in the correct box. Thus, the student will be able to understand the learning input by coding the rabbit with the "der" article, the cat with the "die" article, and the crocodile with the "das" article. Thus, with this activity, an abstract linguistic structure can be made concrete in accordance with the physical, mental and emotional readiness of the students.

3.3. Activity 3: Jobs (Berufe)

This activity is designed for the topic of professions. The activity is based on a constructivist approach and method of presentation. With this activity, the student learns the German of 10 professions.

Picture 5



Visuals of each job are prepared. The figures of the jobs whose articles are "der" are pasted on the green pipette with their heads cut. The figures of the jobs whose articles are "die" are glued to the yellow pipette with a cut head. A female head is attached to a separate yellow pipette, and a male head is attached to a green pipette. Each pipette is cut to fit into each other. Since the writing format and articles of jobs in the German language differ according to gender, students are made to make both female and male figures in the activity. As seen above, each puppet reflects the external visual features of a profession.

Picture 6



In this activity, on a voluntary basis, each student is asked to come to the blackboard and choose the professions they dream of and want to be in the future and say it in German equivalents. The teacher gave the volunteer student "Was bist du von Beruf?" A small dialogue is to be established by directing the question. If the student who answered the question is female, answer so "Ich bin eine Krankenschwester"; The male student expresses himself verbally in German in the form of "Ich bin ein Lehrer". This activity contributes to students' speaking and listening skills. The main purpose here is to make the gains more communicative by making the activities skill-centered (Tarakcioğlu, 2012). Therefore, in order to enable students to communicate with each other, students can ask this question each other: "Was sind Sie von Beruf?"

Picture 7



In addition to the subject of professions, an additional event can be organized in order to reinforce the tools frequently used in the professions mentioned above. A Wheel of Fortune design is made in this event. For this, a piece of cardboard is cut into a circle. And the circle is drawn by dividing it into 10 equal parts. Tools and equipment belonging to 10 professions are cut and stuck on the circle. German equivalents are written under the pasted tools. The circle is fixed in the middle of the cardboard with an arrow needle. The cut circle is glued on the rectangular cardboard and the top is the question "Zu welchem Beruf gehört das Zeug?" is written. A sample sentence is written under the question to make it easier for them to answer this question. Then, by turning the wheel, the students express in German which profession the corresponding object is related to.

3.4. Activity 4: Separating garbage (Mülltrennung)

This activity was designed with a constructivist approach and question and answer method. The aim of this activity is to correctly express and group the words given in the course in German by the student for garbage separation. In this activity, when the student is asked to differentiate the garbage in three ways: paper, plastic and glass, she/he can group it in German. When designing this activity was inspired by Kemal Sunal film, who is a film and theater actor in Turkey and very important for each generation of Turks. Since the year 1970 in Turkey, Kemal Sunal films have an important place for Turkish cinema (sunal, 2012: 520). So many generations grew up with Sunal films in Turkey and continue to grow. The use of a hero belonging to Turkish culture in teaching German may positively affect the interest and attitude of the student to the language in question. Turkish films are a helpful tool in foreign language teaching due to their rich content and cultural elements (İşcan, 2011: 946).

Picture 8



As a matter of fact, this activity was inspired by the movie "The King of Garbage" (Çöpçüler Kralı) and for that, a garbage collection truck was designed. In this activity, students grasp the German names of waste materials and place them in the sections in the garbage truck. The words will be even easier to remember since the event includes a hero that the students enjoy watching. In addition, students will have an enjoyable learning process.

3.5. Activity 5: Vegetables and fruits (Obst und Gemüse)

Picture 9

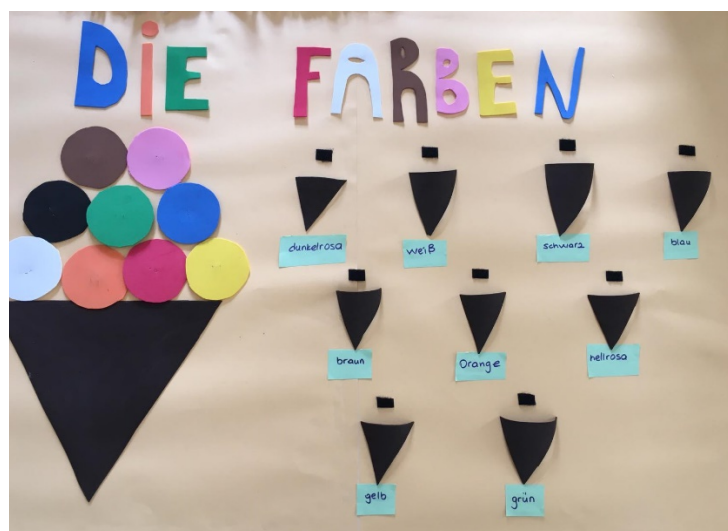


The above activity is designed for the subject of "Obst und Gemüse". In this activity, they are asked the students to reenact with the question "Wer bin ich?". Students are asked to play the role of the vegetables and fruits they have chosen. Thus, children can learn the German of vegetables and fruits by using their imaginations to see themselves as a fruit or vegetable they love. Since the student is active in this activity, learning by experience comes to the fore. As is known, learning by doing also plays an important role in learning information permanently. In this activity, as in the other activities in this study, it was aimed to improve the communication skills of the students and was planned as an activity for speaking and listening skills.

3.6. Activity 6: Colors (Die Farben)

This activity is designed to teach colors. After this activity, the student can write and say colors in German. In the activity, students try to find out which colors to match the ice cream balls written on the bottom. Accordingly, it distinguishes the colors as light and dark in German. The student builds her/his knowledge with a constructivist approach by experiencing.

Picture 10



As it can be seen, the event was inspired by ice cream balls. First of all, the colored Etil Vinil Asetat is cut and pasted on the cone in the form of a round ice cream ball. The student is asked to understand the colors on this cone and place it on the small ice cream cone given on the side. The German equivalent of the color of each round ice cream ball is written on these small ice cream cones. Since the event is prepared using velcro adhesive, it is economical as it can be used more than once. Each student can recognize and match colors with their German over and over again. Thus, the subject is further reinforced by repeating the subject.

3.7. Activity 7: Shopping, asking price (Einkaufen, Preise nennen)

This activity is designed for the topic "einkaufen, Preise nennen". The aim of this activity is that the student can use the words and speaking situations that he/she needs in shopping in German. When he buys something, he can ask for prices in German.

Picture 11



As seen above, a small market is designed for this activity. On the shelves in the market, nutrients that are frequently needed in daily life are lined up. On the side, shopping lists are hung on ropes. In this activity, a learning environment is created that will make the student feel himself in the market. According to the scenario in the activity, the student comes to the market, asks the prices of the food items and the shopping list in German, and the student in the role of seller answers. Thus, with this activity, a communication environment where the student is likely to encounter in real life is provided and the student can express herself/himself in German.

4. Result

Serious steps have been taken in recent years related to foreign language teaching in Turkey. One of these steps is teaching German as a second foreign language in basic education. The increasing importance given to teaching German brought the need to design different teaching methods, techniques and activities. Creating learning environments with the experiences children encounter in daily life or with a high probability of encountering will make a great contribution to the foreign language learning process of the student. In order to achieve this goal, an activity-centered teaching should be brought to the fore.

In order to achieve the desired success in German teaching, it has become an important issue to organize activities according to the interest and readiness of the student. In this study, activity design examples where communication for teaching German as a second language after English at primary education level is at the forefront are presented. . In this study, is designed activities related to the topic "Einkaufen, Farben, Obst und Gemüse, Mülltrennung, Berufe, Artikel, Krankheiten" located in the German language curriculum in basic education in Turkey. Considering the cognitive, physical and affective development of the students in the design

of the activities, many teaching principles such as relativity to the student and the principles of experiencing by doing have been brought to the fore.

As in teaching the first foreign language in basic education, it should be ensured that the students are interested in the activities used in the second foreign language teaching. While designing activities in teaching German as a second foreign language, explanations and principles of educational sciences should be taken into account. Because in a foreign language course designed in accordance with the child's readiness level, interests and wishes, active participation will be higher and the chance of achieving the desired success will be higher.

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