



Subject Field Competency Analysis of Teachers of Turkish as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to elicit the qualifications needed by teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language for performing their duties more effectively in line with their opinions. In this study, data were collected by means of a survey from teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language. For this purpose, qualifications reported in the doctorate dissertation written by Mete (2013) were capitalized on. As a result of the study, it was found that in the Professional Knowledge section, the teachers need the most training on making use of literary works in teaching of a language; in Professional Skills Section, they need the most training on in-class and out of-class activities that can meet students' expectations, are student-centered, motivating, and suitable for students' language proficiency levels, learning styles and learning needs; in Professional Attitude and Values Section, they need the most training on making necessary warnings about the correct use of Turkish.

Keywords

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Introduction

Education and instruction have a dynamic structure undergoing a continuous change and development. The science of education needs to keep up with the developing technology and innovations to create the individuals of the information society in the current world.

In line with the requirements of the modern world, new reconstruction efforts have been put into effect in Turkey, required works have been done, physical structures of the schools have been improved, contemporary educational equipments have been attempted to be provided, education and instruction programs have been updated parallel to the developments and continue to be updated. New international research indicates that the teacher is an important determiner of students' learning outcomes (Australian Teaching Profession Standards National Framework, Consultancy Report, 2013).

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The teacher should assume important duties such as designing educational settings, coordinating other education-related factors, selecting appropriate teaching methods, establishing human relations successfully and motivating students to learn. Therefore, the teacher is regarded to be the most strategic element in fulfilling the objectives of education (Kuruüzüm & Çelik, 2005, p.138). Hence, investments made on the teacher and education are made on the future of a nation. "The qualifications and competencies of the teacher are the most important factor determining the success of educational and instructional activities" (Büyükkaragöz et al., 1998, p.16). Therefore, teachers should be educated in such a way as to meet the expectations of the age. "The most important school variable affecting the student achievement is the quality of the teacher" (World Bank Report, 2011). In educational process, the duties of the teacher and qualifications required by these duties should be continuously questioned and developed. "Knowledge and skills of teachers are the most important factor affecting the learning of students" (Leigh & Mead, 2005, p.1). In this regard, the greatest responsibility in educating qualified teachers should be assumed by teacher training institutions. "Some standards should be developed for teachers to possess the required qualifications. Anticipated teacher qualifications can make some contributions to the generation of such standards" (Seferoğlu, 2009, p.204).

The most comprehensive study was started by the Directory of Teacher Training and Education of the Ministry of National Education to determine the teaching qualifications within the context of Basic Education Support Program (TEDP) in 2004. Then, these teaching qualifications were determined and with the approval of Head Council of Education and Morality, they were put into practice with permission of the Ministry given on 17/04/2006 and issued with number 2590 in the Journal of Communiqués. "Program and Content Knowledge" is a part of Teaching Profession Qualifications. 'Special Subject Area Program Knowledge and Application Skill and Special Subject Area Teaching Program Monitoring-Evaluation and Development' sub-qualifications are defined as knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be possessed for teachers to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently. This made the research of teaching profession special subject area qualifications compulsory.' " (MEB, 2013).

Improvement of teacher competencies is being considered as one of the most important national problems of the Turkish Educational System in a report published in 2009 by the Turkish Education Association (Türk Eğitim Derneği) (Teacher Competencies Summary Report, 2009). That research both reports on international practices of enhancing teacher competencies and provides suggestions for improving primary level teachers' competencies depending on teachers', administrators', students', and parents' perceptions. (Teacher Competencies Summary Report, 2009).

The existing literature on the domain-related competencies of teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language includes just only one dissertation of which data collection instrument was adopted in this research with the consent of the author. In this context, Turkish language special subject area qualifications for elementary school teachers and Turkish language and literature special subject area qualifications for secondary school teachers were determined; yet, no work has been conducted on the qualifications needed by teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Qualifications expected from teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language are different from qualifications expected from Turkish language teachers and Turkish language and literature teachers.

The Teacher teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language

As known, "pre-service teachers are prepared for their career by acquiring general culture knowledge, subject area knowledge and pedagogic knowledge" (Demirel, 1999, p.192). However, in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, usually the graduates of the departments of Turkish Language teaching, Turkish Language and Literature, Foreign language teaching and Linguistics work as teachers. Though the graduates of these programs seem to be suitable for teaching Turkish as a foreign language, it is generally agreed that teaching Turkish as a foreign language is a

different field of study. What is expected from a teacher of Turkish as a foreign language is not only to know about phonetics, syntax, semantics and context but also to be competent in teaching of them to students whose native language is not Turkish (Metz, 2013, p. 9).

Purpose

Given that the teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language work in a field different from the fields they are educated for, the present study aims to conduct a qualification analysis based on needs analysis approach. Determining the qualification requirements of the teachers based on their opinions may increase their voluntary participation. "In this way, professional development programs designed in compliance with the teachers' developmental needs can be effective in enhancing the teachers' knowledge and skills." (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p.454). In this regard, the needs of the teachers who work in a field for which they are not educated should be determined for them to work more effectively. In this connection, the expectations of the teachers working abroad to teach Turkish as a foreign language were investigated and itemized and the issues on which they need training were elicited.

The present study is expected to contribute to the programs developed to help the teachers teaching Turkish to overcome their professional shortcomings resulting from their pre-service education on the basis of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. In order to meet this expectation, the subject area teachers were asked to indicate the competency area and competency and performance indicators they want to have training on.

Methodology

In the present study, data were collected through survey method to determine the qualifications needed by the teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language to carry out their duties more effectively. The data collected were converted into Competency Training Needs Evaluation Questionnaire by the researcher. The stages of this conversion process are given under the heading of *Needs Determination Process*.

Study Group

The study group consists of 96 teachers teaching Turkish abroad. Personal information of the participants is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Personal

		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Country worked	Belgium	8	8.3
	France	16	16.6
	Egypt	10	10.4
	Albania	4	4.1
	Kosovo	3	3.1
	Bosnia Herzegovina	16	16.6
	Macedonia	4	4.1
	Kazakhstan	4	4.1
	Italy	2	2.0
	Poland	4	4.1
	Romania	6	6.2
	Germany	12	2.5
	Switzerland	4	4.1
	England	3	3.1
	Total	%100	96
Department graduated	French teaching	18	18.7
	German teaching	8	8.3
	Turkish language and literature	26	27.0
	Turkish teaching	28	29.1
	English teaching	6	6.2
	History	2	2.0
	Contemporary Turkish dialects	4	4.1
	Classroom teacher education	4	4.1
Total	%100	96	100
Teaching experience in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language	0-5	60	62.5
	6-10	24	25.0
	11 years and more	12	12.5
	Total	%100	96

Needs Determination Process

In the design process of an education program, one of the important aspects is the determination of needs. Kayabaş (2008, p.15) stated that following a sensitive and systematic way in the determination of needs is of as much importance as determination process itself and the more teachers are encouraged to participate in this process due to the more important role in their professional development. In this respect, 96 teachers were involved in the study on a voluntary basis and data were collected about the areas on which the teachers think they need training.

Development of the Competency Training Needs Evaluation Questionnaire

In order to investigate the subjects on which teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language need training, the first thing to be done is to determine knowledge, skills and attitudes and values expected to be possessed by these teachers. At that point, with the permission granted by Mete, competencies and performance indicators presented in his Dissertation (2013) "Research on the Special Field Competencies of Teachers teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language" under three headings (A. Professional Knowledge, B. Professional Skills, C. Professional Attitudes and Values) were used to develop Competency Training Needs Questionnaire of the present study by the researcher.

In the first section of the questionnaire, there are 7 items to elicit the personal information such as the place of work, gender, education level, department graduated, length of service, foreign languages known and contact information. The second part of the questionnaire is the main part designed to elicit data on 12 competencies. In this part, the competencies and performance indicators are presented as three groups and the participants were asked to mark the items indicating their training needs. Under each competency, performance indicators are given to provide guidance. Furthermore, after each item, an empty box is given for the participants to write, if there is any, their needs not indicated in the questionnaire.

Before the administration of the questionnaire, the opinions of three field experts and two assessment and evaluation experts about the suitability of the questionnaire were sought. In addition to this, Cronbach Alfa coefficient was calculated and it was found to be reliable (Cronbach Alfa Coefficient=0.975). Moreover, piloting of the questionnaire was conducted with the participation of 9 teachers.

Administration of the Questionnaire

In order to ensure the objectivity of the data to be collected through the developed Competency Training Needs Evaluation Questionnaire, it was coded and the names of the participants were not taken. The survey developed to collect data in this research was sent to respondents through email and they were asked to participate into the study by responding to the survey. The questionnaire was then administered to 96 teachers teaching Turkish abroad through snowball method on voluntary basis.

Analysis of the Data

The data collected in the present study were coded to enter the computer and analyzed through "SPSS" (Statistical package program for social sciences) 13.0. The collected data were tabulated as numerical figures. Percentages and frequencies were calculated for the data. For each item, need statements were comparatively evaluated. The findings obtained in this way were evaluated and are presented in the findings section.

Findings and Results

The data collected through the competency training needs evaluation questionnaire administered to the teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language are presented under two headings. First personal information of the participants and then findings concerning the items for which the lowest and highest needs were reported are presented.

Findings Obtained from the Competency Training Needs Evaluation Questionnaire

Based on the opinions of the teachers about their needs, the subjects for which the lowest and highest training needs felt by the teachers and their reasons are presented below.

Table 2. Data collected in relation to competencies and performance indicators included in professional knowledge section

<i>Competencies</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Being able to use the components of the language and linguistic knowledge <i>Being able to make use of literary works in language teaching</i>	36	37.5
Being able to apply language teaching approaches, methods and techniques <i>Being able to reflect methods and techniques suitable for language teaching on class applications</i>	50	52.0
Being able to use Turkish in compliance with its characteristics and rules <i>Being able to communicate explicitly and implicitly in written and spoken Turkish</i>	58	60.4

Among the items related to the components of the language and use of linguistic information, the highest training need was reported by the participants for the item *being able to make use of literary works in language teaching* (n=36) and it is followed by *Language-culture and language-thinking interactions* (n=34) and the lowest training need was reported for *basic concepts and theories of linguistics* (n=16). Thus, it can be argued that the teachers have difficulties in making use of literary works in their applications.

Among the items related to the application of language teaching approaches, methods and techniques, the highest need was reported for *being able to reflect methods and techniques suitable for language teaching on class applications* (n=50) and it is followed by *methods and techniques suitable for foreign language teaching* (n=46) and the lowest need was reported for the item *basic approaches and theories in language teaching* (n=8). Hence, it seems that the teachers experience some problems in foreign language and teaching techniques.

Among the items related to use of Turkish in compliance with its characteristics and rules, the highest need was reported for the item *being able to communicate explicitly and implicitly in spoken and written Turkish* (n=58) and the lowest need was reported for the item *the place of Turkish among word languages in terms of syntax and origin* (n=16). As there is no common cultural infrastructure with the students in foreign language teaching, the issue of reported speech could be difficult for teachers to handle.

Table 3. Data collected in relation to competencies and performance indicators included in professional skills section

Competencies	F	%
Being able to plan teaching process in line with the objectives <i>Student-centered and motivating in and out of-class activities suitable for the development level, learning styles and learning needs of students</i>	62	64.5
Being able to arrange teaching environment <i>Environments conducive to the improvement of the use of Turkish in daily life</i>	44	45.8
Being able to use materials and resources suitable for language teaching process adjusting <i>Adjusting the selected materials and resources to reflect the characteristics of Turkish culture</i>	74	77.0
Being able to develop students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills <i>Activities to equally develop four skills used in daily life</i>	54	56.2
Being able to monitor and evaluate learning-teaching process <i>Based on the unity of language, using assessment tools paying attention to the evaluation of four skills</i>	46	47.9

Among the items related to the planning of the teaching process in line with the objectives, the highest need was reported for the item *Student-centered and motivating in and out of-class activities suitable for the development level, learning styles and learning needs of students* (n=62) and it is followed by the item *Based on the unity of language, assessment tools paying attention to the evaluation of four skills* (n=56) and the lowest need was reported for the item *considering material and resource requirements in plans* (n=36). In this regard, the teachers can be argued to have difficulties in the implementation of in and out of class activities.

Among the items related to the arrangement of teaching environments, the highest training need was reported for the item *Environments conducive to the improvement of the use of Turkish in daily life* (n=44) and the item *considering the interaction of national culture with the language while creating learning environments* (n=44) and the lowest need was reported for the item *establishing a secure, positive and motivating learning environment* (n=30). It is seen that the teacher has difficulties in reflecting daily life on their classroom activities.

Among the items related to being able to make use of appropriate materials and resources in language teaching process, the highest training need was reported for the item *adjusting the selected materials and resources to reflect the characteristics of Turkish culture* (n=74) and it is followed by the item *using materials and resources suitable for improving one or more of the four basic language skills together* (n=64) and the lowest need was reported for the item *using materials and resources conducive to the development of students' language skills and compatible with their development levels, learning styles and needs* (n=44). The teacher seems to have problems in the adaptation of the material to be used.

Among the items related to improving students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, the highest training need was reported for the item *Activities to equally develop four skills used in daily life* (n=54) and it is followed by the item *improving the vocabulary reservoir of students to enhance their fluent and effective speaking and writing skills* (n=50) and the lowest training need was reported for the item *seeking appropriate opportunities to correct wrong expressions and writing mistakes* (n=28). Thus, it can be concluded that the teacher experiences difficulties in the inclusion of four basic language skills in the applications.

Among the items related to monitoring-evaluating learning-teaching process, the highest training need was reported for the item *Based on the unity of language, using assessment tools paying attention to the evaluation of four skills* (n=46) and it is followed by the item *interpreting the data collected with the employed evaluation tools* (n=38) and the lowest need was reported for the item *giving feedback to students based on the results of the evaluation about their language development* (n=16). It seems that teachers have difficulties in the development of scales to be used to assess students.

Table 4. Data collected in relation to competencies and performance indicators included in professional attitudes and values section

<i>Competencies</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Being able to take the lead in the proper and effective use of Turkish <i>Making necessary warnings for the proper use of Turkish</i>	35	36.4
Being sensitive to language-culture interaction <i>World cultural artifacts</i>	46	47.9
Continuing professional development <i>Following the up-to-date publications and developments in language/Turkish teaching</i>	56	58.3
Making professional connections to establish cooperation for professional development <i>Contact and cooperation with individuals and institutions from different countries</i>	66	68.7

Among the items related to taking the lead in the proper and effective use of Turkish, the highest training need was reported for the item *making necessary warnings for the proper use of Turkish* (n=35) and the lowest need was reported for the item *the effect of using Turkish properly and effectively on his/her duties* (n=9). The teachers seem to have lack of self-confidence regarding the strategies of 'giving warnings' and expect to be supported.

Among the items related to being sensitive to language-culture interaction, the highest training need was reported for the item *world-cultural artifacts* (n=46) and it is followed by the item *the cultural structure of Turkish society, traditions and customs* (n=38) and the lowest training need was reported for the item *tolerance for different cultures* (n=20). The teachers seem to be short of information about cultural products of the world.

Among the items related to continuing professional development, the highest training need was reported for the item *Following the up-to-date publications and developments in language/Turkish teaching* (n=56) and it is followed by the item *sharing the experiences and gains obtained during the process of professional development with colleagues* and the lowest training need was reported for the item *participating in seminars, conferences and workshops etc. about teaching and learning of language/Turkish* (n=28). Thus, the teachers may be claimed not to break away from up-to-date discussions and developments in their disciplines.

Among the items related to making connections to establish professional cooperation, the highest training need was reported for the item *establishing contacts and cooperation with individuals and institutions from different countries* (n=66) and it is followed by the item *establishing contacts and cooperation with individuals and institutions for professional development* (n=58) and the lowest training need was reported for the item *cooperative learning strategies for professional development* (n=40). In this regard, teachers' asking for help to communicate with the associates from different cultures can be considered as indication of development.

Discussion and Suggestions

Findings of the current research point out that the teachers perceive the item *using literary works in language teaching* (n=36) as the highest training need among the items related to competencies and performance indicators. When language-culture interaction is considered, it is known that the texts used can contribute to students' cultural awareness and knowledge as well as their language learning and help them to develop tolerance to different cultures. In this connection, it can be argued that the participants have adequate background of language, linguistics, concepts and theories; yet, they have a developmental need for using literary works to improve their intercultural interaction competency (Erişek & Yücel, 2002, p.63).

Among the items related to language teaching approaches, methods and techniques, the teacher think that they have the highest training need for the item *Being able to reflect methods and techniques suitable for language teaching on class applications* (n=50). When the personal information of the participants is examined, it is seen that 32 of them are graduates of English, French and German language teaching departments and the rest of the participants are from the disciplines different from foreign language teaching such as Turkish language and literature, Turkish teaching, Contemporary Turkish dialects, History and classroom teaching. Though the most closely related fields to the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language are considered to be Turkish language and literature, Turkish language teaching and Contemporary Turkish dialects, their contents are nor designed by considering teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Teaching Turkish as a foreign language settings mainly include learners having various cultural backgrounds, ages, and interests. Thus, language teachers employed in these settings are expected to be equipped with skills to use various methods and techniques. However, due to the absence of a specific undergraduate level program for training teachers to teach Turkish as a foreign language at the Turkish universities, domain based teaching competencies of this discipline have never been determined precisely (Barn, 2010). In this regard, it seems to be natural that the teachers not educated to teach a foreign language need some education about foreign language teaching approaches, methods and techniques.

Among the items related to use of Turkish in line with its characteristics and rules, the highest training need was reported for the item *implicit/indirect expression in written/spoken communication in Turkish* (58). The elements used to create implicit expressions in Turkish are similes, syncretism/metaphors, affective value/connotations, transfers, elliptical expressions, idioms, proverbs, sentences exhibiting deep structure and surface structure differentiation, presuppositions and implications (Onan & Tiryaki, 2012, p.224). Implicit expressions in written and spoken communication make up the secondary language within a language together with its cultural and abstract meanings. In this respect, it can be argued that the participants need training about the use of such elements as they were not educated about how to teach the use of such elements to students from different cultures during their undergraduate education.

Among the items related to the planning of the teaching process in line with the objectives, the highest need was reported for the item *Student-centered and motivating in and out of-class activities suitable for the development level, learning styles and learning needs of students* (n=62). While describing his culture, French Herriot says "culture is what remains after the forgotten things" (Goldhammer, 2009). And famous anthropologist C. Wissler defines the culture as follows "Culture is a living style of a nation" (Cited by Gültekin and Sığrı, 2007, p.275). Language teaching is at the same time culture teaching. Being the most fundamental instrument of a culture, language opens a door to the life of a nation. However, in order to be able to get to know this life, four language skills of the language should be mastered and opportunities to use them within the life should be found. In this respect, language teaching should not be restricted to the classroom environment; instead, it should be expanded towards outside world. Language is acquired by the individuals rather than desperately memorizing the vocabulary or elaborating the structure. To do that, learners may be asked to use language skills in an imbedded way. For instance, they can be asked to write after they listened something and take notes about what they have listened. Later, they may be asked again to talk about what they have written and let them listen to each other. Briefly, a self-iterative model can be implemented to support language skills interrelatedly (Freeman & Freeman, 1994; cited by Uysal, 2011, p.99). Therefore, teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language should possess competencies required to teach four language skills not only inside but also outside the class and they need education to do so. "Audio-visual materials used in the foreign language pedagogy help teacher to create an authentic environment in the classroom. Because learners' attention to the language increases when they expose to real life language materials. Thus, utilizing audio-visual materials in teaching Turkish as a foreign language will improve the chance for the teacher to make learners acquire the targetted vocabulary and concepts." (Demirel, 1993a, p.24).

Among the items related to the arrangement of teaching environments, the highest training need was reported for the item *Environments conducive to the improvement of the use of Turkish in daily life* (n=44). There should be a direct connection between the formation of the learning environment and the characteristics of the target population. Students' level can be determined by individual characteristics as well as countries' learning habits and popular teaching methods. Another critical point regarding the professional development of the teachers is that they underline the need to know about reflecting daily use of Turkish into the teaching and hence enhance the in-class interaction. The importance of the culture education in the foreign language learning settings was underlined by a part of the relevant literature (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983; Fantini, 1997; Moran, 2001; Bayyurt, 2011). In this respect, it can be argued that if the teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language become more informed about the culture of the target population, they can design more effective learning environments.

Among the items related to being able to make use of appropriate materials and resources in language teaching process, the highest training need was reported for the item *adjusting the selected materials and resources to reflect the characteristics of Turkish culture* (n=74). Every type of material and resource to be used for language teaching naturally reflects the culture of the country. Foreign language instruction is also the teaching of the target culture because human beings express themselves with the concepts and vocabulary of the culture of their community. That is to say, since each word and concept is based on a cultural understanding, the culture and the values of the target language can not be separated from language learning process (Avcı, 2002). Nearly half of the teachers reported that they do not need training about students' levels, learning styles or learning needs while selecting or adapting materials and resources. However, when the teachers think that the existing materials and resources do not reflect the characteristics of Turkish culture; they have difficulties in adapting these materials and resources. Hence, they perceive that they need training in this area. This specific finding also indicates that the teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language are aware of the fact that they are teaching not only the language but also the culture. As the highest majority of the teachers think that they need training in this area, it is regarded to be very important by them.

Among the items related to improving students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, the highest training need was reported for the item *Activities to equally develop four skills used in daily life* (n=54). The main goal of foreign language teaching is enabling the learners to communicate effectively and properly in daily life. Education process should be designed to meet this goal. Hence, equal emphasis should be put on each skill without overlooking any of them. Turkish language instruction is based on the basic language skills as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Hence, Turkish language teaching programs aim to help learners to improve their language skills in line with pre-determined program outcomes. The most crucial two aspects of the first language learning is comprehension (reception) and production of the language. Comprehension includes listening and reading skills, and production includes speaking and writing skills (Lüle Mert, 2014, p.23). Therefore, it can be argued that the teachers attach great importance to the development of four skills. Vocabulary knowledge can contribute to the development of four skills. In this regard, the teachers stated that they need training about how to enhance the vocabulary reservoir of their students.

Among the items related to monitoring-evaluating learning-teaching process, the highest training need was reported for the item *Based on the unity of language, using assessment tools paying attention to the evaluation of four skills* (n=46). Language is the integration of four skills. It is not easy to evaluate whether a language is learned or not because it necessitates the evaluation of four skills. Assessment and evaluation of the language learners should be incorporated into all phases of the language teaching process in an ongoing way. As an unneglectable part of the language learning process, assessment and evaluation activities should be utilized to monitor efficiency of the language learning program, tracking the learners' performances, and gain insights for the following steps to be taken in the curriculum (Göçer, 2007, p.32-33). In this regard, it seems that the teachers need training about the evaluation of listening and speaking skills.

Among the items related to taking the lead in the proper and effective use of Turkish, the highest training need was reported to the item *making necessary warnings for the proper use of Turkish* (n=35). Language teaching includes the teaching of four skills. It is natural for students to make some mistakes while using listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Correction of such mistakes may vary depending on methods and time. Mistakes left uncorrected for a long time, may survive for years. In this regard, the participants think that they need some training about the method and timing of correction.

Among the items related to being sensitive to language-culture interaction, the highest training need was reported for the item *world-cultural artifacts* (n=46). Foreign language teaching is an intercultural interaction process. In addition to his/her own culture, the teacher should be knowledgeable about world culture. While teaching the language of a foreign culture, for a teacher to be effective, he/she should be informed about students' cultural structure. In this regard, it can be argued that the teachers want to be more informed about world culture and cultural artifacts to establish more effective communication with students. Besides, foreign language programs should not expose language learners to artificial language materials and/or decontextualized structural forms for the sake of teaching culture. It should be noted that foreign language learning is an ongoing, dynamic, versatile, and complex system (Demir & Açıık, 2011, p.56).

Among the items related to continuing professional development, the highest training need was reported for the item *Following the up-to-date publications and developments in language/Turkish teaching* (n=56). As the teachers work abroad, they may have some difficulties in having access to information and this may give rise to concerns about their having some shortcomings; hence, they may need some training. The item for which the lowest need was reported may have been found overtly academic by the teachers.

Among the items related to making connections to establish professional cooperation, the highest training need was reported for the item *establishing contacts and cooperation with individuals and institutions from different countries* (n=66). Information and experience sharing is of great importance in the field of education and instruction. Teaching Turkish as a foreign language has not been sufficiently institutionalized and environments suitable for cooperation have not been established yet. In this respect, it can be argued that the teachers need support to establish contacts and cooperation. As the developments in the field of education and instruction have brought cooperative learning into the forefront rather than individual competition.

In addition to above-mentioned issues, the participants also emphasized the need for professional development training, sustainability, concrete applications in addition to theoretical information, use of activity-based interactive techniques and use of more than one teacher in the class.

The present study was designed to elicit the training needs of the teachers teaching Turkish abroad. In this regard, it can be useful to elicit the opinions of the teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language in Turkey and compare its findings with the findings of the present study.

Following suggestions can be made for a training program to be developed:

- ✓ In order to apply the domain specific competencies of Turkish as a foreign language teachers and improve the quality of teacher education, the relevant organizations and institutions should be in collaboration.
- ✓ The findings of the present study should be taken into consideration while developing a program for the training of the teachers working in this field.
- ✓ In order to attain efficient outcomes of the professional development programs in this field, subject experts should be utilized to contribute as instructors in the programs.
- ✓ Seminars prepared for language teaching should not be too general and target language and population-based differences should be taken into account.
- ✓ In the training seminars to be prepared, there should be application-oriented activities.
- ✓ While organizing education seminars, the characteristics of the country where Turkish will be taught should be considered.

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