Perception of Turkish-Language Teachers Towards Listening Monitoring Texts: A Phenomenological Approach

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Abstract

Texts are primary instruments of Turkish language courses aiming to improve the basic linguistic skills of students. In Turkish language course curriculum renewed in 2006, teaching texts are classified as “reading texts” and “listening/monitoring texts” as distinct from Turkish language curriculum in 1981. Together with the increasing use of communication instruments based on technology in daily life, the concept of “monitor literacy” comes up. In this context the texts to be used to improve the listening/monitoring abilities of students contain visual elements as distinct from reading texts. The objective of this research is to determine the perceptions of Turkish-language teachers, who are the applicators of the programme, towards the use of listening/monitoring texts. In this study the qualitative research method was chosen. The phenomenological approach from the qualitative research patterns was used. Some interviews were made with 15 Turkish Language Teachers. The findings obtained as a result of the research, were interpreted in the light of the related literature and some proposals were brought.

Keywords: Turkish Language Teacher, listening/monitoring text.

1. Introduction

In Digital Age, the developments in educational technologies brought some changes in native language education, schoolbooks, and educational devices began to be comprised of the materials including rich visual and aural elements. The texts found in Turkish language school books are important instruments for Turkish language education. Because all of the linguistic skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening and grammar) in Turkish language courses are tried to be given through the activities prepared depending on texts (Cecen and Ciftci, 2007). These texts are one of the mostly used materials in order to make the target group understand
grammar rules, the eloquence of Turkish language, the ways to establish a healthy communication, qualities of literary genre, national values, Turkish intellectual world etc., and during the process of making information and behaviour targeted to be gained, and when these texts have the necessary qualities, they become very effective (Duman, 2010). The developments mentioned also influenced the structure of these texts, new definitions were made on them, the limits of text concept were enlarged with the semiotic perspective which was a different point of view to text concept. Previously pictures, photographs, films, maps, graphics, body language etc. signs and drawings were included in the concept of text with the semiotic perspective when it came to linguistic texts. According to this idea, to establish a comprehensive meaning is possible through the interpretation of linguistic and semiotic texts together (Akyol, 2008). Therefore, the verbal and written texts became the most significant of the separate exciters which prepared the students to learn during the learning and teaching process (Göçer, 2010)

In the Turkish Language Curriculum renewed in 2006, listening/monitoring texts together with the reading texts were added to the texts which were the most important educational instruments of the courses as distinct from other programmes, it was envisaged to include three reading texts at least and a listening/monitoring material within the scope of each theme (MEB, 2006). In the programme, listening/monitoring is one of the primary instruments of communication and learning, it is defined as the ability to understand the message given properly, to interpret and evaluate it. Listening activities are found in student’s workbook and listening texts are in teachers’s guide book.

The listening defined as the ability to properly understand the message given by the person speaking and to react against the subject exciter (Özbay, 2003: 93), begins in the womb, gradually develops and forms the basis of other learning fields such as speaking, reading and writing (Gunes, 2007: 73). The listening that no hard effort is made to gain it because it is thought that listening is natural, is evaluated by the researchers as a field “the one which does not get the due importance, the one neglected” (Dogan, 2010; Özbay, 2003). Moreover, it is seen that listening still stays in the background given other abilities (Özbay & Melanlıoğlu, 2012). This ability has both physical (sound coming to ear) and cognitive (attention, analysis, evaluation) aspects. In this case the result is that it is necessary to give much more importance to this ability used in individual life very effectively (Temur, 2010). Ozman and Gurbuz (2006:140) state that the activities related to listening in Turkish language courses stay in the background in comparison with the other activities, so individuals show “effective listening” faintly. It is necessary for an individual to make a conscious effort, to develop new abilities and thus to increase the activities of listening education in order to be a complete listener (Bolukbasi, 2007: 55).

Ozbay (2001) remarks that it is necessary for students to benefit from the visual-aural instruments effectively such as television and computer in addition to aural instruments like radio and tape. The importance of the visual and aural material is an undisputed reality during the process of providing listening ability (Gündoğdu, 2011). At that, it is thought that there are many more visuals in the listening activities conducted in our schools and these activities should appeal both to the eye and ear, will make the listening education more efficient (Karasakaloğlu, Saracaloğlu, & Uça, 2011)

When the studies on texts in Turkish language education are examined, it is seen that the researches are generally focused on reading texts (Çiftçi, Çeçen, & Melanlıoğlu, 2007) and the studies about the use of listening/monitoring texts in Turkish language education are limited. Accordingly, the objective of the study is expressed as the determination of the perceptions of Turkish-language teachers towards listening/monitoring texts.

2. Method
2.1.Model of the Research

This study has a descriptive qualitative research character. The “phenomenology pattern” which was fit for the nature of the research out of the qualitative research patterns was used. The phenomenology pattern focuses on the phenomena of which we are aware but we have no profound and detailed understanding (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2005).

2.2.Work Group

The data of the research were obtained from the interviews made with 15 Turkish-language teachers.

2.3.Data Collection Tool

The perceptions of Turkish-language teachers towards the use of listening/monitoring texts by using “semi-structured interview form” in the research. To give a place to the direct excerpts taken from the individuals interviewed and to reveal the results by starting these is important for validity (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2005). The operation of transformation of the raw data into codes and categories was made by two researchers and reliability was obtained.

2.4.Analysis of the Data

The content analysis was used to analyse the data (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001). After the record of the interviews, codes and general categories which defined them were determined in the light of the related literature and the data obtained. In the determination of the codes and categories, an attention was shown to the concepts appearing in the findings in addition to the related literature.

3.Findings And Discussion

3.1.The Reasons of Turkish-Language Teachers For Their Use of Listening/Monitoring Texts

A part of the teachers mentions that they use listening/monitoring texts because these texts are in Turkish language workbooks and Turkish language curriculum. “Yes I use. Because listening/monitoring appears as a learning area in Turkish- Language Curriculum (2006). There are certain activities for listening texts in the workbook. We teach these texts as teachers since they are in the curriculum.”; “I use listening texts compulsorily, because there are activities related to the listening field in the workbook.”

Most of the teachers state that the use of listening/monitoring texts in courses has a contribution to linguistic skills of students. “I use listening/monitoring texts because I believe that these improve students’ abilities to understand, to interpret, to evaluate what they listen.”; “Listening education is necessary to improve the perception levels of children. Learning by listening is as useful as reading, writing and speaking at least.”

The reason of Turkish language teachers to use the listening/monitoring texts appears as a product of two different perspectives. We can generalize these perspectives as the ones who explain the use of the listening/monitoring texts within the framework of the word of “obligation” and as the ones who express that the listening/monitoring texts will provide important contributions to the linguistic improvement of students.

3.2.The Individual Efforts of Turkish Language Teachers to Reach Listening/Monitoring Texts
A part of the teachers says that the listening/monitoring texts in the school books are sufficient. The teachers who have this thought state that the curriculum and the school books cannot allow to additional listening/monitoring activities in general. “I’m contented with the listening/monitoring texts in Turkish language school book. Because I do not think that there is a freedom for the teacher about teaching additional listening/monitoring texts.”; “I do not use a text from any book except for Turkish language school book because the texts in the book are sufficient, anyway the duration of the course is hardly sufficient for these texts.”

Most of the teachers mention that they do not only use the listening/monitoring texts in the school books in Turkish-language courses, but also they use different listening/monitoring texts which they obtain in various ways. These various ways appear as libraries, internet networking sites, the books that the teacher reads, the texts which are put in the school books with reading purpose, the educational applications provided with the internet and prepared by private or official institutions.

3.3. The Views of Turkish-Language Teachers On The Necessity of Listening/Monitoring Education and The Time for Given to Listening/Monitoring Activities

Turkish-language teachers have the same opinion on the necessity of listening/monitoring education. There are two different views about the time given to listening/monitoring activities. A part of the teachers says that the time given is sufficient. “The reason that they get this idea is explained that listening/monitoring education is available inspite of being indirect within other skill areas. “If I tell that we do not listen what we read, I think the ones listening to me sense that listening is so neccessary. Moreover, the time is sufficient.”; “I have no trouble to take time listening/monitoring education because we have an opportunity to give listening/monitoring education in different activities in many phases of the course.”

The great part of the teachers think that listening/monitoring activities and the time given to these activities are not sufficient. “I can say that the rate of listening/monitoring texts are at the bottom level in comparison with the texts in other learning areas. There is a listening text in each theme. A listening text is not sufficient in a theme in which there are 4-5 texts in average.”

3.4. The Views of Turkish-Language Teachers About the Impact of Extracurricular Activities Presented by Technological Advancements on Students’ Turkish-Language Courses

The Turkish-language teachers share the opinion that the communication devices such as television, the internet, multi functional telephone presented by technological advancements to student reflect on Turkish linguistic skills negatively. The teachers who have a positive opinion state that it should be behavioured cautiously or this student-technology interaction should be made in a controlled manner. “The use of the internet and telephone unfortunately brings negativeness at an unbelievable level. The pretension to use English words which nearly attacks spoken language has reached to great dimensions. They begin to use the foreign words whose meanings they do not know.”; “I think that the technological devices do not bring a benefit for Turkish language course because children are less interested in book.”; “Television and the internet are used by students widely. As the students speak in street language in the internet environment, they reflect this both on their speaking and writing.”

3.5. The Views of Turkish-Language Teachers On the Qualities To Be in Listening/Monitoring Texts
The Turkish-language teachers have the same opinion that the most important quality to be in listening/monitoring texts is “attractive subject.” Except for this quality, the qualities stated differentiate for each teacher. A good listening/monitoring text in line with the views of Turkish-language teachers is defined as “the one which gives an opportunity to be predicted,” “not long”, “directs the student to dream,” “in which music is used,” “chosen from the text genres depending upon an event (story, tale, legend, epic),” “fit for student’s level,” “including a current subject,” “well vocalized,” “having visual effects,” “not aiming to give information,” “makes the student interpret and evaluation.”

3.6. Teaching Format and Methods of Turkish-Language Teachers for Listening/Monitoring Activities

There are generally certain similarities in teaching format of Turkish-language teachers for listening/monitoring activities in class. Especially a part of the teachers has a tendency to perform the listening/monitoring activities by using an electronic device. “I make the text to be listened by linking the extant sound system in my class to my computer. If I find a visual related to the text, I reflect it with the projection and help students to envisage it.”; “I sometimes download the listening texts and make them to be listened through my cell phone.”; “I teach by making them to be listened with necessary repetitions from the speaker.”; “I make students listen through the computer in the class.”; “By using audible or both audible and video materials performed in the electronic devices…”

The method mostly applied by the Turkish-language teachers is that they read the listening text aloud in class while applying the listening/monitoring activities. Except for reading aloud, Turkish-language teachers perform the activities as follows: “to make students listen or monitor repetitively,” “to make them question,” “to make them note down,” “to make them watch film,” “question-answer,” “to give project papers and performance assignments,” “to make them interpret,” “to make them establish empathy,” “to make them apply 5ws 1h.”

4. Result And Discussion

At the beginning of the 21st Century, the dazzling development of the information and communication technologies formed the basis for the encountering of individuals with many more digital media in their daily lives. This case required to understand the messages properly and to develop abilities to gain a critical perspective for them. Thus, accordingly it was aimed to improve the ability to “monitor” of students as well as the ability “to listen” in Primary School Turkish-Language Curriculum (2006). The texts are one of the primary instruments of native language education. The use of listening/monitoring texts together with the monitoring ability which comes into prominence in Turkey, gains importance in Turkish-language courses.

In this research, the perceptions of Turkish-language teachers towards listening/monitoring texts are researched. The first striking finding of the research is that there are still the ones who regard the reason of the use of the listening/monitoring texts as “obligation” among Turkish-language teachers. At this point, this shows that the Turkish-language teachers cannot sufficiently internalize the Primary School Turkish-Language Curriculum prepared with the constructivist approach. On the other hand, the fact that the Turkish-language teachers present the listening/monitoring texts from libraries, internet networking sites, the books that the teacher reads, the texts which are put in the school books with reading purpose, the educational applications provided with the internet and prepared by private or official institutions, appears as a positive development. A good listening/monitoring text in line with the views of Turkish-language teachers should have qualities as follows: “the one which gives an opportunity to be predicted,” “not long”, “directs the student to dream,” “in which music is used,” “chosen from the text genres depending upon an event (story, tale, legend, epic),” “fit for student’s level,” “including a current subject,” “well vocalized,” “having visual effects,” “not aiming to give
information,” “makes the student interpret and evaluation.” In this context, it is proposed to the next researchers to research the qualities of the listening/monitoring texts used in the Turkish-language school books.

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