

## A Study on the Turkish Teachers' Experiences on the Turkish Language and Culture Course in the Schools of Germany: A Field Research\*

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the problems experienced while teaching the Turkish Language and Culture course in the Federal Republic of Germany from the perspective of the course teachers. The number of Turkish and Turkish Culture teachers in the Federal Republic of Germany in 2013-2014 academic year amounts to 1047. Some of these teachers are assigned by the local authorities in Germany, and some include teachers selected by the Ministry of National Education among those working in Turkey. There are 510 teachers assigned by the Turkish Ministry of Education to teach the Turkish language and culture course in Germany. Both the teachers sent from Turkey and the ones assigned by local German authorities must cope with a number of problems. In this study, the results of 398 questionnaires, which consisted of three main open-ended questions and were sent to 510 teachers working in Germany, who formed the sample group for the study, were evaluated. According to the results, the observed problems are mainly about parents' and students' indifference to the course, the inadequacy of physical infrastructure in schools, school principals' unwillingness to cooperate with the Turkish teachers, and insufficiency of teaching materials

**Keyword:** Germany, First Language Education, Turkish Language and Culture, Native Language

### Introduction

Today, Turkish, one of the oldest and most widely used languages in the world, is spoken by 200 million individuals as a state, official, or minority language with different dialects and varieties in different regions. The past of the Turkish population living in Germany goes back to 1879 (Bekar, 2013, p. 773) The existing demographic structure arises from immigrant workers who came to the country after the German Employment Agency made agreements with countries including Turkey such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Greece and Morocco with a demand for temporary workforce starting from 1955.

As for the increase in the Turkish population in Germany, it occurred after the workforce agreement was signed between Turkey and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961 (Yıldız, 2012, p. 7) In this process, some of the Turkish workers who went to the Federal Republic of Germany that needed advanced workforce in industrial areas from Turkey later brought their spouses and children to the cities where they work, while some got married in Turkey and moved to Germany (Gülmüş, 2012, p. 126) The Turkish population in the country showed a constant increase depending on immigration due to economic reasons and a set of developments stemming from immigrant networks, and also second, third and fourth generation children who were born there.

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As of late 2013, the number of foreigners registered to the Federal Foreigners Registration Centre (Ausländerzentralregister) was 8.1 million, reaching to the highest number since 1967. On the other hand, the number of the population holding Turkish citizenship was 1 million 527 thousand and 118 people. Those who passed to German citizenship were not included in this number. According to the Mikrozensus data, the number of individuals who passed to the German citizenship was 22.463 only in 2014. Therefore, it can be stated that the number of Turkish-origin people in the country is close to three million (2.793.000). 29,7% of this population is still under 15 and in school age, and 40% does not have a school diploma in that the proportion of women is 45,5% whereas that of men is 36%. The rate of university graduates is 1,5% among women and 2,1% among men, while only 1,8% of Turkish-origin immigrants are university graduates. This rate is 7,7% across Germany (the data were compiled from SB 2015 by the researchers).

The desire of this population to be in contact with Turkey, and its feelings and views in direction of protecting cultural values are reflected in social and community dynamics, and the Turkish language and culture course is perceived as resistance to assimilation. According to the one-dimensional model proposed by Gordon (1964), the minority group prefers either protecting its own culture or adapting to the mainstream culture as a result of the long-term interaction of the minority culture with the mainstream culture, and the result of this adaptation process is dissolution or assimilation within the mainstream culture. However, adapting to the mainstream culture does not constitute a prerequisite for the carriers of the minority culture to be assimilated (see Ekşi et al. 2015, p. 42). The fact that the Turkish language and culture course is evaluated as resistance to the assimilation in Germany is due to the belief in this one-dimensional model, in other words the anxiety of not being able to adapt to the mainstream culture while maintaining one's own culture. Moreover, there is an alternative two-dimensional model mentioned by Berry (2006; 2011), and in this model, maintaining one's own culture and interacting with new cultures are dealt with in two different dimensions. Accordingly, while individuals or the minority group maintain their own culture, they can also adapt to the new culture. In his definition based on the two-dimensional model, Çakır (2001, p. 14) defined adaptation as "the skill of individuals' accepting the elements belonging to different cultures as they are, without rejecting the phenomena stemming from their own cultures, and experiencing these cultures together in their existing forms without trying to change the habits that are different from theirs, and by being aware of the differences in the other culture". There is a new strategy of reconciliation within this definition. Since gaining the skill to live together with different cultures enables individuals to comprehend the dominant culture and the difference of their own culture and identity from others (Herskovits, 1938, p. 10), it will also be possible for them to successfully complete the educational processes.

Among the Turkish-origin immigrant living in Germany, the ones who kept their Turkish citizenship as well as those who passed to the German citizenship maintained their relationship with each other, continued to have intense connections with Turkey, and also tried to preserve the cultural heritage they had (for numerical data on the Turkish existence in Germany, see: SB, 2013). In this process, the Republic of Turkey has followed a reconciliation strategy, also known as the "integration strategy" in the literature, against the assimilation strategy about the immigrants to preclude decomposition. The integration strategy is individuals' protecting the characteristics and values of their own culture, and accepting and adapting to the values of the mainstream culture (Ekşi et al. 2015, p. 46) It can be achieved if the mainstream culture is inclusive and open to cultural diversity, and with the minority group's free choice and the dominant culture's acceptance. In the case where the carriers of the dominant culture are not ready for this diversity, or the minority culture has lost the connection with its origin-values, is marginalized or is exposed to discrimination among the mainstream culture groups, immigrants' interest in the mainstream culture would weaken and a ghetto culture that is formed by its residents and is close to outside interactions would come out. It is due to this situation that today, the trends of "marginalization" and social problems are observed among immigrants or minority groups in various European countries.

Berry (2008, p. 331, cited in Ekşi et al. 2015, p. 46) states that if the dominant group pushes individuals to assimilation, the result will be leaving that community, and if it chooses to exclude them, then there will be marginalization, whereas social integration can be achieved with the majority's acceptance of various cultural groups. This integrated life is also known as social multiculturalism, and following the xenophobic arguments proposed by Thilo Sarrazin (2010), the Federal Republic of Germany accepted that the policy of multiculturalism failed in the country (Hürriyet, 16.09.2010) and started to work on new policies.

The confusion about the policies to follow with respect to the foreigners in the country led the carriers of the mainstream culture to a new pursuit, and the local people who felt that their existence was under threat initiated a set of actions such as PEDIGA (Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes) (see Çakır, 2015).

The Turkish government took and implemented a set of measures in order for the Turkish citizens living in Germany to maintain their connection with the Turkish language and culture. Based on the Turkish constitution, Law on the Organisation and Responsibilities of the Foreign Ministry (law no. 4009), Basic Law of National Education (law no. 1739), Decree Law on the Organisation and Responsibilities of the Ministry of National Education (MEB) (law no. 652), the cabinet decision on 5/6/2003 (no. 2003/5753), the decision of the inter-ministerial common culture commission, MEB regulations, and *Turkish Language and Culture Course Curriculum for Turkish Children Abroad* (see MEB, 2006), the Republic of Turkey started to provide the Turkish language and culture course to its citizens living abroad (Turkish Consulate General in Karlsruhe, 2015). Teachers of the Turkish language and culture course who are assigned by the Turkish Ministry of National Education aim to prevent the loss of Turkish language in new generations living abroad, whereas fulfilling a mediator role for the continuity of culture.

With regard to the Turkish existence in Germany, scientific field studies have been conducted in many areas within the course of time, and views and suggestions have been stated (see Abadan-Unat, 1964 & 2005; Yıldız, 2012; Çakır, 2011; Aydın, 2013).

### **Turkish Language and Culture Course**

In accordance with Article 15 of the Europe Agreement that regulates the state of immigrant workers, opening of courses for the benefit of these workers' children was guaranteed by the contracting parties. As part of the existing agreements between the Republic of Turkey and the Federal Republic of Germany based on this article, the Turkish language and culture course is taught by teachers who are either appointed by the local German authorities, or sent from Turkey (see MEB, 1996a). At the same time, with regard to the practice in Germany, the Joint Commission of the Ministers of Culture in Germany (KMK-Empfehlungen) gave states free rein regarding the implementation with its decisions on 8.4.1976. These decisions constitute the *legal background* and are still valid (see KMK 1976). Further in the process, every state's decision-makers on education attached different meanings to the mother tongue courses and employed different practices (Hohmann, 1982, p. 169) Whereas a state administration placed emphasis in these courses assuming that students would eventually go back to their country of origin, another stated preferred a different practice with the assumption that they would never go back.

According to the decisions of the German Ministers of Culture Conference, “mother tongue supplement/reinforcement course” (Muttersprachlicher Ergänzungsunterricht) is opened as an elective course including contents of language, history, geography, and in some cases, religion as 2-5 hours every week (Damanakis, 1983). Today, the most common practice is to teach this course mostly as two hours every week which is the lowest limit. Therefore, the course falls outside the economical, educational and social political interests of local German authorities, but has been among the problems of immigrants for which an exact solution could not be found, and “children's right to education was neglected” (Damanakis, 1983, p. 7) As of 1982, the German authorities that are aware of this situation have taken and implemented the necessary measures to help foreign children maintain their ties with their culture of origin. The aim of both Turkish and German authorities has been to train citizens who receive decent education as well as adapt to the social and cultural environment they live in.

Referring to language as the most lively part of human and life, Mehmet Kaplan (1915-1986) says that “not having enough knowledge of the deep relationship between language and literature, and language and life has cost us a high price” (Kaplan, 2012, p. 164), and in a way, points to the importance of conveying the cultural heritage to the immigrant Turkish children. Similarly, Ursula Neumann, a faculty member at the Department of International and Intercultural Educational Sciences, Hamburg University, states “Turkish is an important language spoken in Germany. It forms a source for the economic power of the country. It is necessary for family communication.

Turkish is part of our bilingual children. Turkish is a language of instruction and it is beautiful” (Varlı, 2014, URL), while Hohmann (1982, p. 169) draws attention to the fact that the mother tongue education to be provided to foreign children is among the priority duties of educational policy-makers.

Since 1960s, the ambassadors who were aware of this important matter have taken steps for Turkish children living in Germany to be taught in the official mother tongue of their country of origin at German schools, and continued to have bilateral discussions when necessary. This is because language education starts before birth, and over time, contributes to both the formation of individuals' cultural identities and increasing their grammar knowledge of the second language spoken in the environment where they live. For this reason planned and regular mother tongue or first language education should not be neglected within institutionalized bodies.

In 1964, the German Ministers of Culture Conference gave the following advice: “Educational Directorates/Administrators should provide extra help to the *courses* opened in the mother tongue of foreign children” (Reich, 2010, p. 446) In the Conference's recommendation in 1976, it is stated that: “States themselves decide on whether these courses are within the responsibility of the culture administration, or not.” (Reich, 2010, p. 446).

The objectives of the Turkish instruction include students' establishing a good level of communication with their friends, using the Turkish language effectively, being successful in their courses, maintaining the communication with their relatives in Turkey, and not facing a language barrier when they start working in areas having connections with Turkey. Besides, the positive reflection of mother tongue acquisition at a desired level to second language acquisition can also be mentioned in this regard. Although there have been further statements made depending on social and political objectives, it is not dealt with in detail here.

As for clarifying the term "mother tongue" to avoid a negative perception, it is "the language of communication that children learn from their social environment in the preschool period and mainly use in the family, whereas the language of origin is defined as the official language of the country where children come from, and mother tongue and language of origin may not be the same in the cases where local dialects are spoken in the family" (see Damanakis, 1983, p. 2) The Turkish language and culture course opened for Turkish immigrants' children in the Federal Republic of Germany is referred to as a "mother tongue course". The language used in this course is the mother tongue for some students, but only the language of origin for other students, in that those in the latter group are observed not to attend the classes.

### Teachers Teaching the Turkish Language and Culture Course

Since its founding, the Republic of Turkey has been a country that both sends and receives immigrants depending on social, cultural and political developments (Gelekçi, 2014, p. 183) In this respect, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB) organises activities necessary to meet the educational and cultural needs of citizens living abroad and ensure the transfer of culture based on reasons for which the legal background is mentioned above.

According to the data published by the Educational Consultancy of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, 155.369 students were taught the Turkish language and culture course by our teachers assigned to the European countries in the 2013-2014 school year. This course is delivered by individuals who received teacher education in the country they come from and are assigned only to teach the **Turkish language and culture course**, and immigrants who grew up and received pedagogical training in Germany.

The Turkish language and culture course is observed to be delivered in “three different ways” in practice. These are:

- Mother Tongue Education as a Valid Course „Fach“
- Mother Tongue Education as a „Second Language“
- „Bilingual“ Education

### State of the Students Who Attend the Turkish Language and Culture Classes

The group of Turkish students in Germany who go to schools that provide general education is the largest in number among the immigrant students. According to 2014 Mikrozensus data, there are 580.000 students who are Turkish citizens across Germany. The academic achievement of these students who receive education with their German peers in accordance with the values stated in the constitution is relatively lower than Germans and other cultural minorities. Although the rate of Turkish students at schools goes up to 80% in some regions across Germany, that of Turkish teachers remains around 1,7% among their colleagues. Another important matter that needs to be focused is the fact that 80% of Turkish-origin immigrants do not attend the Turkish language and culture classes. In the light of these, the interest in the Turkish classes in Germany seems to decrease gradually, and there are no sufficient efforts observed to have this course taken among those that affect the class passing grade. Even in the North Ren Vestfalya State, which has the highest Turkish population, the attendance rate remains nearly in 20%. The number of Turkish-origin immigrant students in this state is about 280.000. According to the data of the Education Ministry of the North Ren Vestfalya State, the number of students who attend the Turkish classes that are not compulsory and are opened as an elective foreign language is 56.500. This causes the emergence of language development states that are defined by Stölting et al. (1980: 199). Accordingly, if students

- attend the Turkish classes or can acquire the first language at a level to fluently speak it, they learn German and Turkish at native-like level equally (Bloomfield, 1933, p. 55) and use these languages (Äquilinguismus),
- do not attend the classes and this situation is negatively reflected in their school achievement, they develop as two-way half-lingual (Semilingualismus),
- use a single language at home, they grow up as bilingual individuals whose language of origin, or mother tongue is dominant,
- do not use the language of origin, or mother tongue at home, or in informal environments, they form a bilingual student profile with the second language being dominant.

The most typical characteristic of students who grew up in Germany and could not acquire both languages at equal levels, or who did not have adequate learning in areas such as vocabulary and syntax is changing languages or word order while speaking in different environments (Damanakis, 1980; Tekinay, 1982; Fthenakis et al. 1985) Students' development as two-way half-lingual individuals shows that they cannot use either languages according to rules, and need support in the educational process, and thus, they should be paid special attention. As for the language that students' families speak, it is observed to reflect local dialects mostly rather than being the standard language (see Çakır, 2002). In mixed marriages, on the other hand, there is a natural bilingual environment for children (Hammer, 1999, p. 51) In children who have grown up in such natural environments, either the language problem is not seen, or the indicators of two-way half-lingualism are observed.

In a study, Yildiz (2012) reported that 63,3% of Turkish children at home and 61% at school spoke Turkish and German interchangeably, and performed code-switching. This type of elliptical language shows that students and family members who have social communication with them should be trained to develop language awareness.

In the 2013-2014 school year, 606.871 of the 8.410.111 students going to school in the Federal Republic of Germany were foreign nationals, in that 161.108 students were Turkish nationals. The attendance status of students with Turkish nationality, or those with Turkish origin is presented in the table below.

**Table 1: Number of Students Who Attend the Turkish Language and Culture Course in the 2014/2015 School Year**

	Region of the Attaché's Office	Number of Schools Where the Course Was Opened	Number of Students Attending the Turkish Language and Culture Course
1.	Berlin	150	4.850
2.	Düsseldorf	195	10.777
3.	Essen	218	12.526
4.	Köln	-	11.117
5.	Munster	-	8.952
6.	Hamburg	127	2.822
7.	Hannover	-	7.136
8.	Karlsruhe	600	10.640
9.	Mainz	-	9262
10.	Munich	220	4.322
11.	Frankfurt	-	14.700
12.	Nurnberg	171	1776
13.	Stuttgart	818	13.979
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2499</b>	<b>112.859</b>

The German authorities did not provide the number of schools in some cities presented in the table, but only the number of Turkish-origin immigrant students in those cities. It is not known whether it is the number of students who attended the Turkish language and culture course. Besides, when examining these numbers, it should also be taken into consideration how Turkish-origin children and young individuals living in Germany were reflected in the statistics due to gaining German citizenship from birth, or afterwards. Therefore, distinctions such as "immigrants" or "Turkish immigrants" sometimes yield more specific results compared to the citizenship tie in the statistics

Within the German education system, there are nearly 12,8 million foreign students. These students were either born in Germany, or immigrated from another country. Foreign students mostly study at a type of school called *Hauptschule*. In the statistics, the rate of students who go to private educational institutions (German: *Sonderschule für Lernbehinderte*) is two times more than that of domestic students. Turkish-origin immigrant students are observed to attend schools that provide lower-quality education compared to the ones that other students attend (see Çakır, 2001a; Çakır, 2001b). 4% of Turkish children go to special education schools for students with reading difficulty, whereas 2% of German, 2,5% of Spanish and 3,1% of Greek students go to these special education schools. As mentioned above, the rate of students who attend these schools is two times more than that of domestic students (6,2% vs. 3,8%). 21,7% of all Turkish students who study at elementary and high schools go to the "Hauptschule", this rate is 10% among Germans, and 16,6% among Spanish.

The rate of Turkish students who go to the *Gymnasium* was 5,7% among all students in the previous years, while it went up to 11,5% in Greeks, 15,8% in Spanish, and 23% in Germans. The 2014 data shows that the existing situation is getting better (Çakır, 2014). The rate of German citizens who were 15 years old or above, and were qualified to continue to study at a university with an *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife* degree increased from 27,7% to 28,5%. According to the 2014 data, nearly 2,2 million Turkish students formed the largest group among foreign students within the German education system. Although there has been a slight improvement in these students' performance compared to the previous years, only 14% of these students got qualified to study at a university with an *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife* degree, and the rate of university education is observed to be lower than other nations. This rate is 36% among Polish, the second largest group, 43% among Spanish, and 51% among Ukrainians. Among foreign students, one third of Syrian students and one third of 112.000 Afghan students earn this degree. The rate of British and French immigrants is 62,4% among all students, and 53,9% of these get the right to study at a university with a *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife* degree. Similarly, Bulgarians (45,9%), Hungarians (42,9%) and Austrians (40,6%) in the country are observed to go to universities with a high rate (Spiegel-Online, 2015, URL).

According to the PISA results, Germany has the highest relationship between the social class where students come from and their achievement at school among all countries, and German students are the most intelligent and successful in school types. One of the reasons behind this controversial picture is the fact that German schools fall relatively behind the schools in OECD countries in terms of supplementary language courses, and, as Damanakis (1983, p.7) says, "the neglect of foreign students".

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to reveal the views of teachers who teach the Turkish language and culture course opened in German schools for the children of Turkish citizens living in Germany and Turkish-origin individuals who gained German citizenship on the state of this course in practice, the problems they experience and their solutions, and offer constructive and concrete suggestions for the future.

### **Significance of the Study**

Following the labour agreements with European countries in 1960s, there was a mass immigration to these countries, particularly to Germany, due to political, social and economical conditions in Turkey. In the course of time, field studies at various scales were conducted to identify the problems of Turkish-origin immigrants (e.g. Demiryürek, 2012; Ertürk, 2012). Studies mostly focused on social, economic and cultural problems, but did not pay much attention to the teachers who were sent from Turkey or appointed by the local German authorities, and provided education to the children of immigrants.

The current study is of significance in terms of the following aspects:

1. Identifying the administrative problems that the teachers of the Turkish language and culture course in Germany experience in educational institutions,
2. Identifying the instructional problems that teachers experienced with regard to the Turkish language and culture course throughout a semester,
3. Revealing teachers' relationship with the non-governmental organizations that operate in their immediate environment,
4. Determining teachers' perspective to problems, and
5. Providing tangible data to solve these problems for both Turkish authorities and the administrative staff that would conduct the meetings between the concerned units of both countries, and work on possible solutions.

### **Problem**

The problems that teachers who work in the Federal Republic of Germany experience across the country have not yet been studied extensively. However, in scientific knowledge production, "the accuracy of anything that we publish should be able to be proved" (Karasar, 1996, p. 23). Accordingly, the problems that are aimed to be identified by means of this study are defined as follows:

1. What are the problems that the teachers of the Turkish language and culture students encounter at their schools?
2. What are the problems experienced while teaching the Turkish language and culture classes?
3. What is the level of relationship that teachers have with the non-governmental organizations in their regions?
4. What problems do teachers have with regard to their social life, apart from those related to the instructional activities?

### Basic Assumptions

The basic assumptions of the study are as follows:

1. The teachers who filled the questionnaire that was used as the data gathering tool reflected the real situation by responding to the questions sincerely.
2. The sample represented the population.
3. The study would contribute to the solution of problems that the teachers in Germany experience.

### Method

In this section, the research model, the population and sample of the study, the data gathering tools used, the data gathering process and the statistical methods and techniques employed in data analysis are presented.

### Research Design

Descriptive research design was employed in this study to describe a case. "Research that reflects an existing case as it is called descriptive research" (see Karasar 2013; Friedrichs 1980). Accordingly, it was assumed that the teachers in the research sample responded to the questions in the questionnaire correctly, and by means of open-ended questions, it was aimed to describe the case, and by clustering similar responses, to retrieve statistical results through frequency analyses. The model implemented in the study has the characteristic of "retrospective evaluation", or "studying clusters that exist by themselves" (see Karasar 2013: 110). On the other hand, the fact that the population and the sample consisted of the same group did not allow using a control cluster in the study.

### Population and Sample

In addition to 510 teachers who work in the Federal Republic of Germany and are assigned by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, teachers assigned by the local German authorities also teach the Turkish language and culture course, and the number of these teachers is 537. In total, the number of teachers assigned to teach the Turkish language and culture course in this country in the 2013-2014 school year is 1047. Not all 1047 teachers constituting the research population were included in the study, but the questionnaire was administered to 510 teachers who were sent from Turkey by means of the cluster sampling method. Therefore, the study was conducted with the teachers selected from the population, or the clusters for which the distribution is given based on states below. In this type of cluster sampling, all clusters in the population or the sub-population has the same chance of being selected (Karasar, 2013, p. 114). The distribution of the teachers working in Germany based on states is presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Distribution of Teachers Based on States in the Federal Republic of Germany**

No.	Region of the Attaché's Office	Assigned by the Local German Authorities	Sent by the Turkish Ministry of National Education
1.	BERLIN	0	51
2.	DÜSSELDORF	47	5
3.	ESSEN	43	
4.	KÖLN	64	
5.	MUNSTER	39	
6.	HAMBURG	42	
7.	HANNOVER	95	60
8.	KARLSRUHE	0	17
9.	MAINZ	80	119
10.	MUNICH	0	16
11.	FRANKFURT	95	43
12.	NURNBERG	32	40
13.	STUTTGART	0	24
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>135</b>
			<b>510</b>



The sample consisted of 510 teachers sent by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, and 398 of these teachers participated in the study. In other words, 112 of the teachers to whom the research questionnaire was sent were excluded from the analysis due to various reasons, and the remaining 398 teachers were included.

**Table 3: Research Population**

Cluster	Constituting the Population	Constituting the Sample	Excluded from Analysis	Included in Analysis
Teachers	1047	510	112	398

The distribution of the teachers in the sample based on gender is presented in the table below. Accordingly, 30.65% of the samples were female, and 69.35% were male.

**Table 4: Distribution of the Teachers in the Sample Based on Gender**

Gender	No. (N)	Percentage (%)
Female	122	30.65
Male	276	69.35
Total	398	100.00

### Data Gathering Tool and Administration

The data gathering tool needed for the study was developed by the Educational Consultancy of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin as service-restricted, and it was administered under the supervision of the Consultancy in December 2014 after the approval of the General Directorate for European Union and Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of National Education and the Embassy. Prior to the administration, the necessary explanations were e-mailed to all teachers. Questions raised by some teachers while responding to the questionnaire were answered, and in this process, it was paid due attention not to deliver the views of the Republic of Turkey and the authorities that represents it to the teachers, and to create an atmosphere in which they can freely express their own views.

### Data Analysis and Reporting

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained through the data gathering tool were exposed to various steps related to the interpretation before the analysis. Some of these steps included checking whether the teachers filled the questionnaire as required, examining all forms one by one in this respect, and excluding the forms that had missing responses or were filled wrong. Each form was given a number to make the responses anonymous, and the data were then transferred to the computer environment. Content analysis was conducted to analyse the qualitative data, and similar responses were grouped. As for the analysis of the quantitative data, statistical techniques, frequencies and percentages were used. Some of the data were presented in one-way tables considering the general characteristics of the sample, where as some were presented in graphs. The data were then reported in accordance with the APA VI format, which is widely accepted in the academia, by means of Microsoft Office tools.

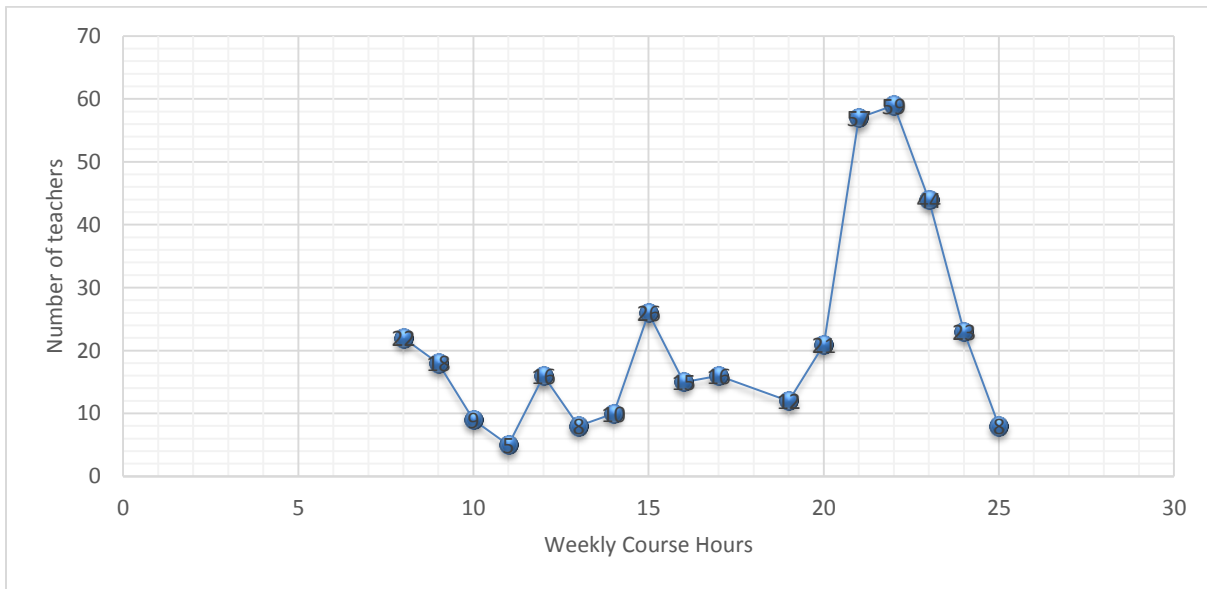
### Findings and Interpretation

In this section, the findings obtained through the analysis of the research data by means of various statistical techniques, and interpretations of these findings are presented.

### Teachers' Weekly Course Load

The weekly course load distribution of 369 teachers who provided information regarding their course load is presented in the graph below.

**Graph 1: Teachers' Weekly Course Load**



The teachers' weekly course load ranged between 8 to 25 hours. It varied based on the population density of the cities where Turkish students lived, and the interest in the course. The frequency distribution of the teachers' weekly course loads is given in the table below.

**Table 5: Average Weekly Course Load of the Teachers Who Participated in the Study**

Hours/Week	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
Teacher (N=369)	8	23	44	59	57	21	12	16	15	26	10	8	16	5	9	18	22
Total Course Load (6236 hours)	200	60	1012	1298	1197	420	228	272	240	390	140	104	192	55	90	162	176

In the sample, 369 out of 398 teachers provided data regarding their weekly course load, in that the total course load of these teachers was found to be 6236 hours per week, whereas their average course load was 16,86 hours per week. This rate seems compatible to the General Provisions for Administrators' and Teachers' Course Load of the Ministry of National Education published in the Official Gazette on 16 December 2006 (no. 26378) and the Decree Law (no. 375) published in the Official Gazette on 10 January 2012 (no. 28169). On the other hand, as it will also be discussed further, it was seen that 4.51% of the teachers said the course load distribution was not fair in practice. As is seen in the table above, 22 teachers taught 8 hours/week, while eight teachers taught 25 hours/week.

**Students' Attendance to the Classes**

In the 2014-2015 school year, the number of students who attended the Turkish language and culture classes was **112.859** across Germany. Forty teachers in the sample did not respond to this item of the questionnaire. According to the data that **358** teachers provided, a total of **28.417** students attended the classes. The numerical data on the number of students are presented in the table below.

**Table 6: Number of students per teacher**

Students	Teacher	Total	Students	Teacher	Total	Students	Teacher	Total	Students	Teacher	Total
167	1	167	109	8	872	82	4	328	54	2	108
161	1	161	108	6	856	81	3	243	52	3	156
160	1	160	107	5	535	80	5	400	51	4	204
157	1	157	106	4	424	79	4	316	50	7	350
147	1	147	105	6	630	78	2	156	49	2	98
141	1	141	104	3	312	77	5	385	48	1	48
138	1	138	103	4	412	76	1	76	47	3	141
136	1	136	102	5	510	75	6	450	46	3	138
135	1	135	101	7	707	74	6	444	45	1	45
134	2	268	100	2	100	73	5	365	43	2	86
133	1	133	99	1	99	72	5	360	41	2	82
132	1	132	98	5	490	71	3	213	40	1	40
131	1	131	97	4	485	70	8	560	39	5	195
130	2	260	97	9	873	69	2	138	38	2	76
124	1	124	95	4	380	68	2	136	37	1	37
123	4	492	94	6	564	67	3	201	36	4	144
121	2	242	93	4	372	66	2	132	35	3	105
120	2	240	92	7	644	65	9	585	31	2	62
118	3	354	91	3	273	64	3	192	29	1	29
117	3	351	90	2	180	63	4	252	27	1	27
116	1	116	89	2	178	62	6	372	26	1	26
115	7	805	88	1	88	61	2	122	24	2	48
114	1	114	87	4	348	60	3	180	23	5	115
113	2	226	86	7	602	58	2	116	21	4	84
112	1	112	85	6	510	57	3	171	20	14	280
111	2	222	84	7	588	56	5	280	13	2	26
110	4	440	83	1	83	55	5	275	79.377	358	28.417

According to the results of the analyses, the average number of students per teacher was 79.377. In this regard, it can be assumed that if 40.482 students attended the classes of 510 teachers assigned by the Ministry, a total of 1047 teachers, with the 537 teachers assigned by the local German authorities added, would have 83.107 students. Even if this assumption is true, it seems that 29.752 students do not attend the Turkish language and culture classes, and this brings up the necessity to develop and continue the cooperation with the local authorities to be able to transfer the Turkish language and culture to future generations. There are different views and suggestions regarding that the Turkish language and culture course should be regulated based on a rule in Germany. It is stated that discrepancies are observed particularly because the Turkish language and culture course is not included in the local regulations in Germany, there is a deviation from the objectives of the course and it is delivered in isolation from other courses, and instead, it should be made compulsory, not an elective foreign language, to increase the interest in the course (Damanakis 1983: 3).

**Table 7: Practices of the Mother Tongue Course Based on States**

States	Course Hours	Included in the German regulations	Compulsory Mother Tongue Course	Compulsory Mother Tongue Course Instead of a Foreign Language Course	Number of Students Required for the Course to be Opened
Baden-Württemberg (14.12.82)	5-8	No	No	It can be	12
Bayern (19.7.79)	5	Yes	No	It can be	12
Berlin (13.12.77)	5-8	No	No	It can be	-
Bremen (19.1.78)	5	No	No	It can be	-
Hamburg (1.2.76)	4-6	No	No	It can be	-
Hessen (20.3.78)	3-5	Yes	Yes	It can be	12
Niedersachsen (20.11.81)	5	Yes	No	It can be	8
NordrheinWestfalen (23.3.82)	5	Yes	No	It can be	15
Rheinland-Pfalz (1.5.78)	5	Yes	No	It can be	8
Saarland (10.10.78)	5	No	No	It can be	15
Schleswig-Holstein (3.7.73)	5	No	No	It can be	-

According to the data reported by Damanakis (1983: 3), the state of the practices regarding the mother tongue course taught to foreign students across Germany can be seen in the table above. The data given along with the states show the data of the regulation published for the implementation of the course. In Baden Württemberg and Saarland states, there is no minimum number of students required for a mother tongue supplementary course to be opened, and the numbers in other states are advisory.

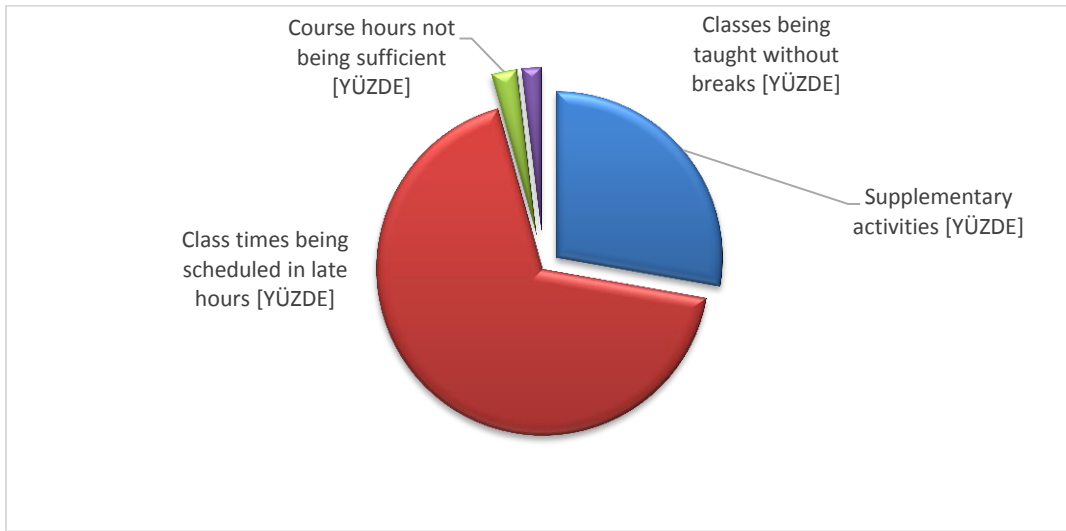
With regard to the Turkish course that would be taught in the place of a compulsory foreign language course taught in German schools, there are no regulations; however, there is a spontaneous practice in certain states. In North Ren Vestfalya state, the "origin-language" practice has started at state schools as of 2010. In order for this course to be opened in schools such as Gesamtschule, Realschule, Hauptschule and Gymnasium, which are described as "Sekunderstufe I", the application of at least 15 students is needed. Because the "origin-language" courses are five hours a week and affect the grade point average, they have compulsory attendance, and the classes are delivered by the teachers assigned by the local German authorities. Along with this practice, a test of mother tongue proficiency (Feststellungsprüfung für die Sprachkenntnisse der ausländischen Jugendlichen in ihrer Muttersprache) is also administered for foreign students. In this regard, the Senate of Berlin decided that as of 1979, Turkish would be taught in the place of the compulsory second foreign language course in Grades 1-9 in Realschule, and Grades 1-10 in Gymnasium and Gesamtschule for students who wish to take it. This started to be applied with the lesson plans prepared in 1979, and according to the regulations, Turkish was included in the second foreign language options. In Hessen state, the Turkish as a foreign language course is also compulsory in a limited number of schools, and in this way, students' attendance to the course is ensured.

### **Administrative Problems That Teachers Encounter**

The teachers' answers regarding this issue were grouped under four titles, which are course hours, place, technology, and communication problems.

### **Problems Related to Course Hours**

In the teachers' views, there seems to be an agreement that the course hours for the Turkish language and culture course are not suitable.

**Graph 2: Views Regarding Course Hours**

162 of the 398 teachers (40.70%) who responded to the questionnaire had this view. These teachers emphasized that the course hours were not sufficient (2%), the classes were taught without breaks (2%) and scheduled in late hours of the day (68%), and activities supplementary to the course hours were not possible (28%).

In fact, in the protocol signed related to the Turkish language and culture course in the 17th meeting of the Turkish-German Joint Committee of Educational Experts held on 26-28 April 2006, it was stated that "this course would be included in the curriculum and assessed in the annual student reports, different and arbitrary practices in states would be addressed, and necessary measures would be taken to overcome the problems related to place". (Parliamentary Question to the Turkish Grand National Assembly, 2006, p. 1).

**Table 8: Views Regarding Course Hours**

Course hours not being suitable	% 40,70	162	100
Supplementary activities		45	27,77
Class times being scheduled in late hours		110	67,90
Course hours not being sufficient		4	2,46
Classes being taught without breaks		3	1,85

According to another information specified in the Parliamentary Question mentioned above, Turkish and German experts came to an agreement on "scheduling the Turkish language and culture classes during the day within the regular program, and including the course in the annual student report" (above-cited document) and also "teaching the religious culture and moral education course within the Turkish language and culture course" (above-cited document).

### Problem of Classroom

Problems are observed to be experienced in allocating classrooms for the Turkish language and culture course taught by the teachers sent from Turkey to the Federal Republic of Germany. 85 of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire (21.35%) also stated that the environments where the classes were delivered were not suitable for education.

**Table 9: State of the Teachers Who Reported to Have the Problem of Place**

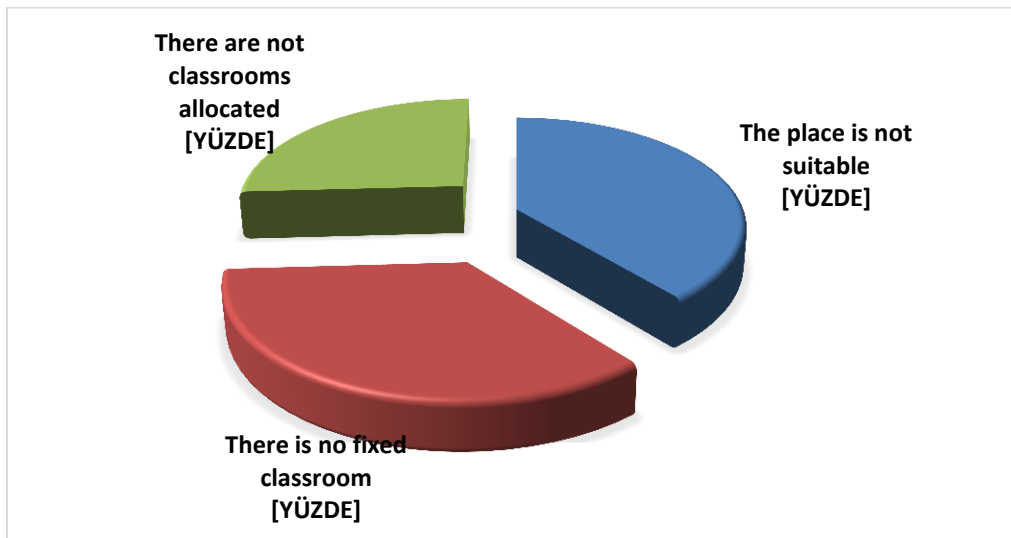
<b>There is a problem of place</b>	<b>% 21,35</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>
The place is not suitable		33	38,82
There is no fixed classroom.		30	35,29
There are not classrooms allocated		22	25,88

A retired teacher wrote the following in his memories (Ercan-Sakallı 2003: 175):

Germans, who actually know the importance of the origin-language better than anyone else, could not find a place in the schedule for the Turkish course that was opened perfunctorily. In fact, we all know that is not because they cannot find a place, but it is because they do not want to. They seek for the ways to make students forget the mother tongue rather than learn it. Another teacher provided a good example regarding the role of speaking the language at an institution and having effective communication with others in overcoming problems, by saying:

In the first year when I started the duty, the classes were delivered in a classroom called the movie classroom in the basement floor of the school. That was the same before me, the classes were always in this classroom. It was smelly due to damp, and I got an appointment from the administration and expressed the problem clearly. I stated that the parents were also uncomfortable with it, and they gave me a regular classroom from the upper floors. In other words, if problems were clearly stated, the administration would help in any matter.

With regard to the distribution, it is emphasized that the places used were different from a classroom order.

**Graph 3: Views on the State of Place**

The teachers stated that they were not allocated a place for the Turkish language and culture course (26%), the places allocated were not suitable for education (39%), and there was not any planning for setting up a classroom for this course (35%). One of the teachers touched upon this issue as in the following: “In some schools, a normal classroom is not just allocated. Places like a refectory or a storeroom can be given as the classroom.” On the other hand, positive examples can also be observed. Another teacher described their school as follows:

The administrators and teachers in my school are very helpful and positive to me. They are flexible about the days and times of the classes.

We can do the lessons whenever is suitable to most students. I don't think one would have a problem with the school administration if he/she was careful about issues such as leaving the classroom clean and orderly after classes, not damaging anything in the school, handing the semester grades in time, informing the parents and the administration in time if a class is to be cancelled due to reasons beyond control, attending the classes in time, and not exceeding the photocopy quota that was allotted to you.

### Use of Technology in Education

The use of technology that has functions such as ensuring students' comprehension of subjects in a course, clarifying abstract concepts, establishing a connection between the subjects being learned and real life, and making students have fun of lessons is of great importance. It also contributes the development of a set of skills in students including questioning and doing research.

Twenty-five of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire (6.28%) stated that the classrooms that were allocated to them did not have the infrastructure for educational technologies, and they did not receive any help in using technology in the scope of the Turkish language and culture course. However, today, technology can play an effective and active role in any area of life, and be used in a way to respond to the needs of educational environments as in real life (Kenar, 2012, p. 124). The fact that the teachers said "In a school, the administration did not let me use the photocopy machine" in the questionnaire provides insights about how helpful the stakeholders their school was to them.

### Interest in the Course and Communication Problems

Behind the academic failure of Turkish-origin students in the German education system, the communication problems and consequently the deficient development of students due to being two-way half-linguals come into question. Overcoming this issue depends on children's and parents' caring about their origin language as much as the target language, and backing the Turkish language and culture course that was presented to them. In order to raise parents' consciousness and compensate the mistakes made in the past, the school-parent-student cooperation should be established well (Çakır, 2014, p. 158).

According to the data obtained in the current study, students and parents do not show the desired interest in the Turkish language and culture course. The responses of 6.28% of the teachers were in this direction, and not having a strategic planning in this respect makes it more complicated to cope with the existing situation.

**Table 10: Interest in the Course and Communication Problems**

<b>General communication problems 51, 50%</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>
Students' and parents' lack of motivation towards the course	25	12,19
Not being conscious of the necessity of the Turkish course	15	7,31
Difficulties experienced due to multi-grade classes	10	4,87
Having general communication problems	6	2,92
Deficiency of teachers' proficiency of German	15	7,31
Negative attitudes of school administrators	22	10,73
Being exposed to discrimination and exclusion	5	2,43
Not having the keys for entrance to the school, and the contact information of the staff concerned	11	5,36
Negative attitudes of other teachers	8	3,90
Problems experienced due to taking up the job late	88	42,92

In addition to the lack of motivation in the Turkish language and culture course, not being conscious of the mother tongue was stated by 15% of the teachers, whereas the difficulty of teaching multi-grade classes was mentioned by 4.87%

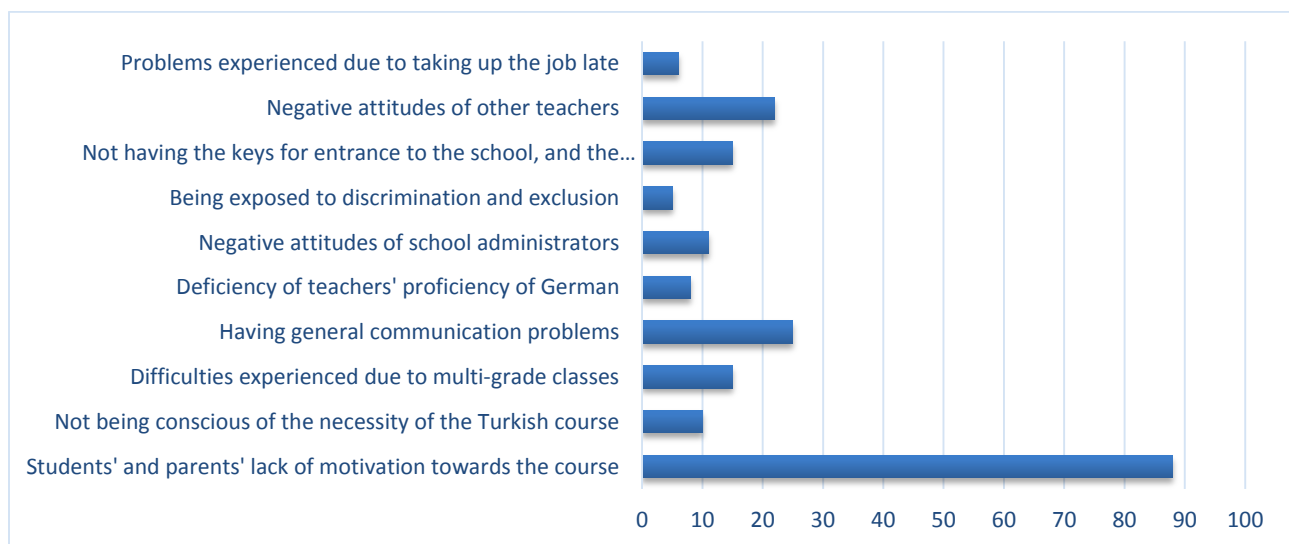
Because ways of expression, except grammatical patterns, such as pragmatic elements show differences between the mother tongue and the target language or the foreign language being learned, the most important role is of teachers in this process. They should play the pioneering role in raising the mother tongue awareness in individuals. It should also be noted that the problem is not solved only with teachers' playing the pioneer role; moreover, individual awareness and the effort for learning the language should accompany the process (Çakır, 2009a, p. 39). Educational administrators' supporting this effort is seen as one of the important elements of mental transformation.

Based on their statements, the teachers seem to have been incompetent in dealing with various communication problems they had at the schools they worked. One of the reasons behind this is "not being ready to deliver a completely different instruction" (Ercan-Sakallı, 2003, p. 174) as well as the low German proficiency of the teachers assigned to work in Germany. As a matter of fact, 2.92% of the teachers mentioned this issue.

Europeans who are quite tolerant towards those who come from their root culture even if they speak different languages can reveal strict and subjective attitudes when it comes to "others", and "tolerance" that can be described as social conscience gives way to an attitude that is difficult to understand and overcome (Çakır, 2009b). It does not change however high individuals' education levels are. The fact that 3.90% of the teachers said their colleagues had negative attitudes towards them while 10.73% said school administrators had negative attitudes similarly supports this view. One of the teachers described the environment that he experienced as "not all but some of the teachers being racist and cold".

In his memories, one of the retired teachers says "As the Turkish teachers, we were treated as if we were responsible for all the negative incidents around the school" (Ercan-Sakallı, 2003, p. 175), attracting the attention to the discriminatory and marginalising attitude shown to them.

**Graph 4: Distribution of the Problems**



One of the communication problems experienced by the teachers that stand out as the most explicit, and perhaps the most important one, was the teachers' taking up their job late due to various reasons and consequently having certain difficulties. 42.92% of the teachers stated that they had difficulties because of arriving their place of assignment in Germany late. Based on the information obtained from the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, the source of these difficulties can be summarised as follows:



- Although teachers of the Turkish language and culture course assigned by the Ministry in service of our Embassy in Germany apply for their visa all together and in time, their applications result in different dates and with delay. This causes teachers to arrive their place of assignment long after schools start, adapt to their new job late, have difficulties with the administrators in setting up their weekly course hours, results in delays in the curriculum and losing students, and negatively affects our teachers motivation. On the other hand, Turkish parents conveyed their complaints about the idle classes to our Embassy, and held the Turkish authorities responsible for this delay.
- Out teachers who want to bring their families with them are issued their visa in different dates, and this aggrieves the teachers and their families. The visa applications of some teachers result after their spouses' applications do. In family reunification applications, family members are asked to provide a language proficiency document in some cases, and our teachers' requests can be turned down by claiming that they have insufficient income.
- The applications of Turkish teachers assigned by the Ministry are subjected to the same approval process with those of foreign nationals coming to Germany to work, which is not reasonable, and the application process is extended needlessly.

### Problems Encountered in Teaching the Turkish Course

Both the content area education and professional training of the teachers before they are sent to Germany does not aim to teach abroad, but rather work in educational institutions in Turkey. It would be beneficial to train them in a way in which they can gain the ability to use their professional experiences in Turkey, and knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits related to their content area education and teaching profession in an instructional environment abroad. This cannot be achieved through trainings given under the title of "seminars for adapting to abroad assignments". Therefore, the teachers who are assigned to teach abroad have to struggle with years of neglect while they also have difficulties in coping with various problems. Among the prominent problems reported are the lack of instructional materials, and the ones that are available not being able to meet the needs. The rate of the teachers who touched upon this issue is 44.72%.

One of the aspects that the teachers mentioned was changing the status of the Turkish language and culture course, which has been taught for over 40 years now, to compulsory. 16.81% of the teachers who responded to the section of the questionnaire that was allocated for stating views and suggestions asserted that the course should be included in the German curriculum and the instructional materials used should be prepared in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). One of the teachers reported his observations as follows:

Today, technology addiction causes students to have their phones at hand all the time, message on social networking sites, and spend a lot of time with computer games that include violence. To spare more time to these harmful activities, many students try not to attend the Turkish classes by making up various excuses to their families (e.g. the teacher cannot teach anything, he/she tells the same thing all the time, there is too much noise in the classroom, and nobody is listening to the teacher). Unfortunately, parents sometimes believe in their children, or they do not want to argue with them, and leave the decision to their children.

Being aware of this situation, the Ministry of National Education had the Head Council of Education and Morality to prepare the *Turkish Language and Culture Course Curriculum for Turkish Children Abroad* in 2006 (MEB, 2006). In addition, after the Turkish Language and Culture Coursebook (Grades 1-10) that is being developed by a Specialization Commission formed within the General Directorate for European Union and Foreign Affairs of the Ministry is completed, other supplementary resources compatible with the curriculum are expected to be prepared. In this respect, 35.42% of the teachers stated that the contents of the existing books did not coincide with the instructional objectives.

In the section including the teachers' views on instruction, there were 365 items counted that are presented in the table below, and were critical of the course book, its contents and suitability for the objectives. This corresponds to 91.70% of all statements. The books that are used in the Turkish language and culture course abroad are supposed to be selected from within the list published in the Journal of Announcements. However, due to either the difficulty of reaching these books, or subjective reasons that were not mentioned by the participants, the teachers either did not use any books or preferred to use books that are printed in Germany in combination with their course notes.

In Table 11, the major problems that the teachers working in Germany encountered while teaching the Turkish language and culture course are grouped, and the frequencies and percentages are presented.

**Table 11: Problems Encountered While Teaching the Course**

Type of problem	N	%
Course books not being suitable for students' developmental levels	178	44,72
Contents in the course books not being in accordance with the objectives	141	35,42
Not being able to develop special materials due to not having suitable classrooms	5	1,25
Existing course books not being available to schools and students	31	7,78
Course books not being in accordance with the curriculum	15	3,76
<b>TOTAL number of those who stated negative views on instructional materials</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>52.76</b>
Students' lack of interest and motivation in the course	48	12,06
Parents' negative attitudes towards the course	23	5,77
Lack of a fixed place	8	2,01
Those who stated not to have had any problems	13	3,26
Those who did not provide any views	17	4,27

As is seen in the table, the rate of the parents' lack of interest is 5.77%, while that of the students' lack of motivation is 12.06%. There is a need to enhance parents' and students' interest in the Turkish language and culture course. For this purpose, contact meetings to present the Turkish Language and Culture Course Draft Curriculum, and evaluate instructional environments and course materials are organised by the Turkish Ministry of National Education in different German cities. These are held in the form of evaluation meetings with the participation of stakeholder in the cities where Turkish citizens mostly live. The latest meeting was organised by the Turkish Embassy in Karlsruhe. All stakeholders were informed and consultations were held in the event hosted by the Education Attaché in Karlsruhe, Gürkan Avcı, with the participation of the Education Attaché in Berlin, Prof. Dr. Cemal Yıldız, the Education Attaché in Munich, Prof. Dr. İlyas Öztürk, the teachers of the Turkish language and culture course in the Baden region, school councils, and representatives of the school council federation. (see Avrupa Gazete, 12.06.2015).

Establishing a connection with the origin-culture and/or transferring the existing tie to future generations by maintaining it are only possible with individuals' speaking, not forgetting, the language of the country they come from. Besides, individuals' learning the origin-language to an advanced level would reinforce their confidence by raising their awareness regarding their cultural background, and enable them to have a place as equal individuals in the society, actively participate in the social environment and gain acceptance. Teachers who teach the Turkish language and culture course that has such a significant meaning should be trained in the education faculties of universities as "Turkish Language and Culture Teachers" or "Turkish as a Foreign Language Teachers". In this way, graduates should be educated in accordance with the requirements of the area in which they will teach, not only the areas related to Turkish language and literature or western languages and literatures, in that they should perform practical works and take courses related to the subjects that they will be responsible for while teaching.

### Relationships with Non-Governmental Organisations

Metin Es, a journalist who has lived in Germany for many years, draws attention to the fact that there are no non-governmental organisations in its real sense in this country, and summarises the state of the Turkish community in the context of non-governmental organisations as follows (Es, 2015: URL):

If Turkish immigrants who have been living in Germany for 52 years could not obtain dual citizenship, if they cannot go to the polls in the local elections with their own identity, if the MPs selected to the parliament cannot express themselves enough, if they enter German universities at a very low rate and even have difficulty in entering high schools, if young individuals have difficulty in vocational education areas, if racism and xenophobia increase every passing day, if these people cannot stand for their rights when treated unfairly, if the unemployment rate increases constantly and they are at the top of the list in poverty, if 50% of women in this community is unemployed, if there are still honour killings and violence against women although they live in Europe, if they are manipulated in elections and refer to politicians who cut Turkish kebab and drink Turkish tea as "He loves Turks", if they are seen by the Turkish government as a money machine and they have to fly somewhere else to vote for the Turkish elections, if their faith is abused and their money is siphoned off, and if their children are taken away because "they cannot look after them", we have to think carefully as a whole society.

These remarks aside, the non-governmental organisations in Germany are affiliated with the federations under TGD (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland – Turkish Population in Germany), and include the foundations approved by the local German authorities (see TGD, 2015), the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DİTİB), Islamic Community of the National Vision Movement (IGMG), Union of Islamic Culture Centres (İKMB), and Federation of Alevi Unions in Germany (see AABF, 2015).

In Germany, the largest non-governmental organisation of the Turkish population is DİTİB that reach out more than 890 foundations and was founded according to the German law of associations. Research shows that it represents 70% of Muslims in Germany. This association is the largest non-governmental organisation that organises religious, social, and cultural and sports events by coordinating the foundations bound to it across Germany (see DİTİB, 2015).

The Islamic Community of the National Vision Movement (IGMG), which was once shown among the harmful organisations and monitored in Europe (Seidel et al. 2001, p. 28), provides religious services to Muslims living in Germany particularly, France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium and England through 514 mosques with 323 mosques in Germany (see IGMG, 2015). The religious, social and cultural services of IGMG include developing programs to maintain cultural values and organise educational events for individuals of all age groups.

"Süleyman Efendi's Students" who came to Germany among Turkish workers in 1973 founded a mosque association with the title "Islamic Culture Centre" aiming to "protect the cultural identity and teach the religion to young generations". This association that took the name Union of Islamic Culture Centres as of 1980 and turned into the umbrella organisation for similar mosque associations in Germany employs young religious staff who were born in Germany, have graduated from German schools, speaks German well, have received a decent religious education and are members of the second generation (see İKMB, 2015).

Turkish immigrants living in Germany can be said to be organised in the field of education as well. In addition to non-governmental organisations such as German Federation of Turkish Parents' Associations, German Federation of Turkish Teachers' Associations, German-Turkish Doctors' Union, German Dentists' Association (VZT), Institute of Turkey-Europe Affairs (TEB), German Union of Turkish Students and Academics, there are foundations established by businessmen such as German-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AHK Turkey), European Union of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists (ATIAD e.V.), and Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (Turkish Embassy in Berlin, 2015).

The teachers stated that their relationship with the non-governmental organisations founded by Turks in their immediate environment with the aim of religious, social and cultural cooperation was limited. Among these teachers, 59.12% asserted that they were distant in their relationship with these associations, and thus, they did not have any problems and received help from them in organising ceremonies for reasons like religious feasts. The teachers' views on non-governmental organisations are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12: Views on non-governmental organisations**

<b>Views on non-governmental organisations</b>	<b>62,81%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>100</b>
I don't know, I didn't have any problems		149	59,12
Associations are disconnected from each other		26	10,31
It would be beneficial to organise events that bring these associations together		11	4,36
There is a prejudice against the non-governmental organisations		12	4,76
The activities of non-governmental organisations need to be supported		13	5,15
Due importance is not attached to the activities of non-governmental organisations		20	7,93
The Turkish course can be taught within non-governmental organisations.		5	1,98
The administrators of non-governmental organisations need to be changed from time to time		1	0,39
Teachers are treated as supervisors.		15	5,95

Among the teachers, 10.31% stated views as in "We don't have a problem with the non-governmental organisations in our region, and we pay due attention to having good relations with all organisations that maintain our national and moral values; however, non-governmental organisations seem disconnected from each other because they are in a competition, either explicit or implicit. The rate of those who reported not to have had any problems with the non-governmental organisations is 59.12%. One of the teachers within this group who made interesting statements summarised his experience by saying "Not staying away from places such as mosques and sports clubs that are meeting or gathering places of our citizens gives use the opportunity to stand beside them and enables us to work more effectively in these places, and at the same time they protect their children, language, culture, beliefs and most importantly teachers and their activities".

5.95% of the teachers stated they were uncomfortable because the staff of the non-governmental organisations "saw themselves as the officials who would make complaints to sack the teachers", while for 0.32% of them it was because "the parents working in the school union were unwilling to do anything and thus social and cultural activities were not effective enough". Another group asserted that "they could meet their needs by contacting all non-governmental organisations in the region they worked without any problems" and added that "the teachers preferred to be seen in the care of the Education Consultancies, not the school unions".

While mentioning the prejudices against the non-governmental organisations, 4.76% of the teachers emphasised that "there was common hostility against Turks in certain associations in the states where individuals who had, or still having, trouble with Turkey, and immigrants who were convicted with crimes related to extreme organisations and terror mostly live".

### **Additional Views and Suggestions of Teachers**

Among the teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 28.39% preferred to state a view and suggestion, while the remaining either thanked, or left this section blank. 16.81% of those who stated a view mentioned the importance of including the Turkish language and culture course in the German curriculum as a compulsory course. This course is taught as an elective course in German schools and the grades are not reflected in students' grade report. Consequently, it is inevitable to encounter problems regarding students' preferring the course, their attendance to the classes, ensuring teachers' authority at school, and allocation of classrooms in educational institutions, and the teachers who do not have a sufficient level of German proficiency are expected to cope with these problems in a foreign environment.

10.61% of the teachers regarded not having a certain level of proficiency in Germany as an important difficulty, and suggested that courses in which they can learn German at the level of B2 should be opened in Turkey and those who successfully complete these courses should be sent to abroad duties, by saying: Because school administrators cannot communicate with teachers who don't speak German and thus cannot express themselves regarding the problems encountered at school, they don't want to work with, or have negative attitudes towards these teachers. Those who speak German express their requests whenever possible. There are administrators who don't speak English even if they can.

The teachers who come here only speaking English have difficulty in explaining things to students whose Turkish is not well. It may be necessary to make explanations to some students in German. The teachers who doesn't speak German very well should be subjected to compulsory German course, as it used to be, and at least B1-B2 level should be asked. Similarly, 1.5% of the teachers stated that the "seminars for adapting to abroad assignments" given to them before going to Germany were not enough, and they should receive a longer training in Turkey.

The rate of the teachers who reported that their daily abroad wages could not be paid on their salary payday, and the payments in this regard were not sufficient was 10.61%. Although the daily wages that are paid from the budget of the Foreign Ministry should be paid in times, delays of one or two weeks in some months were reported. This puts teachers in a tight spot, especially if they have regular payments such as loans and house rent. However, in the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Education Council, effective use of existing resources synchronously was adopted to meet the educational needs of our society that aims to integrate with contemporary societies in early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and a multi-faceted approach including increasing the public education budget to the maximum and the participation of beneficiaries to educational costs based on their economic power was accepted. It was stated that this approach would be the most rational and realistic way in terms of both societal and individual outcomes in the short and medium term (MEB 1996b: 401-409). Another teacher summarised the main problems that he encountered after starting to teach in Germany as follows:

There is a need for a guide that can provide realistic and practical information to the teachers sent from Turkey about their children's education, housing, the society that they would serve and the region they would live in. 2.25% of the teachers mentioned parents' indifference to their children's education, and that they did not cooperate with teachers sufficiently. The view of one of the teachers is as in the following:

Another interesting point is that before they start school, Turkish students don't receive adequate education from their families. The schools in Turkey are seen as educational institutions and parents expect elementary school teachers to teach much basic behaviour to children. /.../ therefore, due to reasons stemming from the difference in cultural understanding, Turkish students are thought by their teachers to have behavioural disorder when they start school.

7.51% of the teachers said they had a housing problem when they first arrived in Germany, and 2.25% stated that they had to deal with problems related to family reunification and their children's school enrolment.

The teachers asserted that the coordinatorship system did not work well, those who took on this duty could not fulfil their tasks adequately due to their instructional responsibilities, and they could retard such responsibilities due these tasks. Both the beginning teachers and the coordinators expressed their displeasure with this duty.

**Table 13: Views and suggestions the teachers wanted to express**

<b>Views and suggestions the teachers wanted to express</b>	<b>28.39%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>
Grading students in the status of a compulsory course		19	16.81
Arriving the place of assignment late, the visa problem, and taking up the job late		14	12.38
Problem of German proficiency (B2 level must be asked)		12	10.61
Daily wages being low and paid late		12	10.61
Solving the housing problem		10	7.51
Insufficiency of annual leaves		8	6.01
Course loads of teachers are not equal		6	4.51
Socialising teachers through school trips, and motivating them		4	3.00
Opportunity to pursue MA and PhD degrees when going back at the end of the duty term		4	3.00
Turkish driving license not being valid		4	3.00
For elementary schools (Grades 1-4)		4	3.00
Teachers' problems related to family members		3	2.25
Parents' indifference		3	2.25
Communication gap among colleagues		2	1.50
Elementary school teachers should be assigned for Grundschule level		2	1.50
Collection of TV and Internet taxes		2	1.50
Providing long-term education in Turkey before going to Germany		2	1.50
Forming a lesson plan group among teachers		1	0.75
Selecting teachers to be sent abroad more carefully		1	0.75

While 0.75% of the teachers stated that lesson plan groups should be formed regarding how the course should be delivered in the school where they start teaching, 1.5% complained about the indifference of colleagues. Moreover, there was also a group including 0.75% of the teachers who questioned those assigned for abroad duties in terms of professional competencies, and officials should be more careful about selecting individuals for these duties. This group also shared their opinion that economic income precluded instructional services in the regions where teachers are assigned. The suggestion of one of the teachers, who was probably a coordinator, on this issue is as follows:

The course load of coordinators, which is 16 hours per week, should be decreased so that responsibilities of this duty can be fulfilled adequately, or stable coordinators, apart from teachers, should be assigned to educational regions. This is because the directors of the educational regions indicated that relationships are disrupted because coordinators change all the time. 1.5% of the teachers stated that the teachers of the Turkish language and culture course assigned in elementary schools should be selected among elementary school teachers.

Another issue that should be focused is the problems that the teachers experienced with regard to the local regulations in the countries they go. Among these problems were not being able to use their Turkish driving licences in Germany (3%), and the GEZ (Gebühreneinzugszentrale der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten – Tax Collection Centre of Public Radio and Television Corporations) dues that are paid for the radio and television used by the household in this country (1.5%). The teachers wanted both their Turkish driving licenses, which they can use for only 6 months, to be turned into EU licenses, and to be excluded from the television tax that cost 17,98 Euros per house in Germany and everybody needs to pay whether he/she has a television or not. According to the local regulations, the teachers need to both pay the radio-television tax and take an exam for the German driving license.

The teachers argued that because the officials responsible for educational affairs in the Foreign Missions of the Republic of Turkey are not managed by the Educational Consultancies assigned by the Ministry of National Education, but the staff of the Foreign Ministry, there are interruptions regarding the sustainability of effective works in abroad services. One of the teachers alluded to this issue as in the following:

An education attaché should be assigned to every region in order for teachers coming from Turkey to be followed and their achievements to be rewarded, and also to find solutions for the problems of those who teach the Turkish language and culture course. These education attachés should have lived in the region where they would work and known the problems of that region.

The responses of the teachers in Germany overlap with the problems expressed in the previous literature in the past (see Durdu & Sönmez, 2012; Ercan-Sakallı, 2003). The summary of the teachers' views and suggestions is presented in the table above.

## Results and Suggestions

In this section, the results retrieved from the study are evaluated briefly, and interpretations and suggestions are listed with regard to the future.

## Results

According to the results obtained from the findings of the study, teachers who are assigned to teach the Turkish language and culture course in Germany has to deal with various problems regarding bureaucratic, societal and social life in the regions they work in addition to their instructional activities. Besides, the results yielded from the study are as follows:

- As Alyılmaz (2010, p. 729) states, "language acquisition starts as a result of children's interaction with their family and immediate environment; however, accurate and effective use of language, and the development of reading and writing skills requires more systematic studying at school or another educational institution, which makes language education even more important". For this reason, children should be trained as individuals who can use Turkish fluently by establishing the triangle between parents, teachers and school well. Since the identity development and confidence of individuals who speak Turkish fluently and know about the Turkish culture would be better, their acquisition of German as a second language and becoming bilingual and bicultural individuals would be possible. It cannot be denied that not only Turkey but also the Federal Republic of Germany, who wants to play a part in world politics actively, would benefit from citizens with such qualifications. Therefore, it is thought that Germany would achieve significant outcomes by passing to a more credible policy towards both immigrants and Turkish-origin citizens having a multicultural identity who have become an inseparable part of the country.
- Despite this fact, German authorities are observed to show a tacit resistance to teaching the Turkish language and culture course in this country. This resistance can be inferred particularly from the difficulties with respect to the working and living permits of the teachers sent from Turkey and the visa applications of their immediate families. As a matter of fact, 12.38% of the teachers stated that they arrived at their place of assignment late due to the red tape of the German authorities, and had to deal with a set of certain conditions related to the school administrators, parents and students because the school year had already started. In the case of delays, the Turkish courses are cancelled in schools, or alternative solutions are applied.
- Another issue is that according to the new German Nationality Act (Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz), the Germany-born children of foreign parents who have stayed in Germany for more than eight years and one whom has permanent residence permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) were foreseen to automatically have German nationality, and when these children reached to a certain age, they had to choose either the nationality they were born to, or the one of their parents, and those who did not make this choice until the age of 23 lost their German nationality. This rule described as the "option model" included an incredible insult and exclusion for the young individuals who were subjected to it, and it was not valid for EU countries, the United States of America, Switzerland and other nations, but only for Turks. Between 2000-2012, 460 thousand of nine million children were given nationality from birth in Germany, and 5% of these were registered as the "option child" (SB 2015).

"Giving German nationality from birth to children born in Germany attracted the attention as a political strategy and was criticized. The desire of Germany-born children's learning German primarily might be behind this decision. However, according to Article 14 of the European Convention on Nationality, "a European country that is a party to this convention shall allow individuals to maintain the nationality that it gives to them from birth as well as their own nationality". The following article, on the other hand, prescribes that the laws of a country shall be tailored for "dual nationality" (Çakır, 2001a, p. 15). For this reason, the right to nationality was reformed with a change in the German Nationality Act that is valid as of 20 December 2014, and those who were below 21 on this date were given the right to dual nationality by annulling the "option model" (for more information on nationality, see Kolat, 2014). The number of those who benefitted from this right is about 50 thousand in reference to the data of the German Statistical Department.

Following these improvements, the German side is expected to develop an attitude based on cooperation regarding the solution of problems encountered in the teaching of the Turkish language and culture course such as the employment of teachers, allocation of classrooms, making the course compulsory within the curriculum, and including it in student reports and end-of-year assessments. What is expected from German educational administrators is not to close the Turkish language and culture course only because Turkish students do not show sufficient interest to the course, but to develop a policy that is supportive of forming the necessary infrastructure for opening this course and bilingualism. By means of this policy, Germans' certain value judgements about Turks living in their country can also be changed (Çakır, 2012, p. 27), and positive contributions can be made to the social adaptation of foreigners who are seen as the "others".

- That the party countries are not informed of the bureaucratic problems experienced cannot be argued. The practices of the decision-makers in the Federal Republic of Germany, which were sometimes well-intentioned but wrong, or sometimes not well-planned and employed without foreseeing the negative consequences, reinforced the negative prejudices and opinions about Turks instead of eliminating them.
- Those who design policies on adaptation and living together do not see the people just beside them by leaving the kaleidoscope in their hands, and insist on pursuing abstract mental designs that do not overlap with the realities of life (see Çakır, 2009b). However, Turks from all walks of life in Germany want to gain acceptance in every step of life, not to be excluded. Gaining acceptance is the prerequisite for "adaptation" that is often mentioned.
- Many decisions such as about family unification that are implemented as a "fait accompli" are contrary to the German constitution particularly, and also to Articles 16 and 19 of the European Social Charter, Articles 8 and 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 12 of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (see Güllapoğlu, 1989, p. 89). The problems they cause to the teachers they host in their country for public service should also be analyzed carefully.

## Suggestions

Based on the results obtained from the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered:

- The qualified personnel that are necessary for education attachés' offices that have been planned to be active in Germany for the abroad organization of the Ministry of National Education and are still vacant should be assigned within the shortest time, and conferences in which all education attachés come together with other administrative staff and all stakeholders in their regions should be organized to quest for shared wisdom. Decision-makers, practitioners, and administrators within or outside institutions can participate in these meetings. Neither all participants are expected to be experts, nor it is necessary, but it should be on a voluntary basis. During these meetings, there is a need for participants who does not focus on titles, status, authority, age or belonging to a professional group, but aim to create shared wisdom, who care about their own ideas as well as others', does not approach to new and extraordinary ideas with prejudice, and are mediators rather than being aggressive. Quest-for-shared-wisdom conferences as a method of planning bring together those who have something to say (stakeholders), and enable revealing the most ideal futures reasonably within this method.



Creative strategies for the solution of the problems identified are then designed with a cooperative attitude, and strategies plans are prepared towards short, middle and long-term solutions. At the end, in order for the strategic plans to be put into practice, the state of the Republic of Turkey needs to embrace this issue, and its institutions and organizations need to distribute the duties and reflect them within their budgets to be able to implement these plans. If these meetings can be organized with the participation of not only Turks, but also all stakeholders concerned, Turkish and German parties can do their parts for the solution of problems.

- In order to increase the importance of the Turkish language and culture course, its existing status needs to be revised. There should be a work started to address this issue as a whole and make changes in the policy documents at the level of states.
- Teachers and lecturers sent to Germany to teach the Turkish language and culture course should be able to enter Germany following the necessary processes before the school year starts (August 15 at the latest).
- Although selecting the teachers sent abroad from other areas is criticized (see Alyılmaz 2010: 740), it would be beneficial not to send abroad teachers who cannot express themselves in a language other than Turkish, revise the processes regarding the selection of teachers, and if necessary, work on alternative methods to the existing practice in collaboration with the relevant units of universities and the Ministry of National Education (e.g. opening a foreign language teaching certification program that is accredited by the Council of Higher Education and in accordance with international standards for the graduates of areas such as teaching Turkish as a first language, or foreign languages education). The actual aim should be training teachers in a way that they can teach Turkish not only to Turkish children in Germany, but also to Germans as a "foreign language" (Damanakis, 1980, p. 23).
- The fact that the Turkish teachers sent abroad to teach Turkish do not know the target population well, are not informed of their problems, and do not have the adequate competence in teaching Turkish as a first and second language (Özbay, 2010, p.15) has long been an important issue. The results of this study also revealed similar findings. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education should immediately start assigning teachers locally among qualified individuals who have grown up in Germany or live in this country, and are suitable for teaching the Turkish language and culture course. In this way, many problems that teachers sent from Turkey encounter such as language, housing, annual leave; gaining acceptance of German colleagues, and communication would be overcome.

Although German proficiency is not a prerequisite for teaching the Turkish course, teachers who do not speak a foreign language and particularly German causes negative attitudes in school administrations. A good level of German proficiency seems to be vital in terms of communicating with administrators and German teachers, conveying current problems of students and helping them out. For this reason, it would be wise to send teachers who have a certain level of German proficiency to Germany, and if this is not possible, to subject the teachers who are among those to be selected in this respect to a foreign language course, and send abroad only those who successfully complete this course.

- Lecturers and teachers' driving licenses that they use in Turkey are longer valid in Germany after six months. Acquiring a local license is expensive (600-1000 Euros). The staff sent abroad as teachers are officials of our state who have a certain level of representation. Their length of service is set by regulations. The driving license is requested to be renewed for their length of service based on German regulations. It is clear that the purpose of this request is to earn income, but declaring the Turkish driving license invalid in the seventh month does not seem reasonable. Necessary steps should be taken for the change of our teachers' driving licenses without any courses or fees in accordance with their duty.
- Turkish education activities abroad should be carried out in coordination with related organizations towards similar purposes. It would be beneficial to set the minimum standards both for instructors who would give the course in private educational institutions that operate in teaching Turkish as a foreign language abroad, and also for the these institutions in which the course would be given.

Accrediting these institutions by a unit to be founded within the Ministry concerned would enable the language proficiency documents given to the graduates of these institutions to reach a standard. On the other hand, the Turkish proficiency exams should be administered from a single center and a minimum standard should be set in this regard.

- General high schools, and vocational and technical high schools, which anyone who meets the entrance criteria can attend, and would be structured in a way to provide education in international standards, can be opened under the Ministry of National Education in different cities of Germany. These schools would be equal to German high schools, and an alternative for young individuals who cannot receive general or vocational education due to language competency in particular.
- Parents are stated not to pay much attention to their children's educational problems. On the other hand, when a realistic analysis of the situation is conducted, it is seen that although Germany has a history of immigration for over 50 years, the number of immigrants who do not have a diploma of any school level is 1 million 216 thousand. It is not a realistic solution to feature the thesis that these people do not pay attention to the educational progress of their children by leaving all problems and responsibilities aside, and to put the responsibility of Turkish children's low academic achievement to the immigrants who do not have any diplomas and their families; however, it is only ignoring the problems. The actual issue that should be considered is why other stakeholders responsible to change this situation are not effective enough.
- Another result that can be retrieved from this study is that family education programs should be organized to enhance parents' education and language proficiency levels. In this respect, two different support programs can be developed. One of these is the support programs towards improving immigrant parents' language and education levels, and the second is those on enhancing their children's language and education levels.

Immigrant children's low language proficiency and academic achievement is a certain and clear phenomenon, and instead of discussing about this phenomenon, it is necessary to focus on what should be done to improve the existing situation, and work together with all stakeholders.

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